

Acknowledgements

Often the nature of the first contact between individuals and institutions sets the tone and speed in which their relationships will subsequently evolve. Human assets such as, the patience to listen, capacity to take fundamentally innovative decisions and, determination to act in a timely manner, are essential in order to *make certain things happen* in a world of new challenges and uncertainties.

We are pleased to acknowledge Dr. Rodrigo Toranzo, the Under-Secretary for Foreign Intelligence at the State Intelligence Secretariat (SIDE), Argentina, who has demonstrated such human qualities since his first encounter with a UNIDIR representative in October 1996, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on the occasion of a conference jointly organized with the Brazilian Intelligence Service. We welcome this first initiative made towards the possibility of joining forces with UNIDIR. Our efforts to learn more about enhancing international security have been strengthened by working with this kind of agency. The joint SIDE/UNIDIR Seminar on *Illicit Traffic in Small Arms and Sensitive Technologies*, held from 23-25 April 1997, is a clear example of this.

UNIDIR is also pleased to thank Brig. (R.) Genaro M. Sciola, Director at the National Commission for Space Activities (CONAE), Argentina, for his cooperation and foresight in helping to formulate the original idea of this seminar. We sincerely appreciate Brig. Sciola's logistical support in the different preparatory missions UNIDIR conducted in Buenos Aires. Beyond the professional qualities of this civil servant, there is the warmth of the man who has introduced us progressively and eloquently to Argentinian culture. He has received us both as colleagues and as friends, thus making our work much more enjoyable. Our acknowledgements also go to Dr. Conrado Franco Varrotto, Executive Technical Director at CONAE, whose role was essential in ensuring that CONAE, along with Brig. Sciola and his staff, could cooperate with UNIDIR and SIDE.

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refreshing and made our work more intellectually stimulating. This attitude is representative of the high level of professionalism at SIDE, and we are honoured to have been associated with this Argentinian agency. In addition, we would also like to thank SIDE for their financial contribution which ensured the appropriate conditions of this seminar.

Our thanks also go to the Argentinian diplomats both at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and at the Permanent Mission on Disarmament in Geneva: Minister Pablo Tettamanti, Deputy Director of International Security, Nuclear and Space Affairs; Secretary Christina López Monra and Counsellor Alicia de Hoz; and Counsellor Carlos Alberto Hernandez and Second Secretary Sandra Moira Wilkinson. They were all very cooperative and always encouraged UNIDIR to pursue its goals. This type of attention is not only welcome, but also necessary since foreign ministries are our bridges in linking with national institutions.

All of those who have helped UNIDIR in its research endeavour have in essence helped the enhancement of international security. Indeed, they have, indirectly, helped to implement United Nations General Assembly resolutions which call for the international community, *inter alia*, to broaden and strengthen the bases for cooperation “. . . by providing information on customs, traffic and seizure of illicit weapons and by coordinating intelligence work where necessary and possible”. (See for example, A/46/301 and A/RES/36H.)

Therefore, the growing importance of working with national institutions, such as the intelligence services, is evident in the role they play in strengthening international security. This is true in the quest to curb the illicit traffic in small arms, but also in the case of illicit trafficking in materials that can be used for the production of weapons of mass destruction, their access by terrorist groups, and a series of other activities that might fuel this traffic (such as drug dealing).

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