

The nexus between mine action, disarmament and development

Landmines, explosive remnants of war (ERW) and small arms and light weapons (SALW) pose a considerable threat to human development and security in a post-conflict situation. Landmines and ERW significantly contaminate the environment and endanger livelihoods. Their removal is not only a humanitarian imperative but also a first essential step toward sustainable development. The availability of SALW not only promotes the vicious cycle of violence and underdevelopment, it intensifies and prolongs the conflict and undermines development. Abundance of SALW tends to lead to a lack of security, which in turn increases the demand for weapons and, hence, the cycle of violence. Dangerous settings prevent structural development and progress in socio-economic problems because infrastructure is destroyed and the society terrorized.

Arms trade impacts development also on a national level. Arms sales and military aid and assistance drain developing countries of financial and human resources and have high opportunity and economic costs. In the worst case, weapons are misused to repress civil society.

1.1 The nexus between landmines, disarmament and development

In light of this, the research community has increasingly searched for links between the three areas: mine action, disarmament and development. A recently issued study by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) draws attention to the fact that very few synergies between the two areas of mine action and SALW programs exist. Coordination and collaboration between the two sectors would make mine action, disarmament and development programs more cost-effective and eliminate duplication.

Synergies between programs of mine action and SALW can be identified above all in the provision of technical expertise and in managing the programs efficiently. With respect to disarmament, while conversion is an expensive and lengthy process, it frees resources for development and is an investment in security

1.2 The legal situation

In order to curb arms trade and foster disarmament efficiently, more binding and transparent guidelines regarding armament transfers have to be developed. While the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention provides a legal framework, responsibilities of states with respect to SALW are not clearly defined. As a consequence, individual states understand existing international law

differently. This results in inadequate and inconsistent national norms. One approach to better address issues of human rights and international humanitarian law more sufficiently in the area of SALW is the Arms Trade Treaty Initiative. This initiative aims at establishing universal standards regulating the international transfer of conventional weapons and affirming the existing responsibilities of states.

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1.3 International organizations

Disarmament and Development, by the UN Department of Disarmament Affairs, New York, NY, US

This website provides access to various UN documents on the relationship between disarmament and development. It includes the report of the Group of Governmental Experts of June 2004, Disarmament Studies, General Assembly Resolutions between 1998 and 2005, and Reports of the Secretary-General between 1998 and 2006. The latter summarizes the activities undertaken by the UN departments and partner agencies.

Disarmament as Humanitarian Action: From Perspective to Practice, by UNIDIR, Geneva, Switzerland

This publication provides practical insights from recent negotiating processes in which arms control and humanitarian perspectives have met, in particular, those relating to landmines, ERW and small arms issues. It aims to challenge some of the conventional wisdom of disarmament and arms control negotiators.

NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) Trust Fund

The NATO PfP Trust Fund supports NATO Partner Nations in the destruction of stockpiled anti-personnel landmines under the Ottawa Convention as well as in a number of other areas of defense reform, such as the destruction of SALW, conventional munitions and rocket fuel oxidizers. The website provides information on the fund's activities, policy and projects.

E-MINE - Electronic Mine Information Network, by the United Nations Mine Actions Services, New York, NY, US

E-MINE offers information and resources on mine action. It provides details on organizations involved in mine action activities, technology and standards, country profiles and mine-action projects. The website makes the presentations at the Ninth International Meeting of Mine Action Program Directors and UN Advisors accessible. The presentations titled Mine Action and Development – The Theory and How to Integrate Mine Action into Development are of particular interest with respect to the relation between mine action and development.

1.4 Research and academia

Conversion Survey – Global Disarmament, Demilitarization and Demobilization, by the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), Bonn, Germany

This website includes the surveys on global disarmament, demilitarization and demobilization that BICC conducted between 1996 and 2005. The latest issue of the Conversion Survey addresses the role of conversion in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and gives an overview of conversion issues.

SIPRI Yearbook 2006: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security, by SIPRI, Solna, Sweden

The SIPRI Yearbook 2006 analyzes the developments in security and conflicts, military spending and armaments, and non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament in 2005. This issue also includes special studies on transparency in the arms life cycle, international arms transfers and conventional arms control.

Reviewing Action on Small Arms 2006: Assessing the First Five Years of the Programme of Action, by the International Network on Small Arms (IANSA), London, UK

This report reviews and analyzes the progress toward the implementation of the UN Program of Action (PoA) and the consequent issues and priorities for the 2006 Review Conference. Chapter 8 titled the Implications of Illicit Proliferation and Misuse of SALW outlines the impacts of SALW on human rights and international law, development and governance. It examines the weaknesses or gaps in the PoA in relation to each area, international attempts to address these issues and makes recommendations on how the PoA can be strengthened to address these areas.

International Law and Small Arms and Light Weapons Control: Obligations, Challenges and Opportunities, by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Geneva, Switzerland

This briefing paper explores the legal basis of states' responsibility to prevent small arms misuse and to restrict arms transfers when such weapons are likely to be misused. It identifies areas that warrant further codification of these responsibilities, as well as opportunities in the coming period for strengthening the legal norms around these issues.

Mine Action Information Center (MAIC) at James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA, US

The MAIC is a public policy center that manages information and conducts training relevant to mine action. The website provides information on global demining activities and initiatives. The center publishes the Journal of Mine Action. The article of Daniele Ressler on A Primer on Explosive Remnants of War clarifies definitions of ERW by examining its legal and functional understandings. The article by Ted Paterson and Eric M Filippino on The Road to Mine Action and Development: The Life-Cycle Perspective of Mine Action outlines the four-step life cycle of mine action. It states that demining is just a small part but development is essential in order to effectively fight poverty and suppression.

Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), Switzerland

GICHD is an impartial and independent foundation that supports the efforts of the international community in reducing the impact of mines and unexploded ordnance. The center is active in

research, provides operational assistance and supports the implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. The website provides information on the Informal Dialogue on Linking Mine Action to Development and on the link between Mine Action and Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW).

Integrating Development into the UN Programme of Action Process, by PRIO, Oslo, Norway
This report provides an overview of the presentations and discussion at the expert seminar organized by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers (NISAT) in March 2006. It identifies priority areas and puts forward recommendations for future action on local, national, regional and international levels.

1.5 Non-governmental organizations

Control Arms, by Amnesty International, London, UK, IANSA, London, UK and Oxfam, Oxford, UK

Control Arms is a campaign jointly run by Amnesty International, Oxfam and the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) that works toward the application of stricter arms control.

Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers (NISAT)

This website provides background information on the problem and the impact of small arms. It features online databases containing information on imports and exports, black market and country profiles.