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GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

Relationship between disarmament and development

Report of the Secretary-General

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1. INTRODUCTION

1. In pursuance of General Assembly resolutions **39/160** of 17 December 1984 and **40/155** of 16 December 1985, the International **Conference on the Relationship** between Disarmament and Development **was held** in New York from 24 August to 11 September 1987. The Conference was **attended** by 150 States, **which** adopted by consensus a final document that included an action programme. **1/** The final document was submitted by the Conference in its report to the General **Assembly at its** forty-second session.

2. In its resolution **42/45** of 30 November 1987, the General Assembly welcomed the adoption of **the** Final Document of the International Conference on the **Relationship** between Disarmament and Development **and** requested the Secretary-General to take action through the appropriate organs, **within** available **resources**, for the implementation of the action programme adopted at the International Conference. In its resolution **43/75** B of 7 December 1988, the General **Assembly** requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the **Assembly** at its forty-fourth session on the implementation of that action programme.

3. In pursuance of paragraph 35 (ix) **b** of the Final Document of the Conference, the Secretary-General established, in December 1987, a **high-level** intra-Secretariat task force having the following composition: Director-General for Development and International **Economic** Co-operation, **Chairman**; Under-Secretary-General, Department of International **Economic** and Social **Affairs**; Under-Secretary-General, Department of Public **Information**; Assistant Secretary-General, Office for **Research** and the Collection of Information; and Under-Secretary-General, Department for Disarmament Affairs, Convener.

4. In **May** 1988 the **High-Level** Task Force **identified** the following **areas** for specific **activities** to be **carried out** concurrently and sequentially **during** the period from 1988 to 1990:

- (a) Monitoring trends in military **spending**;
- (b) Facilitating exchange of **experiences** in conversion from military to civilian production;
- (c) Promoting collective knowledge of non-military threats to international security.

5. In his report to the forty-fourth session, the Secretary-General informed the General Assembly, inter alia, of the specific **activities carried out** in the implementation of the **decisions** taken by the **High-Level** Task Force (**A/44/449**). The General **Assembly**, in resolution **44/116** L, welcomed the report of the Secretary-General and requested him to continue to take action and report to the **forty-fifth** session.

II. PRIORITIES FOR 1990-1993

6. On 10 May 1990, a meeting of the High-Level Task Force was convened to review the ongoing activities and determine priorities for the period 1990-1993. During the meeting, it was felt that the fast changing international situation called for a closer look at the economic aspects of disarmament, including its implications for national and global economy. The changing trends in military spending were discussed together with the need to evolve a set of economic indicators for the measurement of the military burden. Both in reviewing ongoing activities and in deciding upon future priorities, the subject of conversion received much attention.

7. In determining the priorities for 1990-1993 the High-Level Task Force decided to undertake the following specific activities:

(a) Continuation of the work on the establishment of a mechanism for monitoring trends in military spending by the Department for Disarmament Affairs;

(b) Continuation of the work on the establishment of a benchmark study on economic indicators of military spending by the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs;

(c) Continuation of the work on conversion and follow-up by the Department for Disarmament Affairs;

(d) Intensification of contacts with research institutes;

(e) New project on impact of arms reductions on world economy;

(f) Publicity and information strategy within the United Nations.

8. The issue of human and financial resource constraints was considered by the High-Level Task Force. It was felt that besides the regular budget selected donor countries should be approached to finance specific activities.

III. SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

Conversion: economic adjustments in an era of arms reductions

9. In co-operation with the Soviet Peace Fund, the Department for Disarmament Affairs organised a major international conference on "Conversion: Economic Adjustments in an Era of Arms Reductions", which was held in Moscow from 13 to 17 August 1990. Preparations for the conference included inter-agency consultations with the International Labour Organisation, the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the World Bank.

10. The conference was attended by over 200 participants from some 45 countries. Among the participants were political figures, senior executives from business and industry, labour leaders, experts from leading universities and research institutes, and a number of representatives from the United Nations system.

11. A central issue at the conference was the **actual experience** of major economies in dealing with **arms** reductions. In discussing the impact of **arms** reductions on employment, industry and military hardware, the conference debated **the very** concept of conversion, which **some** participants viewed as the ultimate goal of economic adjustments. **Others** took the position that a **conceptual** commitment to conversion was not necessary to carry **out** the economic adjustments required by reduced military spending. **For the purposes of such** adjustments, **many** viewed the military sector as showing signs of a declining industry. **Significant** short-term **costs** were **seen** in the process of bringing **about** disarmament, **e.g.** for **verification** of agreements and disposal of weaponry.

12. Background papers on national **experiences** were prepared by experts from some of the **major** military and industrialized States. The International Labour Organisation, which has conducted a **series** of studies on disarmament and employment, also prepared a paper for the conference. **Topical** papers from the conference including keynote addresses by high-ranking government **officials**, representatives of major industries and labour leaders, will be published by the Department for Disarmament Affairs. In addition, the technical papers and the **oral** reports of the three working groups **will** be included in a separate publication.

Benchmark study on indicators of military spending

13. The United Nations Statistical Office has taken initial steps for the establishment of a theoretical framework of indicators for measuring military expenditures. This was tested and illustrated with the use of available statistics. But the **exercise could** not be **continued** due to **lack** of **resources**. Ongoing activities of the United Nations Statistical Office continue in the collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics in the **fields** of national accounts, industrial statistics, international trade, demographic statistics, energy statistics, etc. The development of an appropriate accounting framework using these data sets and their national counterparts **could provide** a fuller and **continuous** source of information on the economic indicators of military spending.

14. The **Department** of International **Economic** and Social Affairs has also established a departmental task force to examine the post-cold war developments in the field of international co-operative arrangements for maximizing the benefits from arms reductions. **Since** its establishment in February 1990, this departmental task force has developed productive contacts with research groups in the United States of **America**, Union of Soviet **Socialist** Republics, United Kingdom and other countries.

Bibliographical survey of secondary literature on military expenditures

15. As part of the efforts to establish a mechanism for monitoring **trends** in military spending, a bibliographical survey of recent publications on military expenditures was **compiled** by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in co-operation with the Department for Disarmament Affairs. The survey was published in November 1989 and covered the period **since** the holding of the International **Conference** on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development in 1987.

Notes

1/ United Nations Sales Publication No. E.87.1X.8.
