



## The Value of Research in Implementing the Programme of Action

Mr Chairman, colleagues:

Since the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research last presented its statement at the 2003 BMS, we have continued to dedicate a significant part of our research agenda to small arms issues, and in so doing, have reached out to governments, other UN bodies, other international organizations, and civil society organizations alike, through our collaborative research activities, consultations and publications.

I should like to take this opportunity to highlight the critical importance of research as a driving force towards the effective implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action (PoA) and to point towards gaps in research that still need to be filled.

Over the past decade, there has been considerable progress towards enhancing knowledge on small arms issues in policy-making, research and advocacy, as well as in field-level programming. Indeed, it was the work of the research community that brought the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons to the attention of the international community.

Evidence-based research enables States and civil society actors to increase the efficacy of their work in implementing the PoA. This makes a real difference to the lives of people who are suffering from the ill-effects of the illicit trafficking in SALW. Indeed, the majority of statistics used by States in their statements at this meeting have come directly from the research community.

As many of you are aware from today's joint UNDP, UNIDIR, DDA and SAS seminar, the collaborative project on "Capacity Development for Reporting to the UN PoA" includes the analysis of the information provided in the national reports for implementing the PoA. This project has enabled us to see which small arms issues are receiving the most - and the least - attention, and has become a valuable resource for information exchange on implementation matters.

This research is valuable not only at the policy level but also operationally. For instance, through applying participatory monitoring and evaluation techniques and working in partnership with civil society and governments, UNIDIR has been able to identify some key criteria for successful and more cost-effective weapons collection. Through our research in Mali, Albania and Cambodia, we now know that involving local communities in identifying incentives to give up weapons will significantly improve the efficacy of DDR and other weapons collection programmes, which enhances people's security more cost-effectively.

The key to effective and ground-breaking research is the collaboration and involvement of partnerships that bring together the collective competencies of different fields, perspectives and experiences. New thinking has emerged from innovative partnerships across the fields of security, development, human rights, public health and humanitarian affairs, along with the participation of civil society.

Organizations in the UN system are critical to the implementation of the PoA. CASA plays an invaluable role in enhancing the state of knowledge on small arms issues by drawing upon the field experiences of its members on the one hand, and creating operational partnerships on the other. Under the CASA umbrella, UNIDIR has been involved in a wide range of activities, for example:

- UNIDIR assisted UNHCR in the publication of the *Refugees* magazine (volume 2, no. 139 2005) entitled "How Secure do you Feel?"
- UNIDIR is part of the Inter-Agency Working Group on the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards, specifically contributing to small arms issues and gender aspects.
- UNIDIR is cooperating with UN institutions and NGOs on the effects of, and issues pertaining to interpersonal violence and the spread of weapons.
- UNIDIR and UNDP collaborated on a joint study based on the findings of a 1,200 person survey on SALW and personal security in Sierra Leone.
- UNIDIR's collaboration with the Department of Disarmament Affairs includes projects on capacity-building, illicit brokering, information databases and small arms trafficking in Africa.

Mr Chairman, despite our progress, SALW research is still in its formative years as a distinct field of study. There is, of course, insufficient knowledge about the precise nature of small arms problems in specific regions; lack of consensus on the degree to which small arms problems affect the policies and programmes of a range of differing fields; and the implications of the sheer scale and trans-national nature of the problem.

There is a growing but still limited understanding of how small arms action and objectives can be advanced in other areas such as development, poverty reduction, humanitarian action, human rights and health. Equally, aside from anecdotes and general observations, there is little understanding of how small arms problems undermine other areas of intervention in post-conflict situations. For instance, many development and humanitarian actors do not yet recognize how the psychosocial trauma of armed or gender-based violence impacts rehabilitation and resettlement programmes.

In addition, following on from our work on weapons collection and capacity-building, we have identified a gap in our knowledge on the scale and distribution of assistance for the implementation of the PoA. Indeed, research that ascertains the needs and concerns of affected states and local communities is vital for effective policy-making, decision-making and donor collaboration.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to thank all those who fund research and learn from and make use of its findings, including creating a space for it to be reported on at this meeting. UNIDIR and its partners wish to commend all those engaged in this life-saving research and all those who fund it.

I thank you Mr Chairman.

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