

## EDITOR'S NOTE

This issue of *Disarmament Forum* focuses on cluster munitions. For several years, government experts have touched upon cluster munitions in their discussions at the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) meetings in Geneva, mainly in the context of broader work on explosive remnants of war. While these talks have raised some useful issues, discussions have largely been restricted to technical aspects and general considerations of the adequacy of existing international humanitarian law given the effects of these weapons on civilians at the time of use and post conflict. But international concern is growing and has intensified following the recent use of cluster munitions in Lebanon. Concerned states and civil society groups are now considering different options and mechanisms to develop stronger responses to this weapon.

This issue of *Disarmament Forum* provides a survey of views of the humanitarian impacts of cluster munitions: it is intended as a resource for multilateral practitioners and the general public prior to and immediately following the crucial 2006 CCW Review Conference. Articles consider the humanitarian effects of these weapons, look at previous use and existing stocks, examine relevant international humanitarian law, offer personal reflections from a deminer and reflect upon the potential role of civil society.

Issue 1, 2007 of *Disarmament Forum* will address security, arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament issues related to missiles. It will assess the current situation and investigate any future prospects for control. Existing devices, such as the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Hague Code of Conduct, UN Security Council resolution 1540 and the Proliferation Security Initiative are all attempts to ameliorate some aspects of missile-related problems, as are the various bilateral confidence-building measures already in operation. Much remains to be done, however, as cruise missiles are largely unregulated, implementation of existing mechanisms is progressing but leaves much to be desired, and research, development, deployment and international cooperation on active anti-ballistic missile defences continue.

Following two United Nations panels of governmental experts on missiles in 2002 and 2004 (the latter of which failed to adopt a consensus report) and an expert study, which is to be conveyed by the UN Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its current session, a third panel of governmental experts is due to be convened in 2007. The next issue of *Disarmament Forum* is conceived with a view to providing food for thought both for that panel and for the journal's broader readership.

With the delivery of its Final Report, UNIDIR's two-year project "European Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Explosive Remnants of War" has been completed. The Final Report offers suggestions as to how the European Union might deploy the full range of its capabilities to enhance overall effectiveness in actions relating to small arms and explosive remnants of war. The project was principally funded by the European Commission at the request of the European Parliament, with

additional funding from the Government of the United Kingdom. (See UNIDIR Focus for more on the Final Report.)

The project “International Assistance for Implementing the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms” has also delivered its Final Report. The project mapped out the degree of multilateral assistance currently being provided to implement the UN Programme of Action on a geographic and thematic basis and categorized the different types of assistance offered. The analysis allows donors and implementing agencies to recognize and target gaps and areas of specific need, while ensuring that other issues and recipient countries are not neglected. The report will help donors and organizations to coordinate with each other to ensure the compatibility of projects, and will alert donors and implementing agencies to competing or duplicated efforts.

The Institute is pleased to announce two new projects. The two-year “Security Needs Assessment Protocol” aims to build a new system within the United Nations for the timely provision of culturally specific security-building knowledge for field managers who are designing and planning security-related projects. It aims to complement the work of UN and World Bank Joint Assessment Missions by contributing security analysis, and to assist field staff in the delivery of security, development and humanitarian assistance. This project is supported by the Governments of Sweden and of the Netherlands. (See UNIDIR Focus for details about the project.)

The second new project will focus on the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions. While there is a growing body of literature on this topic, work in this area is often limited to examples of use by a few countries or coalitions, and to only a small number of countries where information is easily obtainable. UNIDIR is undertaking an eight-month project to expand the data available on cluster munitions by looking at use by other actors and in countries where little information is currently available. The project, supported by the Governments of Canada, New Zealand and Norway, will produce a report documenting the findings, providing details of the two case studies and offering policy recommendations.

On 21 September 2006, UNIDIR hosted a seminar, with speakers David Atwood, Rebecca Johnson and Jozef Goldblat, to mark the tenth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The CTBT—negotiated at the Conference on Disarmament and opened for signature on 24 September 1996 in New York—has since been signed by 176 states and ratified by 135 states.

*Kerstin Vignard*