

FOREWORD

Humanitarian action is primarily taking place in areas and countries torn by war and conflict. The success of humanitarian efforts is closely linked to the success of disarmament efforts. Disarmament, or the lack of it, can have dire humanitarian consequences. Disarmament and arms control processes are an integral part of promoting human security.

The 1997 Mine Ban Convention is the most recent example of a successful response to a humanitarian crisis. The process leading up to this Convention consisted of an unprecedented partnership and co-operation between governments and non-governmental and international organisations and between countries across traditional divides. These partnerships have been key to the success of the Convention, and constituted a departure from the conventional patterns that characterise protracted multilateral processes.

The purpose of UNIDIR's project *Disarmament as Humanitarian Action* is to view multilateral disarmament issues from a humanitarian angle. Disarmament and arms control problems are, at root, human security issues. This project should facilitate proposals for multilateral arms control processes that will make a real difference in terms of preventing conflict and improving people's lives.

I am encouraged by this initiative and hope that those processes that have successfully built on a broader range of voices will serve as an inspiration for everyone involved in humanitarian action.

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