

FOREWORD

This *Handbook* is a contribution to the training of the armed and security forces of West Africa. It aims to strengthen the effectiveness of these forces in the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. This initiative draws on the idea of development, peace and security for the people of West Africa enunciated by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) already in 1975.

The faith in peace, of which economic development is an essential component, impels the people of West Africa towards a future free from the scourge of armed violence. Because fundamentally human, this yearning for peace is legitimate.

Thus, the human being first. Then, the citizen. And only then, the soldier.

Beyond topics related to classical military training, the *Handbook* provides for civic education. Technical issues on the proliferation of small arms and light weapons are joined by expositions in the disciplines that contribute to the making of a good citizen: domestic law, international law, humanitarian law, human rights, international institutions, etc. The aim here is to distinguish a professional army on the one hand, from an army of mercenaries on the other, by raising the consciousness of professional soldiers and keeping them away from predatory temptation and violence.

Our armed and security forces will greatly benefit from the universal techniques and principles, as adapted for the African environment in this *Handbook*. They will find it indispensable for an effective fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. They will learn about the important human qualities instilled in the professional armies of societies that value peace and security. The difficult alliance between peace and security, courage and moderation, require these qualities.

Efforts to establish peace with a view to making the future of the young West African nations safer, benefit from the support of the international community, in terms of both solidarity and friendship.

UNDP feels honored to be associated, through its regional office, with this initiative aimed at the strengthening of local West African capacities against the proliferation of light weapons. UNDP takes this opportunity to thank Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Japan, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom for their support of the activities of PCASED, notably in the implementation of the West African Moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms and light weapons.

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