

UNIDIR FOCUS

NEW PROJECT

Promoting Discussion on an Arms Trade Treaty

In January 2009 the European Council took a decision “on support for EU activities in order to promote among third countries the process leading towards an Arms Trade Treaty, in the framework of the European Security Strategy”. UNIDIR was entrusted with the technical implementation of this decision, with funding from the European Union.

The overall objective of the project is to promote the participation of all stakeholders in the discussions around an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), integrate national and regional contributions to the international process under way, and to identify the scope and implications of a treaty on the trade in conventional arms. The project aims at facilitating the exchange of views among states, regional organizations and civil society by encouraging discussions around different aspects of a possible international treaty on the arms trade. These views will serve as an important input to current discussions on an ATT, and hopefully support and stimulate related national, regional and international debates.

Within the 15 months foreseen for the project, UNIDIR will host six regional seminars in different parts of the world to increase the awareness of national and regional actors, United Nations Member States, civil society and industry of an ATT, and promote international discussions about the possibility of negotiating a comprehensive, legally binding instrument establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms. The regional seminars, organized in Dakar, Mexico City, Amman, Kuala Lumpur, Addis Ababa and Vienna, discuss the nature of a possible arms trade treaty, the process under way at the United Nations, scope, content and implications of such a treaty, as well as region-specific thematic discussions to gather ideas for further action, recommendations and suggestions that can feed into the ATT process.

In addition to the regional seminars, the project implementation plan contains a launch seminar, a side event in the margins of the First Committee (Sixty-fourth session of the UN General Assembly), and a final seminar to present the overall results of the project. Summary reports from each regional seminar outlining discussions, ideas and recommendations put forward for an ATT will be made available online. A final report compiling the summary reports of the regional seminars will be produced and presented for comments at the concluding seminar, and made available online.

In each issue of *Disarmament Forum*, UNIDIR Focus highlights one activity of the Institute, outlining the project’s methodology, recent research developments or its outcomes. UNIDIR Focus also describes a new UNIDIR publication. You can find summaries and contact information for all of the Institute’s present and past activities, and download or order our publications, online at <www.unidir.org>.

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PUBLICATIONS

The recently completed Disarmament as Humanitarian Action project looked at current difficulties for the international community in tackling disarmament and arms control challenges. The four volumes produced by the project examine multilateral negotiating processes more broadly to help practitioners “think outside the box” in their work by drawing on interdisciplinary research and explore how humanitarian perspectives add value to disarmament and arms control work, proposing new ways these approaches could assist multilateral processes.

Alternative Approaches in Multilateral Decision Making:

Disarmament as Humanitarian Action, John Borrie and Vanessa Martin Randin (eds)

UNIDIR, 2005, 152 pages, sales number G.V.E.05.0.8, ISBN 92-9045-172-6

US\$ 18 (plus shipping and handling)

Multilateral arms control and disarmament negotiations have achieved scant success in recent years, despite pressing political imperatives. This volume critically assesses contemporary multilateral arms control and disarmament negotiating processes, considering, for instance, the role of “political will” in deciding outcomes. Starting from the premise that traditional practices and presumptions are insufficient to address real-world problems deriving from the possession, use or threat of use of weapons, the volume proposes recasting the challenges and responses to benefit also from humanitarian approaches.

Disarmament as Humanitarian Action: From Perspective to Practice

John Borrie and Vanessa Martin Randin (eds)

UNIDIR, 2006, 178 pages, sales number G.V.E.06.0.9, ISBN 92-9045-182-3

US\$ 25 (plus shipping and handling)

Disarmament and arms control challenges are, at root, issues of human security. This volume provides practical insights from various humanitarian contexts such as the anti-personnel mine ban treaty and international work on explosive remnants of war and small arms. Its aim is to inform and help the ongoing efforts of multilateral practitioners, especially in the field of disarmament and arms control.

Thinking Outside the Box in Multilateral Disarmament and Arms Control Negotiations, John Borrie and Vanessa Martin Randin (eds)

UNIDIR, 2006, 270 pages, sales number G.V.E.06.0.16, ISBN 978-92-9045-187-7

US\$ 35 (plus shipping and handling)

There is need for new approaches—to “think outside the box”—in order to make multilateral disarmament and arms control negotiations work better because continued failure has real human

costs. This volume offers new practical tools and perspectives to inform and help the ongoing efforts of multilateral disarmament practitioners, drawing from a range of contributors in civil society, diplomacy, and the policy and research fields.

The Value of Diversity in Multilateral Disarmament Work

John Borrie and Ashley Thornton

UNIDIR, 2008, 98 pages, sales number GV.E.08.0.5, ISBN 978-92-9045-193-8

US\$ 19 (plus shipping and handling)

Serious political problems exist in multilateral disarmament and arms control work, but these are not the only difficulties. The unintended consequences of past practice, or the complex challenges those involved must deal with, can be obstacles to progress. Aspects of multilateral disarmament practice may compound cognitive challenges that individuals face in managing their perceptions and interactions with others in negotiating environments. While there is no way to ensure success in disarmament endeavours, multilateral practitioners can improve the chances by recognizing and harnessing cognitive diversity, as humanitarian perspectives in disarmament processes have shown. This book discusses practical suggestions to help achieve this.