Small arms in Southern Africa

Reflections on the extent of the problem and its management potential

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The mission of the Institute for Security Studies is to enhance human security in Africa. This is achieved through applied research and the dissemination of information that can inform decisions on critical areas of individual, national, regional and international security. The Institute is committed to democracy, good governance and the promotion of common security.

CONTENTS

PREFACE

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*In Commemoration of the
Centenary of the
1899 Hague Peace Conference*

AFRICA AND A NEW AGENDA FOR ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT

The Institute for Security Studies wishes to add its voice to the global commemoration of the Centenary of the 1899 Hague Peace Conference. As a result of its work over the last three years, the Arms Management Programme at the ISS is not only convinced that arms control and disarmament must be dealt with simultaneously, but also that, as far as light weapons and small arms are concerned, initiatives must be supported by educational and development components to allow for the evolution of alternatives to the use of arms in the resolution of human conflict. Nowhere is the need to control, reduce and reverse violence and its roots stronger than on the African continent. The Institute for Security Studies aims explicitly to enhance human security in Africa, and therefore has to voice its concerns and share its vision on the way forward at this august occasion.

TOWARDS A NEW HAGUE APPEAL

It has been said that disarmament is a continuation of strategy through a reduction of military means, while arms control is a continuation of strategy through a mutual restraint on military means. These adaptations of

Disarmament is a continuation of strategy through a reduction of military means

1

If properly applied, the intentions of The Hague Conference would have prevented the development and use of gas, bacteriological and chemical weapons. Yet, it did not. It was the appalling consequence of this deviation from the spirit of The Hague that forced the international community to formulate the 1925 Geneva Protocol that now figures in the long line of milestones under the umbrella of The Hague Conference. Despite this lesson, the spirit of The Hague did not stop the development or the use of weapons of mass destruction during the closing days of World War II. Again, the international community was forced to rein in the power it had unleashed with a long list of treaties and agreements on the control of weapons of mass destruction, all of which are now seen as milestones tied to the Appeal.

The fear that new technological innovations – designed, developed and possibly put to use in future to the detriment of mankind – are still quoted as being part of this process. Yet, with the record of the past, there can be no guarantees that countries will be guided to resolve their differences with vision, before the effects of their own mistakes force them to revert to the guidelines of The Hague process after – and not before – the fact.

Based on these premises, it is possible to infer that The Hague Appeal of 1899 did not fail. It was the interpretation of and the compartments into which its guiding principles were manipulated by national interests that failed. In fact, in a very important way, it could be said that the spirit of The Hague was never a failure, but indeed became a victim of the perversity of 20th century political agendas.

There was, of course, a second victim as a result of the deviation in the implementation of The Hague's principles. This victim was humanity as a whole. What would individual and social security have been like in the 20th century if the defence of the individual and everything he or she represents, had been the focal point of concern of nations and peoples when interacting with one another?

For example, the concerns of the implementers of The Hague agenda during the past century did not include Africa or its peoples. Africa's needs have always included freedom, personal security, dignity, development and peace. None of these were served by the manipulation of The Hague Appeal, particularly with regard to the peaceful settlement of disputes and the reduction and limitation of violence.

While other regions in the world were focused on their own vicious cycle of nuclear deterrence and power politics, the needs of African peoples, as well as those of most people in the rest of the developing world, were neither recognised as part of a security agenda, nor accepted as relevant to the spirit of The Hague Appeal. Today, one hundred years later, there is an opportunity to correct this mistake.

Clausewitz's famous dictum about war underlines what has become the prevailing view about disarmament and that was always at the root of arms control: these concepts are best understood as strategies in the business of politics among nations, rather than as ideals or imperatives.[1] This realist view of the nature of arms control and disarmament was challenged by the ideals expressed at the 1899 Hague Peace Conference.

After a century which can only be characterised as one of devastating wars and massive human suffering, it might be facile to describe The Hague Conference of 1899 and its objectives as a failure. Yet, hundred years after it was first voiced, the ideals of The Hague bring us all together again. The vision expressed at The Hague has stood the test of time, not because of the details expressed about the settlement of disputes, or the limitations on the means and methods of warfare, but because it was guided by a humanitarian approach which ultimately proposed an end to violence. Weapons and politics might change, but people do not. It is this encompassing human approach – transcending barriers of economic, political, racial, geographic and religious divides – that strikes a cord with all regions and peoples in the world today.

The long list of successes and failures that followed The Hague Conference cannot be understood if it is not accepted that neither the proposals made in The Hague nor the intentions that were expressed, were ever implemented globally. With two World Wars and the Cold War affecting most people for the best part of fifty years, it was inevitable that the spirit of The Hague was hijacked by both those who experienced an extreme urgency to make war and those who wanted to limit its consequences, particularly as these thrusts related to themselves. Thus, the failure of countries and peoples to be guided by the true spirit that was present at The Hague in 1899 produced a curious situation where wars and weapons were intentionally developed, only to make an immense effort to control and contain their effects.

The second victim as a result of the deviation in the implementation of The Hague's principles was humanity as a whole

3

the connection between people and violence in all its forms, the spirit of The Hague cannot soar. A careful return to its essence is still possible for all peoples, and in Africa, the time could not be better to push for its ideals to become reality. The Hague spirit must be reborn but not changed. It must be interpreted correctly by those who need its guidance.

Thus, under the rubric of arms control and disarmament – in the spirit of The Hague for the new millennium – the control of weapons of mass destruction must take an equal place with that of arms of a different kind. Africa has been a particular testing ground where small arms and light weapons proved to be as deadly as weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, if Africa is ever to be heard in the arms control and disarmament debate, it has to bring the 'micro-disarmament' agenda to the table and ensure that appropriate and assertive international actions are taken. This is the general aim of this publication. Here, two important aspects are explored that relate to the causes and effects of continued small arms proliferation in Southern Africa and ways in which the international community, regional organisations and concerned African nations can act to reduce this scourge.

CONCLUSION

Africa does not need to wait for a common global reinterpretation of the spirit of The Hague. It can move in this direction right away if it so chooses. On the issues of small arms and the culture of violence which is sweeping through the continent, we can and should call on this spirit to start making a difference now. This is imperative as wars and violence in Africa utilise certain tools and rationales which have to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Any delay in this regard will mean that Africa will not only continue to suffer the physical effects of small arms, but will also fail to realise the constructive aspect of the spirit of The Hague that demands a focus on human development and human security in all its forms.

Finally, the spirit of The Hague must urge us all to consider the concept of violence with great care, and must seek to dislodge it with a culture of peace. At this stage, it is important for us to agree that, unless one's individual conscience accepts non-violence as the highest of all principles, the case for disarmament, peace and development in Africa will never be truly accomplished.

In this context, if Southern Africa succeeds in finding indigenous solutions to improve control over small arms proliferation and reduce the culture of violence that the present surfeit of weapons propitiates among its peoples, the region will be able to demonstrate to the world that it is prepared to be guided by the principles and concerns manifest in The Hague Appeal of 1899, as well as by the spirit that still

NEW ISSUES

The issues that are central to human and state security and of concern at the threshold of the 21st century, are not the hard and cold concepts that prevailed during the Cold War era. The ultimate objective of attaining peace and influence through nuclear deterrence and power politics alone was shaken by the demise of the bipolar hegemonies that had cast shadows on all regions of the globe. Paradoxically, we are now deeply concerned – like our predecessors in 1899 – with the micro-tragedy of human conflict and violence. All the power in the world cannot stop the massive exodus of peoples, contain genocide, or avoid ethnic and religious cleansing, nor can it put an end to the operations of international criminal organisations bent on disrupting both the foundations of the nation-state, and the peace and well-being of individuals.

We start the new millennium in a fitting way: with a people-centred approach to security. We have been forced to this position by the excessive rationalisation of power and security that has prevailed throughout this century. As a result, the voice of The Hague sounds clearer today than it did perhaps fifty years ago. And perhaps, this voice is heard more clearly on the African continent than anywhere else.

It may seem as if the events and developments arising from The Hague, after the hijacking of its implementation, were characterised by an abandonment of the root concept of the defence of human dignity and individual security. But this was again due to the way in which some nations and international power structures preferred to interpret their obligations rather as arms control than as disarmament. The focus fell on nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, without including the control and reduction of conventional, light weapons and small arms.

The reality is that, as long as the world is unable to see

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5

moves it one hundred years later.

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Endnote

1   K   Booth, *Disarmament and arms control,* in J Baylis et al., <u>Contemporary strategy</u>, I, Croom
    Helm, London, 1987, p. 145.

THE MANAGEMENT OF ARMS IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESSES

INTRODUCTION

Intrastate and social conflict in the 1990s is not characterised by the kind of struggle that led, for example, to the peaceful political changes in Eastern Europe in the 1980s. Instead, it is principally determined by the ready availability and use of small arms either by warring factions, as in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Democratic Republic of Congo, or by the public at large, as in Albania and Liberia.[1]

The ready availability of light weapons and, more particularly, of small arms, although not a new phenomenon in itself, has become a critical component of conflict in the 1990s. This is a direct result of the glut of weapons, contained politically by the realities of the international context of the Cold War, that was freed from its constraints in the context of the changing international environment.

Thus, at the end of the Cold War, the world was faced with extensive stockpiles of unused weapons, and even greater stockpiles of weapons that were used and then circulated by secondary or tertiary actors to other conflict areas in ever-widening circles of distribution.[2] Furthermore, financially strapped countries in both the North and the South seemed reluctant to restrain an arms and ammunition industry that provides revenue and employment for many. The ready availability of small arms and the more competitive pricing of these weapons, coupled to an upsurge in illicit small arms-trafficking activities world-wide, have not only sparked an increase in criminal activities, but also the violent resolution of

The ready availability of light weapons has become a critical component of conflict in the 1990s

must be seen as part of a wider political process aimed at resolving underlying and structural sources of conflict. The truth is that, although no conflict can be resolved through the implementation of a disarmament process alone, no conflict resolution process can be completed without serious intent to manage and reduce weapons. And yet, this realisation still has to be fully appreciated by the international community.

THE UNITED NATIONS, PEACEKEEPING AND DISARMAMENT

From 1988, the international community, through the UN, became involved in 26 peace support operations world-wide. This constitutes an increase of almost 45 per cent in the past ten years, with only fifteen operations established in the previous forty years since 1948. International violence today occurs primarily at substate or intrastate level, as is illustrated by the fact that 22 of the peace operations after 1988 were mandated to support peace efforts in intrastate wars. Of all these peace support operations, only seventeen were the result of wars between states. Of these, five operations have continued from the Cold War era to the present day.[6]

The Cold War politics that for so long succeeded in crippling the Security Council have gradually shaped the response of the UN in conflict resolution. Mirroring international conflict resolution, the UN often applies the same principles to peacekeeping in intrastate and failed state situations. Thus, every belligerent party to a conflict is treated on equal footing and elevated to the same degree of status, irrespective of its representation or past.[7] The position of authority that the UN should build for it to be able to manage a peacekeeping operation is thus seriously undermined from the outset.

Authority is gained by a UN engagement in the field with clear guidelines for the role that peacekeepers will play *vis-à-vis* the population, and the authority they will command *vis-à-vis* the warring parties. These guidelines must be constructed, based on the peace agreements, particularly when the agreements are brokered by the UN and/or are then taken up in a Security Council resolution that mandates such an operation. In operations where there is clarity about UN authority, the possibility of sustaining adequate arms management controls (as seen in Cambodia) is greater than when either the mandate or the peacekeepers are unclear over the nature and power of their presence in the field (as in Somalia).[8]

When the UN fails to establish authority over and above that of the parties to a dispute, it reduces its chances at promoting peace; it makes any disarmament and demobilisation component of the mission hostage to the whims of the belligerents; and it seriously reduces the security of the population and the peacekeepers themselves, as happened in Somalia, the former Yugoslavia and Liberia.

8

internal conflict and the accompanying humanitarian crises. The latter makes it necessary for the international community to face decisions regarding the imposition of peace or the management of 'peace' processes that must seriously look at possible controls of small arms availability both as preventive measures to reduce the potential for escalation of violent conflict, and as part of conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction.[3] Thus, failure to consider all possible mechanisms available for reducing the numbers of small arms in circulation and in use, can, and does, have a negative impact on the success of ongoing multinational peace and humanitarian efforts, the consolidation of peace in post-conflict societies, and the prevention of future conflict.

Experience gleaned from United Nations peacekeeping operations since 1989 demonstrates that, if multinational efforts must be undertaken to support the resolution of internal conflict, these must be equally divided into three facets: peacebuilding negotiations between warring parties; humanitarian and infrastructure tasks to support local populations; and the disarming and demobilising of combatants. Although the success of peace operations since 1988, for the most part, has been patchy, it can be said that the first two facets are generally addressed in a multinational operation, whereas, at worst, the last is left out of the process, or at best, badly implemented.

The problem with a mission's failure to take disarmament and demobilisation seriously when it is engaged in a multinational operation, is that weapons not collected or destroyed in a *timely* manner, and combatants not *adequately* reintegrated into civilian society will threaten the emerging democracy in such a country and will destabilise regional security by providing easy access to the tools of violence, as well as to the people who can use them.[4]

For this reason, peace and stability are unquestionably linked to disarmament during and after conflict resolution processes.[5] In the same manner, disarmament and effective arms management during a peace process

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9

can sabotage a mission by withdrawing its consent, the frustration of complex United Nations peacekeeping operations, especially in regard to disarmament, is likely to continue."[9]

Yet, experience shows that there are ways in which 'hollow invocations' can be given content to support disarmament and demobilisation tasks more effectively. In some major peacekeeping operations undertaken under both Chapter VI and Chapter VII mandates, there have been instances of successful application of an enforcement capability to ensure compliance with agreed conditions (as seen in some cases of Sector West monitoring by the UNPROFOR[10] mission, and some of the tactical decisions taken by the UNTAC[11] commanders, among others). This might lead to the conclusion that the enforcement of weapons control at the tactical level, *when there is strategic and operational consent*, is possible. But for this to happen consistently in situations pertaining to the slippery rope between Chapter VI mandates and Chapter VII-type actions in the field, the element of establishing a UN authority over and above the parties, and the willingness of the mission to engage in permanent consent-promoting techniques between belligerent parties, becomes mandatory.

Since 1988, only four 'second generation' peacekeeping missions succeeded in establishing this type of authority: UNTAG (Namibia), UNTAC (Cambodia), ONUCA (Central America) and ONUSAL (El Salvador).[12] All of these were mandated and implemented between 1988 and 1992. From then onwards, very few peacekeeping operations have established the same norm. Thus, a lack of authority seems to have become a standard for UN operations since 1993. Not surprisingly, a lack of established authority early on in the process has also conditioned the approach of deployed personnel in the first crucial months of an operation, whether it was mandated under Chapter VI or VII of the UN Charter. This lack of authority[13] has led to the development of a timorous approach by peacekeepers in the field which has ultimately damaged the credibility, evolution and future of whole operations. This was clearly seen in UNOSOM I, UNPROFOR, UNAVEM II and III, ONUMOZ and UNOMIL.[14] All of the above contained some disarmament or demobilisation components that ultimately became the first casualty of their respective missions.

The lack of a clearly established authority has repeatedly undermined the power of the UN in engaging in consent-promoting techniques between the belligerent parties, a *sine qua non* of successful disarmament and demobilisation needs. To have both the authority and the ability to build consent as the mission progresses,[15] is the single most important factor in disarmament operations because *"... to implement their mandated tasks, peacekeeping and multi-function missions unlike peace enforcement operations rely on having the consent of the belligerent parties, at least at the strategic and operational levels."*[16]

It must be said that the establishment of UN authority, when undertaking a peacekeeping mission, should not be considered a bonus, but a necessity. This is particularly important in 'second generation' peacekeeping operations where the boundaries between peacekeeping and peace enforcement are blurred. By becoming involved in conflict prevention, and in early resolution of conflict, the UN has not always considered a formal cease-fire as a precondition for its intervention. Similarly, there have been numerous occasions where an agreed upon cease-fire has broken when peacekeepers were already deployed.

The establishment of UN authority is therefore essential, not only because it will allow for the necessary freedom of action, but because it can assist in resolving some of the operational nightmares that emerge while monitoring tenuous cease-fires, difficult disarmament chores and intense demobilisation needs. Conversely, if the UN does not have or does not manage to establish authority in the field, the situation does not only imply operational problems but, more often than not, produces a political impasse. Peacekeepers are left in the dangerous position of having to monitor a fictitious situation and being unable to do anything to revert to the *status quo ante*.

Nevertheless, although the UN Security Council continues to be quick in taking the opportunity to impact upon an ongoing crisis and to ensure that the peace agreement and the mandate contain the elements needed to deflate the situation, it still does not provide its peacekeepers with the necessary authority to ensure that the terms for peace are respected and implemented as originally agreed. As Cox indicates:

"[I]n [the] current peacekeeping environment the United Nations is all too often held to ransom by factions whose non-compliance with agreements which they have previously signed goes unpunished. Until the United Nations finds a way between the hollow invocations of Chapter VII to which the Security Council is now prone, and acceptance that any recalcitrant party

A lack of established authority early on in the process has conditioned the approach of deployed personnel in the first crucial months of an operation

11

are no longer the exception, but the rule. Among these tasks, the following stand out:[18]

- ensuring uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian aid and assistance to isolated populations;

- guaranteeing the safety and security of civilian and administrative personnel, national aid workers and personnel of non-governmental organisations (NGOs);
- protecting the local population;

- undertaking demining operations;

- monitoring human rights;

- disarming, cantoning and demobilising of armed factions;

- executing police functions;

- undertaking preventive deployment; and

- monitoring elections and providing security at election points and for election staff.

Each of these tasks includes a multitude of related chores and skills. Thus, under disarmament one could divide the chores needed as recognition of weapons and weapons systems, mine awareness, movement control (checkpoints, blockades), cordon and search operations (urban and rural), patrolling (standing, foot, vehicle and air), ordnance disposal, destruction and/or immobilisation of weapons and weapons systems, information-gathering and interpretation, search for caches, control of depots and storage points, marking and registration of collected weapons, and transportation of weapons, among others.[19]

Although much has been written about the conceptual and operational differences between 'first generation' peacekeeping missions (prior to 1989) and 'second generation' missions,[20] the role and tasks of peacekeepers are less of a novelty than are the mission sizes and their non-military mandates.

It could also be said that the evolution and changes in peacekeeping operations have not ceased with the division between pre and post-1989. In the analysis of operations from 1989 to 1997 for example, another difference is beginning to emerge aside from size, task and non-military mandate: that of a continued effort by the Security Council to gain greater specificity on disarmament issues in the mandates for each operation.

From the above, it can be gauged that disarmament and demobilisation components in a 'second generation' peacekeeping mission are difficult to implement, whereas, at worst, they are prone to fall by the wayside should the mission fail to command authority and build consent. Despite this, the Security Council repeatedly mandates operations that carry such disarmament and demobilisation tasks. This begs the question: Does this happen because the UN has understood the importance of disarmament and demobilisation in securing lasting peace, or because the UN sees disarmament more often as an unavoidable item in the peace agreement rather than a precondition for a lasting settlement?

Disarmament and demobilisation during UN peace support operations

From 1956 (the Suez crisis) to the watershed year of 1990 (UNTAG, ONUCA and ONUSAL), each individual peacekeeping mission has been different. The mandates of operations such as those of Suez, Congo, Cyprus, Southern Lebanon, Namibia and Central America have all varied in terms of needs, objectives and the interpretation of mandates. More than forty years of experience in undertaking these operations has also led to a *de facto* multitasking of military components, sometimes creating the impression that the UN, at times, was talking of new tasks for new forces.

As indicated by Sutterlin, the reality is that, since their inception, peacekeeping operations have always contained myriad possibilities restrained only by the political context of troop contributors and by regional imperatives.[17] Thus, until now, all of the missions that have passed as peacekeeping operations, in reality, have had a mix of peacekeeping, peacemaking, peacebuilding, and peace-enforcing tasks. The real challenge has always been to know when to apply each task in each operational and tactical level at the right moment.

'Second generation' peacekeeping operations have now recognised the multitude of tasks open to them. These

The evolution and changes in peacekeeping operations have not ceased with the division between pre and post-1989

13

UNAVEM II

The <u>Bicesse Accords</u> of 1991 provided the basis for the mandate of UNAVEM II which was passed under UN Security Council Resolution 696 of the same year. The <u>Bicesse Accords</u> provided an explicit disarmament component which included the following measures:

- a cease-fire between belligerent parties;

- the end of supplies of all lethal weapons by any government;

- the separation, demobilisation and disarmament of all forces;
- the disbanding of the MPLA and UNITA standing armies;

- the collection and disposal of weapons; and

- the formation of a new Angolan armed force of 50 000 troops before the elections.

The disarmament component demanded three crucial activities: the cantonment and demobilisation of forces; the disarming of the parties and storage of weapons; and the integration of the armed forces.[23] A joint verification military committee was set up between the parties to monitor the implementation of this component. Unlike ONUCA, the UNAVEM II observers were mandated only to monitor the Angolan monitors. The main weakness of this UN mandate was that it failed to indicate what UN observers could do to get the process back on track should they notice the Angolan monitors not fulfiling their obligations. In more ways than one, as one analyst has indicated, the UN observers were dealing with a 'do nothing' mandate. Problems soon made even this task difficult.

Of the 82 locations in which the joint Angolan verification observers were operational, UN observers could cover only 62. Aside from this manpower shortage (as happened in UNOSOM), it was clear that UNAVEM II was never totally sure of the situation in UNITA locations.[24] UNAVEM military observers monitored the cease-fire, made efforts to investigate reported cases of violation and also helped to resolve problems within the Angolan monitoring groups. Like ONUSAL, mediating between the parties was a discretionary role which was technically beyond the specifics of their mandate, but was to become the central calling of UNAVEM II when the cease-fire and the peace process collapsed.

While the cease-fire held – even though there was always sporadic fighting at one location or another – the UN monitors concentrated their efforts on observing the way in which forces were cantoned and disarmed. It was soon apparent that, because **14** of the uncertain situation, both sides attempted to delay demobilisation and

Here it is important to note that elements of a mandate can appear in three different documents: the peace agreements, the Secretary-General's reports (which recommend mandates for peacekeeping operations) and the Security Council's resolutions.[21] Thus, although some aspects of disarmament and/or demobilisation were present in most mandates (or in documents mentioned in the mandate) between 1989 and 1992 (i.e. UNTAG, ONUCA, ONUSAL, UNTAC, UNPROFOR[22]), it is only since 1993 that a more comprehensive and specific mention of disarmament and demobilisation components has become commonplace (i.e. UNOSOM II, UNOMIL, UNAMIR, UNMIH and UNAVEM III). It is therefore rather surprising that the far-from-perfect, but acceptable record of disarmament and demobilisation tasks attributed to most of the missions in the first category, can rarely apply to those in the second one, despite the fact that the latter had more specific mandates to impact on disarmament.

This seems to point to one of two explanations: either the UN embarked on too many large operations without the proper planning, resources, co-ordination and capacity to undertake disarmament and demobilisation tasks properly; or disarmament lessons from each operation – which should have informed and corrected other missions – have never been applied.

FROM MANDATE TO IMPLEMENTATION

Perhaps one of the best ways to look at the way in which disarmament components have been applied in several UN peacekeeping operations in the 1990s, is to take cases representing a successful UN operation (ONUMOZ), a failed one (UNAVEM II), and an ongoing operation (UNAVEM III) and trace the consistency with which disarmament and demobilisation have and are being applied from the peace agreement to its implementation.

In more ways than one, observers in UNAVEM were dealing with a 'do nothing' mandate

demobilisation chores (a mistake repeated later in ONUMOZ), made for the disaster that ensued.

With only 400 electoral observers, UNAVEM II could not physically secure the 6 000 election points. Nevertheless, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General declared the elections to have been free and fair. The weakness in UNAVEM monitoring left enough room for controversy, therefore assisting UNITA in disputing the eight per cent margin by which the MPLA claimed electoral victory. UNITA returned to war and the mandate of UNAVEM II become obsolete.

Instead of withdrawing, the UN commenced mediation efforts to restore peace but discovered that the gulf separating the parties was as wide as ever.[26] The good news, however, was that both sides wanted to secure greater – not lesser – UN involvement for the future. Even though this was the case, the situation on the ground and the concerns of troop-contributing countries led to a substantial reduction of the UN presence in Angola. By 1994, there were only fifty military observers left in Angola.

At this point, it is interesting to note that, even though the UN Security Council had in fact given a non-involvement mandate for UNAVEM II, instead of withdrawing its presence entirely after the breakdown of 1992, the Security Council consistently encouraged the peacemaking efforts of the UN team on the ground, even as it reduced the number of personnel involved. Thus, the mandate of UNAVEM II was extended ten times between October 1992 and June 1994. As one analyst puts it:

"This left no doubt about the importance attached by the Security Council to the restoration of the peace process. Unfortunately, the same level of concern was not evident in the original conception of UNAVEM II in terms of helping the Angolans find peace in 1991 and 1992."[27]

Within this frame of reference, it must be noted that the UN understood the importance of the disarmament issues in the Angolan case. On 25 November 1992, the Secretary-General reported to the Security Council that a root cause of the deterioration of the situation in Angola had been the incomplete fulfilment of key provisions of the peace accords. In particular, he pointed to the less than effective demobilisation and disarmament, the delay in forming the new defence force, the delay in establishing successful administration in large parts of the country and the failure to set up a neutral police force. Meanwhile, fighting in Angola continued and the Lusaka Protocol to obtain a peace agreement was not signed by both parties until October 1994.

UNAVEM III

disarmament as much as possible. Six days before the date for elections, only sixty per cent of government troops and 23 per cent of UNITA soldiers had been cantoned. UNAVEM was unable to rectify accusations and claims from both sides because of the manpower shortage of the mission.

A second role of the UNAVEM observers was that of monitoring the monitors on the collection and storage of weapons. Since UNAVEM was not present in all the collection and cantonment sites (unlike ONUCA), this was impossible to accomplish. The mission was jeopardised because it lacked a specific force structure tailored to support the disarmament process, which was a fundamental part of the peace agreement. Moreover, some of the UNAVEM contingents had not been exposed to any prior specialist training for the disarmament-related duties they were to perform. For example, both sides were allowed to keep minimum weapons for security, but each side arbitrarily defined its own minimum security needs without input from the UN mission. When most weapons collected at assembly points proved to be old or unserviceable, UNAVEM suspected that both sides were keeping extensive caches of useful weapons. But they could not prove this since, aside from being crippled by insufficient manpower, the mission never had the type of effective verification facilities and technology to find weapons caches.[25] Furthermore, the original agreement and the ensuing mandate had specified that collected weapons should not be stored close to the assembly areas. This was never done because of the lack of transportation facilities required to move the weapons away from the assembly areas and the lack of manpower and requisite logistical teams available to UNAVEM.

With no proper disarmament and only partial demobilisation, any possibility of creating a unified national army or of reaching elections under secure conditions was precluded. The enormity of the task and the international pressure to hold free and fair elections as soon as possible without first implementing prior obligations which related mostly to disarmament and

A root cause of the deterioration of the situation in Angola had been the incomplete fulfilment of key provisions of the peace accords

17

have been retrained and reintegrated to civil society (as happened in ONUMOZ), because most of the soldiers were illiterate, there were few employment opportunities, there was disparity in remuneration, and the whole demobilisation plan was dependent on foreign donors. Meanwhile UN humanitarian and development agencies (as happened in Liberia) continued to be unable to work in the provinces and rural areas due to the lack of a secure environment in the country.[29]

With no effective disarmament and demobilisation in Angola, the most obvious economic opportunities for former soldiers lie in crime and illicit activities – ivory, diamond and weapon-smuggling. Banditry, robbery, assault and other types of violent crime increased. In rural areas, this took the form of ambushes and armed gang operations. The Angolan police indicated that this was directly linked to the failure of the demobilisation process, as well as the inability of the armed forces to account for weapons issued to soldiers.[30] With regard to the collection of weapons issued to the civilian population, no progress was made; although the UN civilian police was responsible for overseeing this component, the actual task had to be executed by the Angolan National Police.

At the completion of this mission, it is now certain that some of the most important causes for the failure of UNAVEM II were repeated in UNAVEM III. The UN was not able to do much to force UNITA to comply with the Lusaka Protocol and was thus unsuccessful in removing the weapons of war from society. The hundreds of thousands of weapons in Angola continued to upset the peace process and led to renewed armed conflict (as in the former Yugoslavia, Somalia and Liberia). But, even if tenuous peace eventually succeeds in taking hold, these same weapons in the hands of impoverished, unskilled and unemployed people could become devastating to the prospects for development and stability of both the Angolan post-conflict reconstruction process, as well as the regional development of Central and Southern Africa where these weapons invariably end up if they are not used at home.

Repeated sanctions against UNITA for not complying with the Lusaka Protocol merely led to an increase in the barter of guns for goods. Weapons of Angolan sourcing are now fuelling the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo and finding their way to other destinations for criminal use, such as by the gangs in Cape Town.

The Angolan experience is a good example of how the maintenance of weapons, lack of disarmament and ineffective demobilisation during an international peace process can perpetuate internal conflict and even war. It was one of the principal reasons for the resumption of war in Angola in 1992, and it has led to a similar situation again.

From the outset, UNAVEM II was given a mandate to observe the cantonment of armies in certain areas and to verify the surrender of weapons by both armies. They
were not responsible for searching out hidden weapons caches or for penalising

With the Lusaka Protocol in hand, the UN Security Council authorised the establishment of UNAVEM III in February 1995. This mission again included demobilisation and disarmament components as follows:

- to supervise, control and monitor the cease-fire planning and organisation;

- to verify information received from both the government and UNITA regarding their forces, and monitor all troop movements;

- to help in establishing quartering areas and verify and monitor the withdrawal, quartering and demobilisation of UNITA forces;

- to supervise the collection and storage of UNITA armaments;

- to verify the movement of the government army to barracks;

- to verify the completion of the formation of the FAA;

- to verify the free movement of people and goods; and

- to verify the disarming of civilians – a task allotted to the civilian police component.

Up to 7 800 military and police personnel were deployed by the UN and the mission was to last for one year.[28] From July 1995 to the end of 1998, the mandate of UNAVEM III has been extended many times. Of the 70 000 people quartered since 1995 in the cantonment areas, forty per cent had deserted or been reported absent without leave by early 1997, and only fifty per cent of those in quartering areas arrived with their weapons. Of the nearly half a million firearms that the Angolan government distributed to the population of Luanda at the start of the 1992 war, less than 5 000 have been recovered to date. Of those demobilised, very few

At the completion of this mission, it is now certain that some of the most important causes for the failure of UNAVEM II were repeated in UNAVEM III

fighting, disease or hunger.[31] The GPA provided the basis for ONUMOZ's mandate, as contained in UN Security Council Resolution 797 of 1992. Unlike UNAVEM II, ONUMOZ's mandate had a comprehensive disarmament component derived from the provisions of the GPA. The disarmament component made provision for ONUMOZ to supervise, monitor and verify the following measures:

- the cease-fire which came into effect on 15 October 1992;

- the complete withdrawal of foreign forces;

- the separation and containment of forces to bases;
- the demobilisation and disarmament of combatants;

- the collection, storage and destruction of weapons; and

- the disbanding of private and irregular armed forces.

In terms of UN Security Council Resolution 850 of July 1993, ONUMOZ's mandate was enlarged, and ONUMOZ was appointed to chair the Joint Commission for the Formation of the Mozambican Defence Force (CCFADM), which was charged with supervising the formation of the new Mozambican Defence Force (*Forças Armadas de Defensa de Moçambique* – FADM).

The respective armed forces of the two parties would separate in an effort to reduce potential conflict and report to locations to be agreed upon between themselves and with the concurrence of the UN. Those not joining the new integrated national army of Mozambique, the FADM, were to be demobilised and re-enter civilian life.

The UN was responsible for establishing guidelines to select and construct assembly areas (AAs) and for ensuring that these requirements were satisfied. However, whereas health, safety, and logistical considerations influenced the UN in establishing its criteria, military considerations were the overriding factor in guiding the parties in their selections.[32]

The first reconnaissance of an AA occurred in January 1993, with the last being approved in February 1994.[33] In June 1993, ONUMOZ had approved six AAs (representing one RENAMO and one government AA in each of the three 'regions') and declared them open.[34] However, no one came to these assembly areas. Unlike some other peacekeeping operations, such as the one in Cambodia in which UN blue helmets escorted combatants to the cantonment sites, the parties were responsible for reporting to the AAs on their own in ONUMOZ. It was obvious that the delays were being caused by the fact that neither RENAMO, nor the FAM, were prepared to forego the military option.

parties for non-compliance. The same constraints fettered the UNAVEM III mission.

The importance of disarmament to the overall success of UNAVEM II was unequivocal. In Angola, the level of mutual distrust was such that a successful election could not have been possible while both sides remained in control of their weapons. The same considerations can be applied to UNAVEM III operations. It seems almost incredible that the Security Council again mandated a mission that replicated the recipe for failure of the previous one.

ONUMOZ and the consequences of imperfect disarmament and demobilisation

If the illegal flow and use of small arms have the capacity to destabilise national governance processes, they also influence multinational and global governance initiatives. The case of the UN peace mission in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) is one such an example. The lack of an effective disarmament and demobilisation component in the ONUMOZ peacekeeping operation, and the fact that collection did not necessarily lead to destruction of existing weapons stocks, have put national stability and regional peace in peril. Similar circumstances have jeopardised peace processes themselves in a number of cases, including Somalia, Liberia, Angola and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Although the peace process in the case of Mozambique was successful, weapons collected and not destroyed have spawned a number of illicit operations regionally, which have ultimately increased levels of internal violence and criminal activity in Swaziland, Zambia, the Great Lakes region of Central Africa, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

On 4 October 1992, RENAMO and FRELIMO signed a General Peace Agreement (GPA) establishing the modalities for the achievement of peace in Mozambique after a protracted war which had started in 1977, internally displacing 3,2 million people, exiling a further 1,5 million and killing one million people due to

Whereas health, safety, and logistical considerations influenced the UN in establishing its criteria, military considerations were the overriding factor for the parties in their selection of soldiers to be demobilised

AAs, the parties eventually allowed ONUMOZ to transport all military equipment in excess of 200 arms from each AA for safekeeping. For this purpose, the UN established three regional arms depots (RADs) at Nampula, Chimoio and Matola. Responsibility for guarding the RADs rested with ONUMOZ armed infantry battalions, which would oversee the transfer as well.[38]

ONUMOZ knew that the registered weapons represented only a small percentage of those in the parties' possession.[39] And, of that amount, very few of the arms and ammunition recovered and registered were destroyed. Weapons and equipment stored at the RADs were classified into three major categories: operational, reparable and beyond repair. Working through the CCFADM, the Cease-Fire Commission (CCF), responsible for overseeing this process, channelled equipment deemed to be essential to the training of the new army to the FADM. Material deemed to be 'beyond repair' was to be destroyed. In the end, all equipment at the RADs was not destroyed, but transferred to the FADM.[40]

It was thus that disarmament during the ONUMOZ operation, which at first had been the prerequisite to the holding of the elections, eventually became little more than an afterthought. As Potgieter indicates:

"The operation's great failing lies with the fact that it did not also make disarmament a priority. Granted, it was a Chapter VI operation. Granted, the Government was a Member State of the United Nations in good standing and possessed a sovereign right to possess weapons. Granted, there may have been more pressing issues. However, whereas creative responses were developed – and the money found – to support supplemental reintegration programs, additional food for the assembly areas, and a separate trust fund for RENAMO, to keep the process on track the disarmament train was allowed to derail."[41]

By 1997, the FADM stood at only a shadow of its former separate entities and not even half of its authorised strength. The weapons and ammunition that ONUMOZ recorded and returned, were enough to arm the FADM many times over. Moreover, what ONUMOZ recorded, is known to represent only a small portion of what the UN and the average Mozambican know is in existence in barracks and warehouses and in caches hidden under the ground. Since the extent of the ONUMOZ success, or failure, depends to a large degree on the proportion of weapons that the mission managed to secure on a permanent basis, ONUMOZ's explicit disarmament components must be seen as a failure.[42]

The proliferation of weapons, particularly small arms, has become a significant problem in post-settlement Mozambique. Many members of the new armed forces have deserted the FADM since December 1994, taking their weapons with them. Some senior members of the armed forces have also been implicated in illegal arms

Initially, there were discrepancies between the number of soldiers reporting to the camps and the number being officially declared as having registered. This created some tension between the parties and the UN. The parties' overwhelming preoccupation with simultaneous proportionality concerning demobilisation made them extremely hesitant to adhere to their commitments without being assured that the other side was doing the same. Fearful of being unable to supply the permitted number of troops – and thus that their side would appear weaker or less committed than the other – each party withheld its lists with details of soldiers registered at the AAs who would demobilise and who would join the FADM. Without these lists, the UN could not issue the demobilisation certificates and begin transporting former combatants to the destinations where they would establish their new lives as civilians.[35]

Although it was not the intention of the drafters to do so, they created, in effect, a situation whereby the parties could hold the UN hostage, in a manner of speaking. The 'simultaneous' process was contingent upon the receipt of lists detailing which units would report to the FADM and which would not. Without these lists, the process could not proceed.[36]

As had been the case in UNAVEM II, ONUMOZ fully understood that the parties were even less enthusiastic to disarm than they were to demobilise.[37] Not every registered soldier arrived with a weapon, as was envisioned. Similarly, the numbers of arms collected from paramilitary troops were also below expectations. Furthermore, the munitions that were submitted, were deemed to be generally of poor quality. It was felt that those of better quality were being held in reserve. There were also several instances when the parties denied ONUMOZ permission to collect and disable weapons at non-assembly areas. Even though the GPA stipulated that all collective and individual weapons should be stored in warehouses under UN control, both parties at first objected to any such arrangement. However, in light of the deteriorating security environment at many

Disarmament during the ONUMOZ operation, which at first had been the prerequisite to the holding of the elections, eventually became little more than an afterthought

23

multinational peace operations in order to identify the causes of the more severe problems that had compromised the disarmament missions in the field. Three principal categories of problems with disarmament emerged:

"The first category focussed on those problems common to all cases irrespective of the organisation or group of nations that ran the peace mission. The second category, largely related to the first one, concerns the problems common to UN operations only. The third category delves into more detailed issues emerging from the two previous ones."[46]

The study showed that the problems in tackling disarmament and demobilisation tasks during UN peacekeeping operations spanned successive layers of decisions and levels within the operation. Peace agreements often mentioned disarmament needs, but when these same agreements were cited as part of UN mandates establishing an operation, they were perceived as diluted for operational purposes (as in UNAVEM II). By the same token, even if mandates specified the disarmament needs of an operation, problems in the interpretation of these needs emerged in successive levels of command (from the strategic to the operational and, finally, tactical levels, the rules of engagement had a propensity for change (as in UNPROFOR).

One of the principal problems that was detected, had to do with personalities, lack of continuity and the composition of different contingents. Where these issues became critical were in moments when peacekeepers – rotating every six months – were tested by warring parties and the local population on their determination and intent (as in UNOSOM and UNPROFOR). A mandate, correctly interpreted and implemented by one contingent during its stint, would at times become perverted by incoming forces that had no memory of what had been negotiated and applied in the field before their arrival (as in UNPROFOR and UNOSOM). Here, a significant drawback was the psychological weight of the mission on peacekeepers themselves. More often than not, as mandates diluted disarmament and demobilisation tasks, or as rules of engagement suffered changes down the line of command, a peacekeeper on the ground had an awareness of *what he was not supposed to do* rather than *what he had to do* to ensure the success of the mission. This alone can explain why some UN missions mandated under Chapter VII operations of the UN Charter were dealt with as if they had been normal Chapter VI operations (as in UNOSOM). Conversely, the lack of clarity in the peacekeepers' mandates and rules of engagement, and the lack of co-ordination between military and civilian components and between different contingents sometimes led to Chapter VII activities during Chapter VI operations (as in UNTAC and UNPROFOR).

With these issues in mind, the UN studies on disarmament during peacekeeping operations concluded that the focal problem areas in need of correction to ensure adequate implementation of disarmament and demobilisation needs were those that

deals involving weapons from state armouries, because of low salaries in the new armed forces, inadequate discipline, low levels of morale and a ready market for weapons in South Africa and other Central and Southern African countries.

Erstwhile collection points of weapons under ONUMOZ coincide with place names now known as illicit small arms-trafficking source points (i.e. Matola and Nampula). These developments have certainly contributed to the proliferation of weapons in Mozambique, and in neighbouring countries like South Africa, Zambia, and Malawi. By 1998, Mozambique constituted the largest single source of supply of small arms for the South African domestic market.[43]

GIVING PRIORITY TO DISARMAMENT AND DEMOBILISATION PROCESSES DURING CONFLICT RESOLUTION

In a series of studies conducted by the UN between 1994 and 1996,[44] a number of UN (and non-UN) peacekeeping operations since 1989 were analysed to determine the way in which these missions had undertaken disarmament and demobilisation activities. The results of this study shed light on one main dilemma in the management of arms during peace processes:

"[I]n contemporary intra-state peace missions, warring parties and paramilitary forces refuse to be disarmed, cantoned and controlled by peace forces even if consensus for doing so has been agreed to by the belligerent factions at the strategic level ... although most peace operations studied had strategic consent and had mandates to undertake disarmament and demobilisation missions, [this dilemma partially explains why] they normally failed to implement them as originally envisioned."[45]

The UN study then undertook an exploration of the various decision-making levels associated with the creation, implementation and termination of

Even if mandates specified the disarmament needs of an operation, problems in the interpretation of these needs emerged in successive levels of command

25

focused on operational and civil-military co-ordination, training, and information-gathering, all of which were key areas that could be improved in the struggle to avoid corruption of a mandate with negative impacts on disarmament and demobilisation tasks.

The studies also showed that disarmament and demobilisation efforts during a peacekeeping operation had a greater or lesser chance of successfully taking root in direct relation to the way in which neighbouring countries shared and supported the peace process that was under way (as in ONUCA, ONUSAL and UNTAG). All successful UN operations during the 1990s have shared one common feature: they had the support of the region. In terms of disarmament and demobilisation, this support is crucial.

Authority and the provision of a secure environment for the people and for the peacekeepers; the use of consent-promoting techniques; obtaining effective regional support; and ensuring the willingness of the peacekeepers to do their job as mandated all the way down to the tactical level, seem to create the right environment for disarmament tasks to flourish during peace processes.

Preparing the ground for post-conflict resolution processes

The improvement of disarmament components during peacekeeping operations conducted by the UN will assist in one type of control of small arms and will diminish the magnitude of the problem of illegal weapons flows considerably; but this is not enough. Neither is it the only mechanism for effective action, because inadequate disarmament as part of such operations is not the sole source of the secondary and tertiary redistribution of existing stocks.

It is at regional levels – levels that the UN is increasingly more interested in working with – that the greatest number of control mechanisms may be applied, particularly during post-conflict reconstruction processes, to begin to put an end to the problem of the proliferation of existing stocks; in other words, it is a question of *"... what existing regional mechanisms and structures might do to control and reduce the damage already set in motion by the increased availability of light weapons across borders."*[47]

Increasingly, regional organisations are taking decisions to address the short and long-term problems associated with small arms proliferation.[48] In 1997, the Organisation of American States (OAS) approved the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacture, Traffic, Sale and Transfer of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials. Also during 1997, the European Union approved its EU Programme for Preventing and Combating Illicit Trafficking in Conventional Arms and established a Joint Action Plan in 1998 to deal with this

situation, whereas the Southern African region started to consider since 1998 an

Action Plan for Developing Controls on Arms and Illicit Trafficking in Southern Africa that has led to the establishment of a SADC working group on small arms control during 1999, as well as increased attention to this issue by the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Co-ordinating Organisation (SARPCCO). The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) have both expressed their concern at the extent of the proliferation of small arms and their effect on the populations in different regions of the world. The OAU has further announced in 1999 that it would hold a continental conference on this issue by the end of 2000. Finally, the UN established a UN Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms which issued its recommendations during 1997 and again in 1998. The Panel has called for an international United Nations conference on the issue of illicit small arms-trafficking and associated problems in 2001.

At subregional levels, there has also been much movement among affected countries. Thus, for example, South Africa has established bilateral agreements with Swaziland, Namibia and Mozambique to engage in information-sharing and co-operative efforts to reduce crossborder smuggling of goods, including firearms. South Africa and Mozambique have co-operated in a series of operations in Mozambique to identify and destroy arms and ammunition caches left over from the war.[49] The most recent of these operations took place in early 1999. Small arms recovered and destroyed so far number in the thousands. The South African Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1994 and 1999, Alfred Nzo, called for an international conference to formulate an action plan to combat the proliferation of these weapons, based on the experiences of indigenous regional approaches. This call was taken up by various countries and culminated in the OAU decision mentioned above. The focus of such an international action on small arms and light weapons should be on the curtailment of illicit transfers and the control of legal transfers.[50]

Such a regional action plan has been informally workshopped during 1998 by government representatives

South Africa has established bilateral agreements with Swaziland, Namibia and Mozambique to engage in information-sharing and co-operative efforts to reduce crossborder

27

- voluntary weapons collections and exchange programmes; and

- reversing cultures of violence.

Enhancing transparency, information exchange and consultation on arms in Southern Africa

- enhancing public transparency; and

- information exchange and consultation.

As countries in post-conflict regions struggle to develop in harmony with one another, there is a growing realisation that the negative impact of multinational peace support efforts, which had inadequate disarmament components and ineffectual demobilisation programmes, are taking a toll on human and financial resources needed for post-conflict reconstruction. The increase in armed banditry and organised crime, on the one hand, and the continued political violence in some sectors of society, on the other, as well as an increase in corruption patterns, are undermining safety, security, governance and democracy at large.

In relatively calm regions such as Southern Africa, governments acting alone and in conjunction with others are now addressing these new threats to security. A principal pivot of regional and governmental strategies has to do with the management, control and reduction of illicit weapons flows. Five major areas to enhance and improve regional action have been identified in the case of Southern Africa; four relate to the need to enhance capacity and resources to combat illicit arms, and one to rethink demobilisation issues. On the need to combat illicit arms, the following areas have been identified:

- the need to train police and defence forces in disarmament and collection techniques, as well as to improve co-operation between themselves on these tasks;

- the need to look at national arms holdings with a view to destroy surplus stocks (South Africa, in particular, has already commenced such destruction efforts);
- the need to consider ways of improving accountability and the security of army and police weapons depots (due to the loss and theft of arms); and

- the need to improve co-operation and action measures for the control of mutual borders with regard to illicit transborder operations.

The one area of demobilisation that is currently being discussed in Southern Africa is that of rethinking the training and integration of demobilised soldiers. The examples of past demobilisation retraining and reintegration efforts in Southern

of member countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the EU. Based on the recommendations of the abovementioned conference, elements of a <u>Southern African Regional Action Programme on Light Arms and Illicit Arms Trafficking</u> would comprise the following action areas:[51]

Combating illicit trafficking

- strengthening laws and regulations to combat illicit trafficking;

- strengthening operational capacity to do so;

- improving systems to trace illicit arms flows; and

- improving information exchange.

Strengthening regulation and controls on the accumulation and transfer of arms

- strengthening controls over civilian possession of firearms;

- enhancing restraint and controls over the accumulation and transfer of light arms and associated military equipment; and

- improving capacity to monitor and trace light arms possession and transfers.

Promoting the removal of arms from society and the destruction of surplus arms

- collection, removal from circulation, and destruction of surplus military arms;

- removing confiscated and unlicenced weapons from circulation;

In relatively calm regions such as Southern Africa, governments acting alone and in conjunction with others are now addressing new threats to security

29

the government of South Africa, with no international or national finance available for these tasks. Many other crossborder operations to stop illicit trafficking in Southern Africa are planned but never implemented, because of financial constraints in the countries involved in such planning. It is important to remember that the resources used by countries to undertake these recovery and destroy missions would have been much more efficiently used in other sensitive areas of society, such as education, health and development.

For all of these reasons, the international community should review its assistance to post-conflict development in more ways than one: by ensuring that disarmament and demobilisation is not just a cosmetic issue in conflict-resolution processes and by assisting emerging societies with continued disarmament, the integration of former combatants, and the provision of safety and security (i.e. assistance in training and providing support for the creation of an effective and democratic police service and by assisting in the creation or reform of the criminal justice system).

The burden of arms in post-conflict societies has become a major component of regional action on many continents. The nature of illicit arms flows and patterns means that the control and reduction of these flows can only be partially undertaken as a national initiative; the brunt of the effort must be borne by regional mechanisms for co-operation, and the lead agency for such co-operation should be the police supported by defence forces.

In summary, disarmament processes during peace support operations are best served by co-ordination between the international mission and the region immediately bordering the stricken state. Regional powers and immediate neighbours should be aware of what is happening in their vicinity and deny the use of their territory, resources or facilities by any of the warring parties which have agreed to enter a peace process. If the multilateral peace mission is under the auspices of the UN, the region where the UN is operative should support this endeavour in order to close loopholes that will lengthen the resolution process and endanger disarmament and demobilisation components. If the region becomes part of the problem and not part of the solution in conflict resolution, the chances that the conflict will eventually spill over to the rest of the territories in the region are very great. Thus, it is in the interest of regions to control situations when they are in a position to do so.

By the same token, in post-conflict reconstruction processes such as that of Mozambique, it is in the interest of neighbouring states to provide every assistance for continued disarmament and arms control operations, as well as to ensure efficient demobilisation and integration of former combatants. If this is not undertaken, those weapons and the men who use them become a crossborder threat to the peace and stability of the region.

30   Although the operational brunt of these actions rests with regions, the international

Africa have by and large been negative. It has been customary for international and government agencies assisting in the process of demobilisation and reintegration to look at this issue as if it were a minor correction rather than a major overhaul of society. More often than not, soldiers and paramilitary forces have been battling each other for decades: many men-at-arms who need to be demobilised, have been soldiers since they were eight or nine years old, they know nothing else but combat and the only skill they have is the use of arms. For this reason, it is misleading to talk of demobilisation and reintegration: there was no prior mobilisation, nor a prior role in society for these military men and women. The training of demobilised soldiers must therefore be much more comprehensive than what has occurred so far to cover for the total lack of schooling, general education or skills that often characterise these people. By the same token, their integration into society must be very well structured: conventional wisdom simplifies the issue of reintegration as one where healing and reconciliation are prioritised as if the demobilised soldier had been removed from a viable society, thus creating a vacuum that can be filled with his/her return. More often than not, there is no place in society for these people except as bandits or criminals, because they do not come back to a niche left open when they took up arms. Issues of education, long-term skills training, and programmes for the improvement of entire communities, so that there are places open to demobilised soldiers in this new community pattern, must become part of the new thinking on demobilisation and reintegration.

The needs for disarmament and demobilisation correction are so great in post-conflict reconstruction that precious resources are often taken away from the development and socio-economic needs of emerging societies. To provide but one example: South Africa and Mozambique have had to undertake four major transborder operations to search for, locate and destroy weapons and ammunition caches left over by the war in Mozambique. Each one of these operations yielded substantial results and yet they were paid for entirely by

The burden of arms in post-conflict societies has become a major component of regional action on many continents

to the problem of arms proliferation at regional level.

The problem has acquired such proportions in the post-Cold War era that the UN would do well to review the way in which it manages disarmament and demobilisation components during multinational peacekeeping and peace support operations world-wide. Among the issues that could make a difference in both the approach and implementation of disarmament components, the following stand out:

- When embarking on a large peacekeeping or peace support operation, the UN must not only create a special disarmament component for such an operation, but should provide the resources needed to carry out this component to its final conclusion. By the same token, a disarmament component should not be allowed to become a victim of the peace negotiations or the political situation: it must become a central part of the mandate and its implementation must be pursued at all costs. If the disarmament component becomes a victim to realities on the ground, the UN must be willing to withdraw itself from the field rather than sacrifice the disarmament component.

- When an operation is being planned, and it carries a disarmament component, contributing countries must provide the necessary manpower and financial resources to ensure the adequate implementation of this component. But there must also be a specific effort to analyse the new mission, taking into account **all** the lessons learned on disarmament and demobilisation processes from past missions, in order to avoid the repetition of mistakes.

- The Security Council must not view disarmament as an optional item in a peace agreement, but as a serious and central component of any peacekeeping operation.

- If the Security Council views disarmament and demobilisation seriously; if the resulting mandates confirm this appreciation by prioritising these tasks and providing them with the necessary resources to ensure correct implementation; and if lessons of past disarmament experiences are taken into account in the planning; then the UN must also ensure that it gains authority for itself from the very first deployment in the field. Authority and the provision of a secure environment for the people and for the peacekeepers, the use of consent-promoting techniques, and ensuring the willingness of troop-contributing countries to mandate their peacekeepers to do their job as mandated all the way down to the tactical level, are key recipes in a successful disarmament and demobilisation component.

- Lastly, the region where such a mission is taking place must do all in its power to support the peacekeeping and peace support operations under way, even if this is achieved by denying the use of territory in the region by belligerent forces to

community can assist by ensuring that its part of the responsibility for disarmament and demobilisation is better implemented during a multinational peace process and that arms and former combatants become key focus points for post-conflict reconstruction assistance agendas. The key here is to remember that the greater the number of weapons actually collected and destroyed, the lesser the need for massive operations aimed at recovering and destroying weapons in future.

CONCLUSION

Multinational peace processes have not often been accompanied by either comprehensive disarmament or the adequate control of weapons by the appropriate authorities; nor have they benefited from comprehensive and far-reaching demobilisation and integration programmes for former combatants.

The absence of a well-planned and well-funded demobilisation and reintegration programme for former combatants may result in renewed conflict or lead to increased banditry[52] among unemployed and dissatisfied former combatants (as in the case of ONUCA and ONUMOZ).

The increase in armed banditry is inextricably linked to alternative employment opportunities (or the lack of these) for former combatants, and to the availability of weapons, which is, in turn, a consequence of ineffective arms control and disarmament at a time when these were both possible and crucial to the well-being of an entire region. As a result, literally millions of weapons are now relatively free to change hands because they are no longer required or controlled by parties to the civil wars. More often than not, inadequate demobilisation provides both the user of and trafficker in these weapons. In most cases, these arms have either been used to restart intrastate conflicts (as in the case of Angola and Liberia), or have found their way into the illegal arms market in neighbouring countries (like in the case of Mozambique, Angola and Liberia), thereby contributing

When embarking on a large peacekeeping operation, the UN must not only create a special disarmament component, but should provide the resources to carry out this component to its final conclusion

33

Finally, UN peacekeeping operations seldom occur in states that are islands. For this reason, a special effort must be undertaken by the countries neighbouring the area where the peacekeeping operation is taking place. Without regional support to UN missions, the latter will find its operations all the more difficult to sustain and implement. By the same token, regional co-ordination and assistance must accompany post-conflict reconstruction processes. Nevertheless, the international community also has a major role to play in assisting countries to sustain disarmament, arms control and demobilisation efforts well beyond the end of a UN peace operation.

It is in burden-sharing and sustaining the long-term objectives of disarmament and demobilisation during conflict resolution **and** post-conflict reconstruction that both regional and international goals can meet to produce lasting peace.

Endnotes

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2   Ibid.

3   Ibid.

4   Ibid, pp 175-176.

5   J Potgieter, *The price of war and peace: A critical assessment of the disarmament component of United Nations operations in Southern Africa,* in Gamba, 1997, ibid, p 161.

6   See UN, <u>The Blue Helmets: A review of United Nations peacekeeping</u>, United Nations, New York, 1996.

7   Potgieter, 1997, op cit, p 132.

8   See C Adibe, <u>Managing arms in peace processes: Somalia</u>, UNIDIR Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project Series, United Nations, Geneva, 1995; and A Age et al, <u>Fighting for hope in Somalia</u>, NUPI, Oslo, 1995.

9   D Cox, *Peacekeeping and disarmament: Peace agreements, Security Council mandates, and the disarmament experience,* in UNIDIR, <u>Managing arms in peace processes: The issues</u>, UNIDIR Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project Series, United Nations, Geneva, 1996, p 133.

10 See A Raevsky & B Ekwall-Uebelhardt, <u>Managing arms in peace processes: Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina</u>, UNIDIR Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project Series, United Nations,

continue on the path of violent conflict. It is repeatedly seen that the success of a UN mission is largely dependent upon the effort and support of the regional actors who are the only ones who can ensure that preventive measures are taken, such as denying military support or haven to warring parties; denying the use of their territory for re-equipment of the war effort; and making sanctions enforceable (situations where this was the case were ONUCA, ONUSAL and UNTAG – all relatively successful operations). But, the region must also sustain its responsibility in prioritising the disarmament and demobilisation components not only of conflict resolution processes, but in post-conflict reconstruction. In the end, it is the region itself that will benefit from these actions.

By judging the impact of imperfect disarmament and demobilisation on the evolution of peace processes and their aftermath, it seems logical to suggest that there is an urgent need to improve the mechanisms within existing UN operations so that every mission can start with

"a clear understanding of what disarmament means for a particular operation, as distinct from demobilisation ... to have a clear ... position on the destruction of weapons; to [have] received the financial resources to cover the costs of effective disarmament; and to ... address the existence of weapons caches."[53]

What is needed, is to prioritise arms management processes during conflict prevention and resolution missions so that disarmament and demobilisation become vital and comprehensive components of a mission from the outset, and are not kept hostage by the timings and political manoeuvres of warring parties which are less than serious in their bid for lasting peace. Although the principal responsibility to achieve these objectives clearly lies with the Security Council when mandating peacekeeping operations, it also lies with troop-contributing countries in the way they implement the mandates which they receive.

It is in burden-sharing and sustaining the long-term objectives of disarmament and demobilisation that both regional and international goals can meet to produce lasting peace

35

19 J Potgieter, *Training to manage arms during peace processes: New needs, new technologies,* in UNIDIR, <u>Managing arms in peace processes: Training</u>, UNIDIR Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project Series, United Nations, Geneva, 1998, p 24.

20 See S Ratner, <u>The new UN peacekeeping</u>, Saint Martin's Press, New York, 1995.

21 E Z Zawels, *Specificity in peacekeeping operation mandates: The evolution of Security Council methods of work,* in UNIDIR, <u>Managing arms in peace processes: The issues</u>, UNIDIR Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project Series, United Nations, Geneva, 1996, p 31.

22 See Wang, op cit; Raevsky & Ekwall-Uebelhardt, op cit; P Wrobel, <u>Managing arms in peace processes: Nicaragua and El Salvador</u>, UNIDIR Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project Series, United Nations, Geneva, 1997.

23 Potgieter, 1997, op cit, pp 134-142.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid, pp 149-155.

27 Ibid, p 141.

28 This section is a summary of the findings by Jakkie Potgieter in his extensive case study on Angola and Mozambique quoted above. This work represents joint research between the author and Potgieter over a number of years based on the manuscript of a monograph that is currently in process. Part of this research has been published in a series of books entitled <u>Society under siege</u>, quoted above.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.

31 For a full appreciation of conflict, peace and disarmament efforts in Mozambique see Berman, op cit; Potgieter, 1997, op cit.

32 Potgieter, 1997, op cit, p 144.

33 Ibid, p 145.

34 UN, <u>Report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the United Nations Operation in Mozambique</u>, S/1994/511, 28 April 1994, paragraph 5.

35 Potgieter, 1997, op cit, pp 146-149.

36 Ibid.

Geneva, 1996.

11 See J Wang, <u>Managing arms in peace processes: Cambodia</u>, UNIDIR Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project Series, United Nations, Geneva, 1996.

12 V Gamba & J Potgieter, <u>Multi-functional peace support operations: Evolution and operations</u>, ISS Monograph Series, 8, Institute for Security Studies, Halfway House, January 1997, p 22.

13 See Cox, op cit.

14 See Adibe, op cit; Raevsky & Ekwall-Uebelhardt, op cit; E Berman, <u>Managing arms in peace processes: Mozambique</u>, UNIDIR Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project Series, United Nations, Geneva, 1996; C Adibe, <u>Managing arms in peace processes: Liberia</u>, UNIDIR Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project Series, United Nations, Geneva, 1996.

15 It is important to note that the failure to establish authority and to provide a secure environment for both the peacekeepers and the population not only compromises the success of the mission itself, but at times, has also led to the institution of parallel enforcement missions in the middle of the process, such as that of UNITAF. In contrast, non-UN operations such as those of the Commonwealth Monitoring Force in Rhodesia and Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti, were successful, in that they did manage to establish both authority and a secure environment before handing the effort to multinational forces and the UN itself to consolidate the peace that had been gained.

16 V Gamba & J Potgieter, *Concluding summary: Multinational peace operations and the enforcement of consensual disarmament*, in UNIDIR, op cit, p 213.

17 For a good discussion on this issue, see J S Sutterlin, *Military force in the service of peace*, <u>Aurora Papers</u>, 18, 1993; A Kane, *The United Nations and the maintenance of peace and security: Challenges and choices*, in <u>A world at the crossroads: New conflicts, new solutions</u> (Proceedings of the Forty-Third Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs, Hasseludden, Sweden, 9-15 June 1993), World Scientific, London, 1994, pp 375-184.

18 Potgieter, 1997, op cit, p 133.

It is necessary to prioritise arms management processes during conflict prevention and resolution missions

Nations, Geneva, 1996.

Managing arms in peace processes: Somalia, UNIDIR Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project Series, United Nations, Geneva, 1995.

Managing arms in peace processes: Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, UNIDIR Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project Series, United Nations, Geneva, 1995.

Managing arms in peace processes: Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, UNIDIR Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project Series, United Nations, Geneva, 1996.

Managing arms in peace processes: Cambodia, UNIDIR Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project Series, United Nations, Geneva, 1996.

Managing arms in peace processes: Mozambique, UNIDIR Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project Series, United Nations, Geneva, 1996.
Managing arms in peace processes: Liberia, UNIDIR Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project Series, United Nations, Geneva, 1996.

Managing arms in peace processes: Psychological issues and intelligence, UNIDIR Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project Series, United Nations, Geneva, 1996.

Managing arms in peace processes: Haiti, UNIDIR Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project Series, United Nations, Geneva, 1997.

Managing arms in peace processes: Nicaragua and El Salvador, UNIDIR Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project Series, United Nations, Geneva, 1997.

Managing arms in peace processes: Training, UNIDIR Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project Series, United Nations, Geneva, 1997.

Small arms management and peacekeeping in Southern Africa, UNIDIR Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project Series, United Nations, Geneva, 1997.

45 Gamba & Potgieter, *Concluding summary,* 1996, op cit, p 209.

46 Ibid, p 210.

47 Potgieter, 1997, op cit, p 162.

48 See V Gamba (ed), Society under siege: Licit responses to illicit arms, Towards Collaborative Peace series, II, Institute for Security Studies, Halfway House, 1998.

49 S Meek, *Light weapons and early warning: Initial steps,* in Gamba, 1998, ibid, p 100.

50 *Nzo calls for arms conference,* Panafrican News Agency, 28 September 1998.

51 Conclusions from the ISS/Saferworld Conference on Developing Controls on Arms and Illicit

37 As in Berman, op cit.

38 Potgieter, 1997, op cit, pp 146-148.

39 Ibid.

40 <u>Final report of the chairman of the Cease-Fire Commission</u>, 5 December 1994, Maputo, Mozambique, as cited by Potgieter, 1997, op cit, p 147.

41 Potgieter, ibid, p 148.

42 Temporary collection and storage at assembly areas could only be a part of the process, given the UN's agreed-upon departure date soon after the election. But the proportion of weapons which were permanently secured is difficult to determine, since the total number of weapons in the country at the time remain in question. The Secretary-General's report claims that marginally less than 190 000 weapons were collected and that the majority were of Soviet origin. By contrast, Interpol reports that some 1,5 million AK47s were distributed to the civilian population during the course of the civil war. Current estimates suggest that the Soviet Union shipped between 0,5 and one million AK47s. There is no documentation available, however, to confirm or deny either of these figures. These figures, however, when juxtaposed to those cited by the Secretary-General, demonstrate the burden that sub-Saharan Africa must now carry. They also serve to put the proliferation of small arms in Southern Africa into better focus.

43 For a comprehensive analysis of the pattern of illicit small arms-trafficking in the Southern African region see C Smith, *Light weapons and the international arms trade,* and P Batchelor, *Disarmament, small arms, and intra-state conflict: The case of Southern Africa,* in <u>Small arms management and peacekeeping in Southern Africa</u>, op cit; also, G Oosthuysen, <u>Small arms proliferation and control in Southern Africa</u>, South African Institute of International Affairs, Johannesburg, 1997.

44 The studies were undertaken by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) in Geneva under the Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project which the author directed at the time. The publications produced by the project are as follows:

    <u>Managing arms in peace processes: The issues</u>, UNIDIR Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project Series, United

Without regional support to UN missions, the latter will find its operations all the more difficult to sustain and implement

SMALL ARMS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: REFLECTIONS ON THE EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM AND ITS MANAGEMENT POTENTIAL

Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that current actions in Africa to tackle these problems remain inadequately developed and often ineffective. Awareness of the severity of the problem still needs to be increased in some quarters. The problem also clearly requires a co-ordinated regional approach. However, an African policy and an action programme that cover the needs of the continent have yet to be developed.

THE PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

With regard to the nature and extent of the international problem of small arms and light weapons proliferation and their impact on Southern Africa, it is known from studies undertaken by UN agencies, some academics, as well as work undertaken by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the past ten years that large numbers of weapons – most of which resort under the light weapons and small arms category (including landmines) – were transferred both covertly and overtly to Africa between 1970 and 1990. The numbers as such cannot be safely estimated, since covert operations are not often recorded and, at the time, overt transfers were not properly recorded, particularly if they were the result of conventional arms deals in which small arms were added as a bonus to a sale.

In Africa, this particular period of time was also characterised by new aggressive foreign policies instituted by both the United States and the Soviet Union in their bid to contain or expand their associations to different warring parties and insurgent groups on the continent and elsewhere (particularly Afghanistan, Central America, Central Africa and the Horn). From the Soviet Union's point of view, the emphasis on providing Africans with the means for civil war and confrontation during the 1960s, became quite blatantly subjected to the Union's need to expand its sphere of interest, as may be seen in the military developments in Angola since 1975. From the United States' point of view (and that of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation – NATO), the need to contain this identified Soviet expansion of its military sphere of interest in Central Africa and the Horn, gave rise to the development of the Doctrine of Low Intensity Conflict that

INTRODUCTION

There is a close relationship between peace and security in Africa, both internally and internationally, and the economic, social and political development of countries in the region. The proliferation of light weapons and illicit arms trafficking in Africa pose a major threat to development. Although they do not, in themselves, cause the conflicts and criminal activities in which they are used, the wide availability, accumulation and proliferation of light weapons may escalate conflicts; undermine peace agreements; intensify violence and impact on crime; impede economic and social development; and hinder the development of social stability, democracy and good governance.

Effective intervention to control arms flows and availability requires determined, comprehensive and co-ordinated action not only at the local and national levels but also at the level of African subregions and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). Moreover, the effectiveness of subregional actions to curb arms proliferation and trafficking in Africa can only be reinforced through co-operation with the OAU and other international organisations, and through the establishment of information exchange mechanisms between each subregional organisation and its counterparts.

Increased awareness of the problems of weapons proliferation and arms trafficking in Africa and internationally is to be greatly welcomed. Here, it is important to recognise the numerous initiatives, resolutions and agreements to address the problem that have recently been taken in Southern Africa (the Operations Rachel on weapons collection between South Africa and Mozambique, and the programme of action to combat illicit arms trafficking are among the most recent), and the Sahara-Sahel (for example, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) moratorium on the import, export and manufacture of weapons). These are having an impact on the OAU, the UN and its agencies, and other members of the international community.

An African policy and an action programme that cover the needs of the continent with regard to small arms proliferation have yet to be developed

41

time when most governments or forces were either in transition or were spent.

The long shelf life of the tools of violence (small arms) in the African context and the abundance of ammunition dumped in the field over decades (plus the fact that some African countries saw the benefits in starting ammunition factories of their own to supply the never-ending numbers of small arms in the region) ensured the perpetuation of the utilisation of these weapons even when the original political objective for their use was long gone.

THE NUMBERS AND THE FLOWS

In Mozambique alone, estimates of weapons imported during the civil war range from 0,5 million to six million. During the UN peacekeeping operation (ONUMOZ 1993-1995), nearly 190 000 weapons were collected. However, most were not destroyed and soon were again on the streets of Maputo or in the process of being moved into neighbouring states. In four distinct recovery operations conducted jointly by South Africa and Mozambique over the last years, a total of 11 891 firearms; 106 pistols; 6 351 anti-personnel mines; 88 landmines; 1 260 handgrenades; 424 hand grenade detonators; 7 015 mortars; 263 launchers; 8 138 projectiles; 1 242 boosters; 33 cannons; 3 192 337 rounds of ammunition; and 5 912 magazines were seized and destroyed. Given the differences in numbers of weapons accounted for and those not, it is not difficult to assume that some of the unaccounted-for weapons have made their way to fuel – for example – the Angolan civil war.

In Angola, it is virtually impossible to estimate the number of weapons in circulation and use after two decades of war. Nevertheless, there are some figures that may be considered. For example, it was reported that 700 000 weapons were distributed to civilians by the government in 1992 following the renewal of fierce fighting, but during the demobilisation component of the most recent UN peacekeeping operation (UNAVEM III), only 34 425 weapons were collected of which many were old and unserviceable. This, combined with the small numbers of police and soldiers who have been demobilised, indicated that most weapons and soldiers were kept outside of the now broken peace process. Furthermore, besides the arms stockpiled during the 1970s and 1980s, Angola continued to receive weapons on a regular basis since 1992. Though sanctions to cut off UNITA's supplies were introduced on 1 October 1997, Savimbi has been able to find alternative routes of supply. Without a doubt, the continued availability of small arms in the Angolan conflict has now led to a renewal of civil war in the country. This was the same principle that fuelled the eruption of war in 1992.

The implementation of transitional processes without accompanying disarmament operations in Angola or Mozambique, has also occurred in Zimbabwe, Namibia and

allowed the US also to become active in fuelling non-governmental actors in their internecine wars.

At both ends of this spectrum, the issue of light weapons and small arms became a crucial tool for action. In the case of sub-Saharan Africa, the arming of Somalia (due to the strategic importance of the Horn), the arming of Angola (again due to the strategic importance of the country, both in terms of resources and geopolitics) and the support to South Africa's military prowess can all be explained in strategic terms. The issue of the arming of different rebel groupings and liberation movements in Mozambique, South West Africa (now Namibia) and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) can be explained based on ideological and liberation theories. Geopolitical considerations can also be used to explain the sustained support to Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaïre by the French, as can the support to Rwanda and Burundi by Belgium at the time.

Regardless of these reasons, the choice of weapons in the various conflicts and by rebel groupings, and/or the retention of some repressive governments in power, was not based on the nature of conventional arms *per se*, but on the massive arming of opposing forces with light weapons and small arms. These weapons steadily poured into sub-Saharan Africa between the late 1960s and the late 1980s. Tracking the actual numbers over such a long period of time, is impossible. At the same time, many secondary actors became involved in the arms market in Africa (such as the People's Republic of China, South Africa, Israel, East Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Cuba, Germany, Belgium, Portugal, and others). As long as the struggle in Africa retained its ideological value that mirrored the East-West divide, and as long as light weapons remained the decisive tools of war in protracted struggles, the proliferation of small arms could be said to be 'under control', since it served specific purposes. Nevertheless, with the success of certain liberation movements, the end of colonisation, and the abandonment of the East-West rivalry in the late 1980s and early 1990s, sub-Saharan Africa was internationally left without a frame of reference at a

The continued availability of small arms in the Angolan conflict has now led to a renewal of civil war in the country

43

seldom had a strong disarmament or arms management component, and if they did, it was seldom enforced. Most international operations in Africa succeeded in terms of their political objectives, but without any effective weapons control, reduction and destruction initiatives. Some failed both politically and operationally (and most of these failures are directly related to the failure to contain and control the vast numbers of arms in the hands of warring parties, as is the case in Somalia and Angola). When operations failed, warring parties intensified their arms procurement, linking it at times to the free distribution of weapons to civilian populations in contested geographical areas (for example, the failure of UNAVEM II led to the dumping of small arms among the population of Luanda without records being kept, as indicated earlier). Conversely, when operations succeeded, the post-electoral government (for example, in Mozambique) retained control of all weapons collected and/or *in situ* in the country. With no disarmament and destruction programmes under way, most of these weapons were stocked in government arsenals or in caches underground and control over them was lost as a result of corruption or negligence, leading to the disappearance of some of these weapons. At the same time, the economic problems of emerging democracies often led to weapons being utilised as 'currency' in payment for past services. Many demobilised soldiers (in Mozambique, for example) were 'paid' for their support in the past and could start their lives anew with small arms which they were at liberty to sell or trade (this also happened in El Salvador and Nicaragua).

With these issues in mind, it is easy to see why many international operations to contain violence in sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s have paradoxically led to an increase in weapons availability and in freedom of action and movement for those who own weapons. Vast stocks of existing small arms started an ominous pattern of recirculation in sub-Saharan Africa, finding markets in conflict areas and feeding emerging crime patterns mostly in urban environments.

Dumping arms

The second factor that aggravated small arms proliferation problems in sub-Saharan Africa was a new-found international incentive to rid developed countries of unwanted, unused stocks of small arms, light weapons and conventional armament. NATO countries and Warsaw Pact countries commenced with demobilisation that only included a conversion package associated with research, development and the production of dual-use technologies and/or weapons of mass destruction. Although negligible activities were undertaken in the area of conventional weapons systems conversion, the serious conversion of light weapons manufacture did not occur. With an economic crash at the end of the 1980s that continued into the early 1990s, many countries felt that the arms industry needed to be sustained for internal employment and economic imperatives. With the demise of Cold War confrontation, the sales

South Africa, although the latter has recently accepted a policy that encourages the destruction of surplus stock of light weapons and small arms rather than their sale.[1] Thus, and despite some progress in the control and reduction of existing stocks in Southern Africa, the prevailing situation means that all countries in the region are threatened by the excessive accumulation of small arms and the increasing availability of illicit stock in circulation.

FROM LICIT TO ILLICIT

The 1990s aggravated the situation of the availability of small arms in sub-Saharan Africa. This was caused by three factors:

- the flurry of UN and other multinational peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations in sub-Saharan Africa: ONUMOZ (Mozambique), UNTAG (Namibia), the Commonwealth Monitoring Force in Rhodesia, UNAVEM I, II and III (Angola), UNOSOM I and II and UNITAF (Somalia), and the Liberia and Sierra Leone operations;

- economic constraints in developed countries at a time when demobilisation and disarmament issues of the post-Cold War era were being considered; and

- the grave humanitarian and economic situations in Africa in the 1990s, coupled to a resurgence of civil wars in sub-Saharan Africa.

Peacekeeping and peace enforcement

Prior to the development of IFOR in the former Yugoslavia, the thinking that permeated humanitarian interventions both by the US and other countries (under the aegis of the UN or not) was not conducive to serious and active disarmament (weapons collection and destruction operations) as part and parcel of peacekeeping or peace enforcement operations. As a result, operations

It is easy to see why international operations to contain violence in sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s have paradoxically led to an increase in weapons availability and in freedom for those who own weapons

decades, were left with no infrastructure, no resources, and a population that had adapted itself to live for and of conflict. Millions of Africans in the prime of their lives had only one skill: they knew how to wage war, and only one asset: the gun they possessed. Millions more had been involved in the business of surviving war since they were toddlers and thus have no memory of peace, law and order or any skill save that of surviving a war. The fact that most African conflicts have been fought with under-age populations also attests to the emergence of an adult population at decision-making levels, as well as a work force composed of people who have been child soldiers and have not been prepared for anything else in life. Lack of disarmament programmes, post-conflict reconstruction resources, and demobilisation resources, and increased humanitarian pressures related to basic needs have perpetuated the belief that a firearm is not a weapon, but an asset to be used for sustenance, for crime, for defence, for corruption and for abuse.

This factor needs to be unpacked even further as it really points to some basic recommendations that African nations need to consider when attempting to resolve the problem of the availability of light weapons and small arms in the region. The problems associated with control and reduction occur at many levels, some of which are detailed as follows:

- Badly managed demobilisation processes have led to a growing number of people who have no choice but to operate in a criminal context or as part of the emerging regiments of private security companies in Africa. Both these functions need weapons as tools and/or trade factors. Both of these elements are not concerned over who their clients are (i.e. are not subject to regulations that guide their actions) and are accountable to nobody. If poorly demobilised forces do not resort to either of these two avenues for survival, chances are that they use their knowledge of weapons arsenals, caches in the bush, or extra weapons which they received as payment for past services, as the source of easy cash or trade to meet their meagre subsistence needs. All of these factors propitiate significant trade in small arms, only a minority of which is licit.

- The emergence of geopolitical and ethnic conflict in the 1990s in Africa has generated the massive abuse of civilian populations by warring factions. This has led to extensive refugee communities and legal as well as illegal immigration with millions of people trying to escape the carnage and war by moving to areas that are relatively more peaceful and/or prosperous than their region of origin. More often than not, these groups of people possess or have access to light weapons which they utilise for defence purposes, or to start life anew wherever they go. Moreover, warring parties have at times utilised refugee groups as fronts to avoid capture for humanitarian abuses. These people exert control over refugees on the move or in camps by threatening the use of force, and are invariably well-armed.

patterns to the third world of many countries were not monitored and a fresh wave of weapons hit Africa, albeit not instigated this time by political or military considerations, but by market economy competition.

Both West and East indulged in this practice but, over the years, the production by the unregulated industry of countries such as the Ukraine and Bulgaria has had the most impact. New stocks continued to arrive in Africa to supply both governments and rebels, as well as a growing international organised crime network that depends on weapons for its operations (either because it secures its operations through the use of weapons, or because its trades in weapons on black markets). Many regulated and legal arms industries world-wide (including that of the US) added to the volume of transfers, because their operations could no longer be controlled by Cold War frames of reference. It must be pointed out that it was not only countries in developed regions that indulged in these activities. Middle powers in the South also saw the door opening for them to trade low technology military equipment (mostly light weapons, ammunition and mines) as part of their own economic recovery programmes.

Controlling stocks

The third factor that has increased arms proliferation during the 1990s in sub-Saharan Africa is directly related to the potential for control over existing and expanding stocks by African states. The bleak world economy in the early 1990s did not allow for major assistance packages to emerging African democracies at the end of the Cold War. Droughts and constant warfare in some regions also generated grave humanitarian crises that were manipulated by warlords for their own gain (such as in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan and Somalia). Finally, many countries developed serious development problems in post-conflict environments which impacted negatively on demobilisation processes. Without an effective (and resourced) demobilisation package, war-torn societies that had lived off war for more than two

Badly managed demobilisation processes have led to a growing number of people who have no choice but to operate in a criminal context

47

the proliferation of both licit and illicit arms in Africa today.

- Communities, particularly in rural areas, have either come to depend on the possession of a licit or illicit firearm to defend themselves from lawlessness, or to involve themselves in the proliferation of violence itself by providing basic support facilities to criminals and illegal operators or by turning to crime themselves (particularly armed cattle-rustling activities). The impact of arms in communities has been proven to be great – creating the perception of weapons addiction in younger generations of Africans who, even if they do not need to have a weapon, consider owning one at the first possible opportunity.

- Finally, the issue of governance practices in Africa, when coupled to economic constraints, lack of regulations and arms availability, has been proven to lead to the increase and perpetuation of corruption and the abuse of power among local, provincial and national officials.

ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM

Thus, in answering the question about the nature and extent of small arms proliferation in sub-Saharan Africa, it is safe to say that the problem cannot be quantified, but can be judged by its effects on regional stability and individual security. It is obvious that the numbers of arms and ammunition circulating in the region are vast. It is also evident that these are available at almost any level of the societies concerned. And it is finally evident that these stocks are uncontrolled.

By inference, then, it could be suggested that areas where more research and action are needed, must focus on all aspects of the problem simultaneously and immediately. Some of the recommendations that the Arms Management Programme has proposed, are as follows:

- International efforts at peacekeeping or peace enforcement or humanitarian intervention must have an effective and enforceable disarmament and arms destruction component attached to it from inception.

- Disarmament must accompany demobilisation in post-conflict situations. Demobilisation must be resourced and planned as part of a national strategy leading to full recovery. Duly elected governments must be induced and supported in an immediate destruction of surplus stocks in their armouries so that they reflect the existing nature of the defence force of the emerging country.
- Officials responsible for the handling and storage of national holdings (security and defence forces) must be trained in the responsible management of this
process. Registers of all national holdings must be kept nationally and weapons

- Struggles for power in Central Africa in the 1990s have added to this situation, because these struggles not only lead to large movements of armed and disarmed people across borders, but also to the increased proliferation of arms to sustain the conflict (i.e. Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo), or to efforts to contain conflict through the use of force (in Burundi and Rwanda, Ethiopia and Eritrea, and increasingly in Somalia). If the conflict is hot, this trend leads to the renewed dumping of small arms among populations around big cities in the hope of complicating the offensive alternatives of opposing factions (as is happening in Angola today and happened in Kinshasa (DRC) in 1998). It also leads to rearmament with new stock (mostly coming from the grey markets on the borders of legal and illegal trade). What makes this situation worse is the fact that some of the hottest conflict in Africa today is undertaken in resource-rich territories that can therefore sustain war indefinitely.

- Economic imperatives and incentives generated by the lack of control that is prevalent in transitional societies, have also led to the emergence of a vast network of transnational criminal organisations trading in and out of Africa. Aside from these, organised crime and violent crime are on the rise in most urban areas of sub-Saharan Africa. The weapons that fuel these operations are mostly illicit, but not all of them have entered the market initially in this manner. Research points to three major sources of weapons utilised for and in crime in Southern Africa: licenced weapons stolen from legal owners; state-owned weapons (either stolen from their legal user or from arsenals and holdings); and illicit weapons coming across borders or found in caches.

- Concerns about law and order, on the one hand, and lax government control and a lack of regulations, on the other, also give rise to the increased demand for firearms, and the accounting for, maintenance and storage of licenced weapons become major factors in

The extent of small arms proliferation in sub-Saharan Africa cannot be quantified, but can be judged by its effects on regional stability and individual security

reside.

- Border controls must be improved to control entry points used in the international smuggling of small arms and ammunition. Technology, human resources, co-ordination, intelligence and crossborder co-operation between authorities all need to be enhanced.

- The police is the front service that takes control of illicit trafficking in firearms and enforces licit controls over firearms. As such, they must be resourced, trained and developed to be able to provide specialist units and to control corruption within their ranks.
- Education programmes to reduce the normal demand for firearms should be instated and public awareness campaigns to induce communities to surrender unwanted or illicit weapons should be encouraged.

- Gun buy-back programmes are not effective when they propitiate the myth that weapons are an asset. Recovery and destruction programmes at community level can be undertaken if weapons are traded off for tools of work or for a community facilities (such as a school or clinic). If money is traded for guns, the guns will not be recovered and the area will generate an arms market that brings weapons into the community instead of removing them.

- More research needs to be undertaken on the way in which weapons availability influences community development: statistics tying long-term trends related to health issues, development opportunities, population trends and weapons availability, for example, will make an important contribution to the understanding of this issue. More research on the operations of criminal organisations and gangs and their connection to weapons also needs to be undertaken. Research into the improvement of legislation and its enforcement, and the harmonisation of a standard among neighbouring states needs to be done.

Although these recommendations might fit the context of sub-Saharan Africa, there are some recommendations that might apply to traders in arms abroad, particularly as they trade with Africa. These are as follows:

- Arms transfers to Africa should respond to an acceptable code of conduct that not only looks at the morality and legality of a transaction, but also at its wisdom. End-user, as well as end-use certificates should be the norm. Greater awareness in relation to the responsibilities of suppliers to ensure that the materiel arrives safely at its destination and is used for the requested purpose is recommended. This means greater control of movements of materiel in transit, as well as a visual register of materiel delivered at its destination (perhaps by an attaché or other embassy official of the supplier country).

in national holdings must be marked.

- In countries where it is legally possible for private citizens to arm themselves, thorough arms and ammunition legislation must be in place and must be adequately enforced. A minimum requirement is the existence and maintenance of a central register in the country that would include information on all licenced firearms and national holdings, where applicable. Negligence while in possession of a legally held firearm must be discouraged through strong judicial rulings. Countries that allow for licencing should also conduct education drives among the younger members of the population so that they are aware of alternatives to possessing a firearm. Firearm-free areas should be designated and enforced. The availability of some weapons to civilians that are at a premium in the criminal market, or that can cause devastation to large numbers of people in one single occasion, should be prohibited and, if used for law enforcement, restricted and controlled.

- In countries where there are large suspected stocks of arms caches inherited from civil war and/or conflict, resources should be provided for a cleanup operation that includes detection, collection and destruction of caches.

- In countries with an arms and/or ammunition industry of its own, a code of conduct for arms transfers should be developed that ensures the utilisation of standard end-user certificates, as well as end-use certificates before any sale is approved by the government. Adequate marking must be mandatory, and all trade must be registered in the logbook of the central firearms register of the country.

- Arms brokers must be equally controlled and should have their operations, as well as all transactions registered with a central authority (both exports and imports). Brokers should be controlled by their state of citizenship regardless of the place where they

Arms transfers to Africa should respond to an acceptable code of conduct that not only looks at the morality and legality of a transaction, but also at its wisdom

51

must include the destruction of obsolete stocks, rather than the sale of unused or used materiel. This is of particular importance with reference to the former Soviet Union.

Therefore, the problem of the proliferation of small arms in Southern Africa is both a subregional and an international one. Its solution is as dependent upon global patterns, trends and initiatives to control this scourge as it is on the willingness of Southern African governments to do everything in their power to address the issue from a regional viewpoint.

THE POTENTIAL FOR CONTROL IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: AGENDA FOR ACTION

In Southern Africa, the national capacity to control and reduce these weapons depends on many variable needs:

- sufficient verifiable information on the extent of the problem in national territories;

- human and financial resources to cover the areas and the issue;

- increased capacity of (or the creation of capacity) among national interagency co-ordination structures to combat the illicit arms trade and to manage the licit firearms trade more effectively;

- the development of the capacity to address the issue effectively, where the will and the co-ordination are present;

- the prevention and reduction of corruption; and

- co-ordinated regional approaches.

Because small arms proliferation in Africa is both a product of the past and of the current demand for arms for specific political, security or criminal purposes, the possibilities for control and reduction must necessarily be multifaceted, addressing not only the reduction in local demand, but also the reduction of existing stocks – both legal and illegal – in the region. Both tasks are monumental and cannot be accomplished by any one country or organisation acting alone.

The recognition of the limitations of international and regional institutions to pursue effective arms control inevitably leads to the issue of co-ordination. Hence, it is necessary to emphasise the identification of potential actors in international and regional initiatives, the structures within which they operate, and the potential for joint and/or co-ordinated action. This refers not only to global initiatives and

- The operations of international brokers must be monitored as thoroughly as possible.

- The responsibilities of transnational corporations, particularly those exploiting non-renewable resources, need to be made more transparent and codes of conduct should be propitiated in those companies operating in countries at war or where significant political and military unrest is present. Transnational corporations dealing in resources coming from disputed territories or land governed by different warring factions produce the currency with which arms are bought, and often propitiate the proliferation of arms through their management of private security (the operations of private security companies in the territories managed by such corporations). Kick-backs given by corporations to be able to operate in these circumstances as demanded by national or territorial authorities must be monitored, as these perpetuate corruption in officialdom and can lead to an increased trade in arms to secure authority, position and, therefore, access to these sums of money.

- Marking (preferably by stamping) of weapons by suppliers should be standard procedure (both barrel and frame as a minimum). Government sales of surplus weapons should be discouraged – with destruction as a preferred alternative. If sales of surplus stock are to proceed, a full record should be kept, and full marking should occur.

- Grey market operators must be defined, and their operations reduced to induce them to enter the legal market.

- The conversion of the light weapons industry in countries that do not need production in this industry as much as before, should be prioritised over any other type of conversion.

- Military doctrines leading to the upgrade of systems

Because small arms proliferation in Africa is both a product of the past and of the current demand for arms for political, security or criminal purposes, its control and reduction must necessarily be multifaceted

to remark that the Southern African community of countries has the potential to control illicit small arms trafficking and to reduce existing stockpiles of weapons. This potential is manifest in:

- the fact that most of the countries in the region genuinely desire peace and development, having seen the disruptive effect of conflict in their territories: Namibia, Mozambique, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Swaziland are examples;

- a subregional structure already exists in the body of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) that provides a forum for high-level discussion of common concerns;
- there are reasonably efficient existing *ad hoc* organisations through which small arms issues could be co-ordinated among member states while they finalise the strategies and vehicles for long-term control of this issue, i.e. SARPCCO; and

- some countries in the region have already decided to prioritise policies related to the control of crime, violence and weapons availability in their own national strategies, i.e. South Africa and Mozambique.

With the growing willingness to co-operate on these issues, and with some structures for consultation already in place, the Southern African community has an advantage over other subregions in Africa in terms of the control of illicit small arms trafficking.

The big question is how to go about to make the existing structures operational and effective, not only in the short term but also in the long term. On the negative side, there is as yet no agreement in the region on the perception of each member state's responsibility with regard to illicit small arms-trafficking controls, i.e. there is as yet no regional thinking on this issue. This will eventually come. The process, nevertheless, can be accelerated if ongoing international and extraregional initiatives such as those of the UN, OAS, EU and, eventually, the OAU, undertake to share their experiences and responsibilities – co-ordinating their efforts to fit broad objectives as guideline generators, implementers or assistants to other ongoing processes.

Moves in the right direction have emerged during 1998, leading not only to an increased willingness by the OAU to take on a leadership role on the continent, but also to an increased regional interest in reinforcing and strengthening SADC and its SARPCCO component as mechanisms for action on the control and reduction of illicit small arms-trafficking. Some of the more hopeful initiatives of 1999 consolidate this trend by seeking to make SARPCCO and SADC efforts in this arena compatible with each other. The decision of the OAU to hold a continental conference on small arms during 2000 with the aim of producing an African policy on small **54** arms proliferation; and the decision of SARPCCO and SADC to prioritise the

organisations such as the UN, but also to regional initiatives which could influence the development of crossregional co-operation and consultation mechanisms (as in the Organisation of American States (OAS) and the European Union (EU) initiatives to combat illicit small arms trafficking). In the Appendix, a summary of relevant international and regional initiatives and their current status is provided.

CONCLUSION

An integrated and comprehensive response is needed to meet the complex challenges of weapons proliferation and illicit trafficking. Yet, existing responses remain fragmented and inadequately resourced. A set of co-ordinated subregional programmes does not exist to tackle illicit arms trafficking. Programmes to develop effective control of legal arms possession and transfers, among civilians and state security forces, remain inadequate. So, too, are programmes to disarm former combatants, recover unlicenced arms from civilians, and destroy or safely dispose of 'surplus' stocks of arms or confiscated illicit weapons. Transparency, information exchange and consultation among countries on these issues remain weak.

Internationally, the recognition of the extent of this problem has grown. However, there is still a need for solutions that can be tried – and whether they succeed or fail – evaluated and revised to be used elsewhere. Immediate steps must be taken in conjunction with medium and long-term initiatives by local communities, governments and those outside the immediate area, including the UN and its agencies.

It will only be through sustained, co-ordinated action that the scourge of light weapons can be controlled and perhaps, eventually, removed. In understanding and recognising this need, the Southern African community of nations has increasingly become an important actor in the fight against small arms proliferation. Here, and despite its infancy and structural problems, it is possible

There is an increased regional interest in strengthening SADC and SARPCCO as mechanisms in the control and reduction of illicit small arms-trafficking

55

urgency for small arms control both over licit and illicit materiel are moving the region closer to the actual implementation phase rather than the discussion of policy.

By the same token, countries such as South Africa have reinforced their own initiatives in this direction, leading the way with initiatives to destroy rather than sell surplus weapons in their national armouries and encouraging the discussions within SADC and SARPCCO to generate a regional convention similar to the one signed by the OAS on the control of illicit weapons.

If this co-operative and co-ordinated approach to small arms is adopted by those concerned, everyone will have the opportunity to benefit from others' experiences. Each region will have something to teach the other, and controls will become a reality which might stand a chance to reduce this global scourge in future.

Endnote

This is a version of a paper prepared during 1999 by the author for the Demilitarisation and Peacebuilding in Southern Africa Project managed by the Centre for Conflict Resolution in Cape Town and the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) in Germany.

1   According to the media statement by the Chief of Defence Corporate Communication, Major-General Chris Pepani, on the destruction of small arms (Pretoria, 26 February 1999), the government has agreed to destroy 262 667 small calibre weapons during 1999.

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- Managing arms in peace processes: Rhodesia/Zimbabwe

- Managing arms in peace processes: Haiti

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- Managing arms in peace processes: Training

- Small arms management and peacekeeping in Southern Africa

APPENDIX

EXISTING SMALL ARMS INITIATIVES: THEIR EFFECT ON SOUTHERN AFRICA

INTERNATIONAL

The United Nations has been actively pursuing an agenda conducive to the control and eventual reduction of the proliferation of small arms since 1995. Various initiatives have been started, as well as specific actions taken in this regard. Among these, it is worthwhile noting the following:

- *The UN Panel of Experts on Small Arms:* The recommendations of this group were presented to the General Assembly in October 1997. A follow-up group was established to report on the progress made in the implementation of recommendations. The report of this follow-up group was released in September 1999 and contains many more practical recommendations for joint and global actions to contain and reduce the proliferation of small arms.

- In 1997, the UN Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division (under the auspices of ECOSOC) undertook an International Study on Firearm Regulation that is being followed by a series of regional initiatives to build support for harmonised firearms regulations.

- The Co-ordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) at the UN Department for Disarmament was launched in July 1998.

- In October 1998, the First Committee (Disarmament and International Security) began to meet during the 53rd Session of the UN General Assembly in New

The UN has been pursuing an agenda conducive to the control and reduction of the proliferation of small arms since 1995

- the EU Joint Action on Small Arms
- the EU Development Council Resolution on Small Arms

It is worth noting that the most important development to date under the first of these initiatives has been the development of a Southern African Action Programme on Light Arms and Illicit Trafficking generated at a seminar of EU and SADC officials in May 1998 and hosted by the Institute for Security Studies, South Africa and Saferworld, United Kingdom. This Action Programme was endorsed by EU and SADC Foreign ministers at their Ministerial Meeting of November 1998. A second consultation on technical points for implementation of this programme was organised in September 1999 in South Africa as is referred to below.

ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

At the 68th ordinary session of the OAU Council of Ministers, held in Ouagadougou in June 1998, a resolution (Dec CM/Dec. 432) was passed in which the council:

- thanked South Africa for placing the issue of small arms on the agenda of the meeting;

- supported the Mali initiative on a moratorium;

- suggested a role for the OAU in the co-ordination of efforts to develop inter-African solutions to the problems posed by light weapons proliferation; and

- urged the Secretary General to gather information from members on the scope of the proliferation of small arms and steps that could be taken to deal with the problem.

Thus, at the 35th Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU which met in Algiers during July 1999, the OAU renewed its commitment to limit small arms proliferation, circulation and trafficking. In its final declaration, the OAU decided, *inter alia,* to:

- hail the declaration of the moratorium on import, export and manufacture of light weapons adopted in Abuja in October 1998 by ECOWAS heads of state and government;

- welcome the initiatives being undertaken by member states and regional organisations concerning the question of small arms, such as the ECOWAS moratorium, the destruction of surplus and obsolete small arms in South Africa and in Mozambique, and all such initiatives;

62 • appealed to the international community to render the necessary assistance to

York. The committee had several resolutions before it which relate to the issue of small arms, including one on illicit small arms-trafficking and a second on a proposed conference on the illicit arms trade. The first resolution specifically asks that roles suited for indigenous regional approaches should be considered in the Secretary-General's discussions. The second resolution discusses the convening of an international conference on the illicit arms trade by 2001.

- During 1998, the UN *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Elaboration of a Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime began work on a draft Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials, Supplementary to the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime.

- On 24 September 1999, at the initiative of the government of the Netherlands, an historic UN Security Council ministerial meeting on small arms called for improved control of small arms world-wide. The Council underlined the vital importance of effective national regulations and control measures for small arms transfers, emphasised the prevention of illicit trafficking, and asked for effective implementation of arms embargoes. A key point of the presidential statement at this meeting was addressed to exporting countries, asking the latter to *"exercise the highest degree of responsibility"* in regulating the legitimate trade in weapons. Furthermore, the Council welcomed Switzerland's offer to host a conference on the subject of small arms in 2001.

EUROPEAN UNION

Since 1997, several EU arms initiatives are under way. Among these, the following stand out:

- the EU programme on Illicit Trafficking.
- the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports

The Security Council underlined the vital importance of effective national regulations and control measures for small arms transfers

particularly through the EU-SADC dialogue and within the structures of SARPCCO.

EU-SADC DIALOGUE AND ACTION PROGRAMME

Steps in this direction are already being taken. In May 1998, government officials participated in a meeting sponsored by two non-governmental organisations (Saferworld, UK and the Institute for Security Studies, South Africa) to discuss a programme of action that could be undertaken in a co-operative fashion between the member states of SADC and the EU. The results of this programme of action have been discussed at subsequent meetings in Brussels and Vienna and have the potential to lead to a comprehensive approach towards the control of arms trafficking. Four principal areas of co-operation have been identified:

- combating illicit trafficking by strengthening laws and regulations, reinforcing operational capacity, and improving both the systems to trace illicit arms flows and the information exchange mechanisms in the subregion;

- strengthening regulation and control of the accumulation and transfer of arms by improving controls over civilian possession of firearms, enhancing the restraint and controls over the accumulation and transfer of light weapons and associated military equipment, and improving the capacity to monitor and trace light weapons possession and transfers;

- promoting the removal of arms from society and the destruction of surplus arms by means of collection, removal from circulation, and destruction of surplus military stocks, removing confiscated and unlicenced weapons from circulation, undertaking voluntary weapon collection and exchange programmes, and reversing the cultures of gun-associated violence; and

- enhancing transparency, information exchange and consultation on arms in Southern Africa by improving public transparency, information exchange and consultation.

This agenda for action reflects the nature and scope of the problem as the challenges of weapons proliferation and arms trafficking are complex and no single policy response would be adequate. Programmes to address illicit arms trafficking must be combined with actions to strengthen controls on legally owned arms; remove, destroy or safely dispose of excess or confiscated arms; and enhance transparency, information collection and exchange, and consultation across the region. In this model, the programme of action on illicit arms should be co-ordinated across the Southern African region, so that local and national actions are mutually reinforcing and appropriate actions are taken at regional level. It should build upon and further

strengthen regional institutions and structures. The regional programme must also be

affected African countries to enable them to implement programmes to deal with the problems associated with the proliferation of small arms and light weapons effectively;

- reiterated the need for inter-African co-operation in addressing the problems associated with the illicit use, transfer and manufacture of small arms and light weapons;

- urged the Secretary General to seek the views of member states on the illicit trafficking, circulation and proliferation of small arms and light weapons;

- appealed to member states and the international community to assist in the psycho-social rehabilitation of children who have been affected by the trafficking, circulation and proliferation of light weapons; and

- requested the OAU Secretariat to organise a continental experts preparatory conference on this matter, prior to the international conference scheduled for 2001, and seek the support of the relevant UN agencies and other actors in order to evolve a common African approach.

Furthermore, the OAU Secretariat has been issuing a quarterly newsletter[1] to all its members since December 1998, on the issue of small arms proliferation in Africa. This is designed to sensitise governments to the need to give priority to discussions related to the control of arms proliferation on the continent.

SOUTHERN AFRICAN INITIATIVES

A co-ordinated, determined and comprehensive regional 'action programme' on light weapons proliferation and illicit arms trafficking is needed in Southern Africa. To enhance capacity in the region to develop and implement such a programme, and to reinforce its effectiveness, co-operation with the European Union (EU) and other members of the international community is being developed,

The challenges of weapons proliferation and arms trafficking are complex and no single policy response would be adequate

will be considered at the EU-SADC meeting of senior government officials to take place in November 1999. With the creation of these two working groups on small arms, SADC member states will be in a position to consolidate procedures for co-operation on small arms control and disarmament initiatives, as well as to improve on EU-SADC practical co-operation in this regard.

SARPCCO AND CRIME COMBATING IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

In its endeavour to combat international and crossborder crime, the Ministerial meeting of the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Co-operation Organisation (SARPCCO) was held in Gaborone, Botswana from 27-30 July 1998. The meeting reviewed crime reports of the chiefs of police of all SARPCCO members and the general progress with the organisation's programme.

By this meeting, regional police services had concluded three joint operations and one was still to be completed. These operations were aimed at combating motor vehicle thefts, drug-trafficking, firearms-smuggling, diamond-smuggling and other related crimes. As a result of the joint operations, 624 stolen motor vehicles, 85 firearms and 129 100 rounds of ammunition were recovered and 838 arrests were made.

"The success of the three operations during the year under review was an indication of what can be achieved when police agencies act together with a common purpose in the fight against crime," commented the final communiqué. The meeting agreed that there is a definite need to expand regional crime operations targeting arms-trafficking, vehicle theft and other crossborder crimes. Hence, it urged the Permanent Co-ordinating Committee to plan and undertake more operations of this kind.

Due to the fact that firearms are also used in other types of crime, the meeting identified firearms-trafficking as one of its priority areas. The Liaison Officer for Firearms and Endangered Species sought information and intelligence from all countries in the region in order to assess the extent of this problem. By the same token, the Legal Sub-Committee of SARPCCO began focusing on issues of the harmonisation of legislation and control over licit firearms in member states, as well as the improvement of co-operation in the detection and capture of illicit small arms across borders. As a result of these endeavours the following declaration was adopted by member states during the Annual General Meeting of SARPCCO held in Swaziland in July 1999:

"Illegal small arms and especially the illegal firearms most commonly used in the
perpetration of crime, contribute to the high levels of instability, extended conflict,

integrated with wider programmes to promote individual and community security; implement peace agreements; and advance post-conflict reconstruction, economic and social development, and good governance – both within the region and across Africa. The current challenge is to encourage countries in both the EU and SADC to work together in implementing those steps towards combating the proliferation of light weapons that will work in each country.

During September 1999, a further meeting between EU and SADC officials took place in South Africa to begin implementation of the Action Programme. The main themes of this conference were ways in which the control of illicit small arms-trafficking in Southern Africa could be enhanced; the need to improve legal controls and regulations over licenced firearms; and ways in which the culture of violence produced by an increased availability of firearms could be reduced. Among the practical recommendations emerging from this seminar, the following stand out:

- the need to support weapons collection and destruction programmes in Southern Africa similar to those undertaken by Operations Rachel (between Mozambique and South Africa);

- the need to support governments that decide to destroy rather than sell their surplus stock of firearms (as is the case in South Africa); and

- the need to produce regional integrated plans for action in small arms control between the police and other agencies at regional level.

An important decision was taken during the annual SADC Summit of 1999 in Maputo. The Council of Ministers agreed to constitute a special SADC Committee on all issues related to small arms which will begin its operations at the end of 1999. Similarly, the EU-SADC Co-operation Executive Committee met in April 1999 in Cape Town and recommended the creation of an EU-SADC technical group on small arms issues. This

The Legal Sub-Committee of SARPCCO focuses on the harmonisation of legislation and control on licit firearms in member states, as well as in improving co-operation in the detection and capture of illicit small arms

the initiation of discussions on drafting a regional instrument on small arms, SARPCCO can contribute to preventing the further proliferation of small arms in the Southern African region."[2]

Further discussions at SARPCCO level have led to a prioritisation of the issue of legal controls on firearms which will lead to the creation of a regional firearm protocol among all member states of SARPCCO, as well as a plan of action for the harmonisation of firearms legislation in the region.

DESTROYING WEAPONS: BILATERAL CO-OPERATION BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND MOZAMBIQUE

Aside from these subregional and regional initiatives in this respect, it is also important to note that several countries in Southern African have entered into bilateral or trilateral co-operation agreements around arms control issues. The agreement between Mozambique and South Africa has perhaps had the most success in destroying surplus weapons.

In recognition of the extent of illicit arms-smuggling, motor vehicle theft and the damaging effects which both were having on safety and security, Mozambique and South Africa signed a crime combating agreement in 1995. The agreement allows the police forces of the two countries to undertake joint operations in response to common safety and security problems.

It was recognised that arms caches in Mozambique were a main source of arms being smuggled into South African. Joint operations (known as Operations Rachel) were established to find and destroy weapons in Mozambique left over after the war.

One of the main characteristics of the operations is that they have been intelligence-driven. It was agreed that both the Mozambican and South African police forces would gather intelligence about cache locations. Subsequently, a team of Mozambican and South African police would destroy the weapons on site. South Africa pays the bulk of the costs of the operations and provides expertise on weapons and explosives disposal and destruction. As a result of increasing awareness about the programmes, private companies have become involved, giving incentives to informers who declare the location of arms caches. Often, these informers are women and children.

Operations Rachel also have an unorthodox policing approach. Attempts are made to involve individuals with information on arms caches in the operations, and they are often remunerated for disclosing the location of arms caches. The rationale behind this approach is the belief that most of the cache caretakers know about more caches. *"If you prosecute at the outset you lose the person's co-operation to disclose other*

violence and social dislocation evident in Southern Africa and the African continent as a whole. Aware of the urgent need to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related materials, and owing to the harmful effects of those activities on the security of each state and the region as a whole, and the danger they pose to the well-being of people in the region, their social and economic development and their right to live in peace, the Ministers responsible for policing in the region are concerned about these weapons and the effect they are having in the region. The Ministers have accordingly agreed to cooperate towards improving controls over small arms.

The Ministers also recognize the work of the UN, through its Group of Experts on Small Arms and the Draft Protocol Against Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition and other Related materials, supplementary to the Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime; the European Union through its Programs of Action on Arms Trafficking and its December 1998 Joint Action Against the Spread of Small Arms and Light Weapons; and the Organisation of American States, through its convention against Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials and its Model Regulations for the Control of the International Movement of Firearms, on small arms and illicit trafficking thereof;

The Ministers have therefore agreed to pursue, within the context of Southern Africa, those steps which may be taken to combat small arms trafficking in the region. Among those issues which will be considered are prohibitions on civilian possession of automatic and military weapons; co-ordination of procedures for the import, export and transit of small arms shipments, ensuring the registration of all small arms in a country, and, where appropriate, ensuring that proper controls be exercised over the manufacture of small arms to prevent their entrance into the illicit market; to promote the destruction of surplus arms. Through such actions, and

Several countries in Southern African have entered into bilateral or trilateral co-operation agreements around arms control issues

caches."

Since the initiative was launched, Operations Rachel have gone from success to success. By September 1998, three such operations had taken place. Police statistics indicate that these operations have destroyed more than 300 tons of firearms and about forty million rounds of ammunition.

As a result of these successes, Operation Rachel IV was undertaken in October 1998. While previous operations focused on southern Mozambique, Rachel IV went into the central Sofala province. Over thirty bomb, explosive and firearms disposal experts of the South African Police Service and twelve Mozambican counterparts were involved in the operation. The operation destroyed over 100 tons of illegal weapons, including two cannons, assault rifles, four types of handguns, three types of detonators, eight types of mortar bombs and five types of rocket launchers.

The expectation is that, if these operations continue to be as successful as they are now, most caches in Mozambique will eventually be destroyed and hence, one of the sources of illegal weapons will have been eliminated. The lessons of Operations Rachel will prove valuable for other regions considering similar programmes.

Endnotes

1   The newsletter is entitled Small Arms Proliferation and Africa. Three newsletters have been distributed since December 1998.

2   SARPCCO Declaration on Small Arms, SARPCCO Annual General Meeting, Mbabane, Swaziland, July 1999.

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PREVIOUS ISSUES