



United Nations

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Fact Sheet No.

The International Conference
on the Relationship between
Disarmament and Development



DISARMAMENT

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Disarmament and development

The Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations expresses the determination “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war” and “to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom”. Furthermore, it declares the intention “to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples”. The Charter also refers to the “establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world’s human and economic resources” and to promoting “higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development” with a view to “the creation of conditions of stability and well-being”.

Thus, from the inception of the United Nations, there has been a recognition of the existence of disarmament and development as two vital issues before the international community. In its efforts to achieve these two separate goals, the world Organization has also progressively become involved with the relationship between them. This involvement has grown along with an increasing recognition that a curtailment of the military consumption of resources could be a factor in the resolution of pressing international problems, whether these pertain to matters of peace and security, to international economic co-operation or to a wide range of other social and economic issues.

One of the problems underlying the arms race has been the ineffective implementation of the system of collective security envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations. In the absence of an effective guarantee of security, nations continue to seek security through exercising their inherent right of individual or collective self-defence. Yet security remains an elusive goal. It is evident that efforts to attain it by adding to stocks of weapons have not been successful. For many States the question has acquired an added dimension. Besides perceiving the strictly military aspects of security, which in many instances are affected by global issues of the arms race, the developing countries are concerned with the food or energy aspects of national and international security, which are of immediate concern. The existence of non-military threats to national and international security is widely recognized. In addressing the issues of security in the context of disarmament, appropriate consideration should thus also be given to non-military threats to it.

Disarmament is broadly understood as the process of reduction in the size of and expenditures on armed forces, the

destruction and dismantling of weapons, whether deployed or stockpiled, the progressive elimination of the capacity to produce new weapons and the release and integration into civilian life of military personnel. This process must be implemented through balanced and equitable reductions and provide for mutually acceptable modes of verification and compliance to ensure undiminished security for all States. There is also an important place in this process for arms limitation agreements that genuinely restrain the quantitative growth and qualitative refinement of arsenals. Such agreements would be significant both as confidence-building measures and as stepping-stones to actual reductions in armaments and armed forces.

Development, in a broad sense, refers to social and economic changes in society leading to improvement in the quality of life for all. At the most basic level, it means providing for every person the essential material requirements for a dignified and productive existence. Economic growth essentially means an expansion of output. Development includes, but is not coterminous with, economic growth. Development implies the opportunity to participate fully in the economic and social process and to share in its benefits. More specifically, if the global development effort is to be sustainable in the long term, it should endeavour to provide for a pattern of economic growth that would significantly reduce within a reasonable time-frame the prevailing disparities between nations in the quality of life. Furthermore, global development effort depends on the availability of adequate resources, whether human, natural or material.

Disarmament and development remain parallel and distinct processes, although there are many ways in which they can reinforce each other. Both in turn are widely held to be interlinked with security. Thus, it is recognized that a triangular interaction exists between disarmament, development and security. As stated in the Final Document of the 1978 special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, "peace, security and economic and social development are indivisible".

The continuing arms buildups are pertinent not only in the context of disarmament, but also of development. Beyond the simple opportunity-cost effect, the arms accumulation process could make development more difficult in several respects. It is generally felt that unless the world proceeds more resolutely towards the ultimate aim of disarmament, it will not, in the long run, be able to achieve or sustain development fully and worldwide.

Development is an objective of both developed and developing countries. Developed countries need to sustain or

improve their economic performance; developing countries need to attain better economic performance.

Recommendations by the General Assembly

United Nations involvement with the relationship between disarmament and development has resulted in various recommendations by the General Assembly, which fall into three broad categories: those defining ultimate goals, those addressed to intermediate measures and those articulating immediate concerns.

Statements of ultimate goals are found, for example, in proposals for: the release of resources for purposes of socio-economic development through general and complete disarmament under effective international control; resolution of security-related conflicts and conflict situations with a view to removing the underlying causes of the escalating arms race and military expenditures; and conclusion of specific measures of arms limitation and disarmament in accordance with well-defined priorities contained in a comprehensive disarmament strategy.

Recommendations for intermediate measures include proposals such as those aimed at reducing military budgets; making requisite preparations to facilitate the conversion of resources freed by disarmament measures to civilian purposes, especially to meet urgent social and economic needs, in particular in developing countries; and seeking greater understanding and awareness of the complex issues involved in the relationship between disarmament and development through more accurate and reliable information and analyses. Such proposals tend to view the processes of disarmament and development as running parallel to, rather than being contingent upon, each other and suggest that an interrelated perspective will contribute to faster progress in both areas.

Recommendations articulating immediate concerns focus on measures seeking ways and means to address the urgency of developmental issues and include proposals such as the establishment of a disarmament fund for development, to be financed from budgetary savings related to the implementation of disarmament measures, or from a levy on armaments or voluntary contributions. Proposals of this kind argue that the

challenge of developmental issues is of such a global nature that it can be satisfactorily met only by exploring all available avenues, including the possibility of rechannelling even a fraction of the resources devoted to military purposes to the tasks of socio-economic development.

Over the past three decades, those views have been reiterated in United Nations debates. The positions taken by Member States in 1984, when the Disarmament Commission considered the relationship between disarmament and development, were rather similar to those stated during the debates in the Economic and Social Council in 1953, before the establishment of the Special United Nations Fund for Economic Development.

The Disarmament Commission agreed at that time that world-wide military spending had acquired a staggering magnitude and that the global trend continued to be towards a faster rate of annual increase. That prospect stood in dramatic contrast to the sombre state of the global economy and had serious implications for the economic prospects of the world, in particular those of developing countries.

Throughout the history of United Nations involvement, there has been a wide readiness to consider devoting a part of disarmament-released resources for purposes of socio-economic development, particularly to the benefit of developing countries. However, there have been reservations with regard to both timing and method. Some Member States have declared that they are not in a position to make additional contributions to another development fund; others believe that raising the level of official developmental assistance is not an accurate indicator of the availability of additional resources for developmental aid; and still others have pointed out that it would be unwise to create a new funding activity without sufficient funds for its effective operation. There are also those who have insisted that any decisions to reallocate a part of military budgets to non-military purposes must be preceded by a reliable and accurate picture of the levels and magnitude of military expenditures, particularly on the part of major military spenders, and those who believe that the creation of such a fund should only be viewed as symbolic of an international willingness to promote military restraint.

Various approaches

The question of releasing additional resources through disarmament has been the subject of numerous discussions among Member States, both inside and outside the United Nations. There have also been various proposals, from the first one, made by India in 1950, for the establishment of a United Nations peace fund for development of underdeveloped areas, to be financed from savings effected by the reduction of armaments and from other sources, to the one made in 1985 by Sri Lanka, calling for an agreement between the United States and the USSR to reduce military expenditures by 10 per cent for the purpose of the reduction of the international debt of the poorer nations.

For a number of years, the United Nations itself has been exploring this question. The Secretary-General, in 1978, suggested that “we devote to national and international disarmament efforts \$1 million for every \$1,000 million currently spent on arms”. In 1984, the issue was discussed most extensively by the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

In these discussions, it has been widely suggested that a significant part of the resources released through disarmament should come from the major military spenders. Three types of approaches have been discussed: a levy on armaments, voluntary contributions and a disarmament dividend. Lending itself to taxing military expenditures, the armament levy approach has invited reservations on various grounds. Some fear that, if accepted, it will allow the arms race to continue unabated, as it does not call for measures to halt and reverse it. Also, doubts have been expressed about the possibility of determining individual contributions in the absence of precise information about the nature and volume of resources devoted to military purposes. The reliability of voluntary contributions is sometimes questioned, although the experience of a number of United Nations programmes funded on a voluntary basis is cited as grounds for optimism.

The disarmament dividend approach relates disarmament to development in both political and operational terms. While pointing out that progress towards development should not be made contingent upon disarmament, this approach also emphasizes that progress in the field of disarmament would be required for additional contributions towards development. The disarmament dividend approach may also be seen as a gradual process combining various elements. At an initial phase, it could be financed from voluntary contributions; at an intermediate stage, from the mutually agreed-upon release of

additional resources through specific measures of arms limitation; and, eventually, from disarmament.

There are different views about the administrative machinery that would be required. On the one hand, it has been suggested that there is no need to create a new institution and that the reallocation of any resources released through disarmament could be channelled through an existing United Nations programme, e.g., the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). On the other hand, it has been said that the creation of a new autonomous body could promote possibilities for changing procedures and dealing with sectoral concerns specific to each region. According to this view, even if, for technical reasons, existing administrative arrangements within the United Nations system were to be used, there should be a supervisory body to set the broad outlines of policies for reallocation, in which the major Powers and the developing countries would be adequately represented.

With regard to mechanisms, there are also different views. For instance, should reallocations be made on the basis of regions or on the basis of development objectives or projects? Some believe that the involvement of regional institutions would provide a support base in the sense of helping to determine need and evaluate development objectives and programmes and also of assisting in administering them.

In recent years, institutions, non-governmental organizations and individuals have put forward a number of suggestions and ideas relating a release of resources to the process of disarmament and specifying the nature and volume of resources and possible mechanisms for reallocations. Many of these suggestions stress the importance of making preparations for conversion and reallocation of resources in advance of taking concrete measures of arms limitation and disarmament.

A commonly shared feature of these suggestions is that they view resources in much broader terms than finance. Thus capital and equipment as well as human skills and scientific knowledge have been included in suggestions for creating a United Nations entity to administer resource allocations for socio-economic development.

Many of these ideas concentrate on alternative civilian uses for released resources and provide detailed illustrative examples of possible peaceful uses of the finance, labour and technology now devoted to military purposes. Another approach involves the use of military engineers to construct bridges, ports, roads and buildings, to provide hospital, educational and communication services, and to transport food-stuffs.

In general, considerable attention has been paid to outlining appropriate international mechanisms for the redeployment and reallocation of resources released through disarmament. In some cases, consideration has been given to making this issue a part of the ongoing negotiations on arms limitation and disarmament. In others, greater emphasis has been attached to the establishment of an independent international institution or agency that would consider each measure of arms limitation in terms of its impact on resource consumption and make appropriate recommendations.

Agreements on arms limitation have concentrated on eliminating or banning the use of certain kinds of weapons, prohibiting the stationing of other kinds of weapons in specific areas, and limiting the deployment of and placing ceilings on some categories of weapons systems. Current negotiations and discussions also include issues related to military technological capabilities. Separately, there has been a series of proposals for limitation, reduction and/or elimination of some categories of weapons and for reducing military *matériel*, personnel and their deployment. The types of resources to be released through such measures would include capital and industrial capacity, as well as labour and technology. The action required in the conversion and transfer of such resources would differ depending on whether it took place within national economies or internationally, among economies at different levels of development.

Most of the existing ideas and proposals about ways and means of releasing resources through disarmament have been concerned primarily with one type of resources, i.e., finance. Part of the explanation may be that financial restraints on military expenditures can be seen as a way of narrowing the overall framework within which other kinds of resources are devoted to military purposes. Another reason may be that it is less difficult to measure finance than to determine the nature and volume of other kinds of resources used. There may also be the consideration that, of all types of resources, finance lends itself most easily to conversion and transfer within various sectors of an economy and among economies.

Preparatory Committee and the International Conference

At its 1984 session, the General Assembly decided to convene an International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development and for that purpose established a Preparatory Committee composed of 54 members. The Committee was called upon to formulate and submit, by consensus, to the General Assembly at its next regular session, recommendations on the provisional agenda, procedure, place, date and duration of the Conference.

The following countries attended the first session of the Preparatory Committee: Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, China, Colombia, Congo, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, France, German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Greece, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, Mongolia, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Rwanda, Senegal, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Togo, Uganda, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia and Zambia.

Under the chairmanship of Ambassador Muchkund Dubey of India, the Preparatory Committee met in New York from 29 July to 9 August 1985. As requested, it submitted its report to the General Assembly at its session held later that year. By resolution 40/155, adopted without a vote, the Assembly decided that the Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development would take place in Paris from 15 July to 2 August 1986.

The General Assembly's decision to convene the Conference represents both a recognition of the complex interaction between two vital issues and a willingness to address it at a high political level. Briefly, the main elements covered by this decision, to which different degrees of political emphasis have been attached during the various phases of United Nations involvement, are reflected in the three substantive items on the agenda of the International Conference, which read as follows:

(a) Consideration of the relationship between disarmament and development in all its aspects and dimensions with a view to reaching appropriate conclusions (item 8);

(b) Consideration of the implications of the level and magnitude of military expenditures, in particular those of nuclear-weapon States and other militarily important States,

for the world economy and the international economic and social situation, particularly for the developing countries, and formulation of appropriate recommendations for remedial measures (item 9);

(c) Consideration of ways and means of releasing additional resources, through disarmament measures, for development purposes, in particular for the benefit of developing countries (item 10).

The General Assembly subsequently authorized the Preparatory Committee to hold additional sessions, each of two weeks duration, open to all States, and devoted to consideration of the substantive questions included in the agenda. Accordingly, two additional substantive sessions were scheduled for 1986 in New York. The first took place from 1 to 11 April and the second will be held from 2 to 13 June.

Resolution 40/155 had also requested the appointment of the Secretary-General of the Conference. Thus, on 17 December the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, appointed the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament, Mr. Jan Martenson, as Secretary-General of the Conference.

In accordance with his mandate, he will, *inter alia*, assist the Chairman in organizing the work of the Preparatory Committee and in providing professional assistance through the preparation of background papers and bibliographies and the compilation of information and analyses relevant to the work of the Conference. In addition, he will assume responsibility for disseminating information and for convening a panel of eminent personalities active in the field of disarmament and development.

Documentation

In accordance with the recommendations of the Preparatory Committee, the Secretary-General of the Conference prepared a number of brief background papers based on available information. In order to make full use of the United Nations system, he held consultations with the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation. In that connection, a task force of key units in the economic and social sectors of the United Nations was set up to assist in the preparation of background documentation.

In addition to the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation and the Department for Disarmament Affairs, the task force consisted of senior officials from the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and UNDP.

In order to ensure the widest possible dissemination of information relating to the Conference, as requested by the General Assembly, a senior official of the Department of Public Information was included in the task force. Moreover, all the focal points on the relationship between disarmament and development within the United Nations system were invited to contribute to the preparation of documentation within their own areas of competence. Their inputs were absorbed, as appropriate, in the preparation of the basic documents.

Thus, the following background papers have been prepared:

A compilation of agreed formulations (A/CONF.130/PC/INF/3). The paper utilizes United Nations sources and broadly covers the subjects directly related to the three substantive items on the agenda of the Conference. The documents cited are those which were submitted to the General Assembly and subsequently approved or noted by it without a vote. The excerpts included in the paper are quotations which were the subject of general agreement;

A bibliographical survey of recent literature (A/CONF.130/PC/INF/4). The survey is a listing of recent publications available on the issue of the relationship between disarmament and development. While every effort has been made to present as wide-ranging a selection of analyses and views as possible, it should not be considered as exhaustive;

An overview of United Nations involvement (A/CONF.130/PC/INF/5). The paper provides an overview of the United Nations involvement with the subject of the relationship between disarmament and development and has been prepared on the basis of United Nations sources.

Other background papers

Furthermore, the report of the Preparatory Committee requested the preparation of a "short succinct document" covering each of the three substantive agenda items. Consequently, three papers have been prepared which bear the full titles of agenda items 8, 9 and 10 (mentioned above) and which have been issued as information papers A/CONF.130/PC/INF/6 through 8 respectively.

In addition to the preparation of those background papers, the report of the Preparatory Committee also stated that the "preparation of a number of other new documents and papers, on a strictly selective basis, might be necessary". In consultation with the members of the Committee, the Secretary-General of the Conference commissioned the following papers, which express the views of their authors only.

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| "Overview of events in the disarmament/development relationship field since 1981" | Inga Thorsson
(Chairman of the United Nations study group on the relationship between disarmament and development) |
| "Military spending and economic structure: special reference to market economies" | Nils Petter Gleditsch
(Peace Research Institute Oslo) |
| "Military spending and development process" | Augusto Varas
(Latin American Faculty of Social Science) |
| "Military spending and economic structure: with reference to centrally planned economies" | Institute for World Economy and International Relations, Moscow |
| "Cross-sectoral analyses of military expenditures and capital formation, productivity, economic growth and competitiveness, etc." | Dr. Saadet Deger
(University of London) |

Contributions from ILO and the World Bank are expected to be issued also as information papers by the end of April.

Panel of eminent personalities

In accordance with the decision of the General Assembly based on the report of the Preparatory Committee, the Secretary-General of the Conference will convene, from 16 to 18 April, a panel of eminent personalities active in the field of disarmament and development, drawn from different regions of the world and covering a wide range of views, in order to channel their input into the preparatory process for the benefit of the Conference. It is expected that the panel will prepare a joint statement which may serve as a point of reference at the Conference. The members of the panel, in alphabetical order, are:

1. Ibrahim Hilmy Abdel-Rahman (Egypt)
Adviser for Planning and Economic Affairs to the Prime Minister
Member of the Egyptian Academy of Science
Former Executive Director of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
Former Minister of National Planning and Administrative Reform
2. Tamas Bacskai (Hungary)
Professor of Economics and Head of the Department of Public Finance and Banking, University of Budapest
Former Managing Director of the National Bank of Hungary
3. Gamani Corea (Sri Lanka)
Chancellor, Open University, Sri Lanka
Former Secretary-General of UNCTAD
Former Deputy Governor of the Central Bank
4. Edgar Faure (France)
Member of the French Academy
Senator and President of the Regional Council of Franche-Comté
Former President of the National Assembly
Former Prime Minister
5. Alfonso García-Robles (Mexico)
Nobel Peace Prize Laureate
Member of the Palme Commission
Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva
Former Foreign Minister
6. Lawrence Klein (United States)
Professor of Economics, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
Nobel Prize Laureate

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7. Pei Monong (China)
Deputy Director, Institute of International Studies,
Beijing
 8. Olusegun Obasanjo (Nigeria)
Member of the Palme Commission and of the InterAction
Council
Former Head of State
 9. Raúl Prebisch (Argentina)
Honorary Professor of Political Economy, University of
Buenos Aires
Former Secretary-General of UNCTAD
Former Executive Secretary of the United Nations Eco-
nomic Commission for Latin America
Former Director-General of the Central Bank
 10. O. T. Bogomolov (USSR)
Director, Institute of the World Socialist System of the
USSR Academy of Sciences
 11. Carlos Rafael Rodríguez (Cuba)
Vice-President of the Council of State and Ministers
Professor Emeritus of Economics, University of Havana
Former President of the National Commission for Eco-
nomic, Scientific and Technical Co-operation
 12. Walter Scheel (Germany, Federal Republic of)
Chairman of the Board of the German Finance Company
for Investments in Developing Countries (German De-
velopment Company)
Former President
Former Minister for Foreign Affairs and Vice-Chancellor
Former Minister for Economic Co-operation
 13. Agha Shahi (Pakistan)
Professor Emeritus of International Relations to various
universities
Former Foreign Minister
Former Minister of State, Adviser to the President on
Foreign Affairs
 14. Janez Stanovnik (Yugoslavia)
Member of the Presidency of Slovenia
Former Executive Secretary of the United Nations Eco-
nomic Commission for Europe
 15. Inga Thorsson (Sweden)
Chairman of the United Nations study group on the rela-
tionship between disarmament and development
Former Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign
Affairs

Information and non-governmental organization activities

In the report of the Preparatory Committee it is stated that "due consideration should be given to the widest possible dissemination of information relating to the Conference and to its preparatory work, as appropriate". The Department for Disarmament Affairs is in the process of publishing, in addition to the present *Fact Sheet*, a booklet entitled "Disarmament and Development: Questions and Answers". The 1986 spring issue of the periodical *Disarmament*, vol. IX, number I, will deal exclusively with the same question. The World Disarmament Campaign "Newsletter" will carry articles on the preparatory process and the Conference itself.

At United Nations Headquarters in New York, the NGO (non-governmental organization) Committee on Disarmament and the NGO Committee on Development co-sponsored an NGO Forum on Disarmament and Development from 1 to 4 April. Furthermore, at the United Nations Office at Geneva, the Special NGO Committee on Disarmament and the NGO Committee on Development held a two-day meeting on 22 and 23 April. Another such meeting is expected to be held at Geneva in June, well before the convening of the International Conference. On those occasions, senior officers of the Department for Disarmament Affairs will participate in order to provide information on the work of the second session of the Preparatory Committee and of the panel of eminent personalities.

The Department for Disarmament Affairs is also engaged in various other efforts, including interpersonal communications, in order to disseminate information on the Conference and its preparatory work. It has provided information directly to some 150 research institutes and some 4,000 non-governmental organizations worldwide. The Department of Public Information, for its part, is organizing briefings at Headquarters, at Geneva and at Vienna on the preparatory work for the International Conference; screenings of films on disarmament and development; publication of articles in *Development Forum* and the *United Nations Chronicle*; and radio, press and television coverage.

Invitations and participation

The Preparatory Committee recommended that the Conference be held at a high political level. The General Assembly requested the Secretary-General "to invite all States to participate in the Conference". Other participants and observers will also attend.

Appropriate arrangements will be made for non-governmental organizations concerned with disarmament and development. Following the experience of previous United Nations international conferences, special arrangements are being considered in order to allow their representatives to attend public sessions of the Conference or its Committee of the Whole. Consideration is also being given to the possibility of allowing non-governmental organizations to contribute to the work of the Conference in other ways, including expressing their views to the Conference.

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