

## 1. Weapons collection and destruction, stockpile management

The Netherlands has made a substantial contribution to destruction of weapons and ammunition programmes in Afghanistan and Ukraine, and to destruction projects and stockpile security programmes in South-Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa.

Improved stockpile management and destruction methods have a positive effect on the successful implementation of SA projects. They prevent weapons being diverted into the illicit trade. The recent SAS study on the situation in Haiti is a case in point: when domestic conflict flared up again, it turned out to be fuelled by the availability of weapons from the former army which was disbanded earlier, but whose weapons were not destroyed.

It is important to realise that in practice weapons collection can only take place when a recognised authority is able to impose it. That shows the importance of peacebuilding efforts, a theme that is at the centre of our attention in the broader debate on U.N. reform and the Millennium goals.

Also, a gender perspective is of particular importance in weapons collection and weapons for development programmes.

Furthermore, in our experience, human resource development forms a crucial part of successful stockpile security programmes, as has been shown in the EU ASAC programme in Cambodia, where the consistent training of local military personnel has been key to the success of the programme, which also benefits from close cooperation with the national government in question.

Apart from military stockpiles, we must not forget that *civilian* stockpile management remains a distinct field of attention. In several regions in the world, there are according to the SAS yearbook still “huge numbers of unlicensed owners and unregistered guns”.

Finally, ammunition stockpiling deserves particular attention. Only a couple of weeks ago, in Afghanistan a makeshift ammunition storage exploded in civilian surroundings, killing dozens of people. Experts, including from SEESAC, the clearing house in Southeastern Europe, have rightly called for the development of international minimum emergency standards for ammunition storage as soon as possible.