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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

DECLARATION OF THE 1980s AS A DISARMAMENT DECADE

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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UNESCO*

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/10 November 1980/

Proposals concerning elements of the declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade, submitted by UNESCO in accordance with the request made by the World Congress on Disarmament Education held at UNESCO headquarters from 9 to 13 June 1980. (The paragraph numbers refer to the report of the Working Group reproduced in para. 19 of the report of the Disarmament Commission to the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly, document A/35/42.)

* * *

After paragraph 8, add the following new paragraph:

"At the same time as the negotiating process, which constitutes an essential means of achieving an appreciable reduction in weapons, it is necessary to develop a broad awareness of all the obstacles to disarmament and of the urgency of overcoming them. For this reason, efforts to promote education and information about disarmament should be redoubled."

Add the following new paragraph 13 (g):

"(g) Formulation of standard clauses whereby the States parties to arms control or limitation agreements would undertake, firstly, to publicize the instrument in question and, secondly, to promote education and information for disarmament in general, to the extent possible and using appropriate means."

Amend paragraph 14 (j) to read:

"(j) Reduction of military expenditures and use of a percentage of such expenditures for peace research and for national and international efforts to promote education and information for disarmament."

After paragraph 18, add the following new paragraph:

"Education for disarmament

The Second Disarmament Decade should be the occasion for decisive development of education for disarmament, in accordance with paragraphs 106 and 107 of the Final Document. Such education should be guided by the following principles, which were adopted by the World Congress on Disarmament Education held by UNESCO from 9 to 13 June 1980:

* Addendum to the reply dated 24 August 1980 (A/CN.10/10/Add.4), p. 6.

Relation of education to disarmament

1. Disarmament education, an essential component of peace education, implies both education about disarmament and education for disarmament. All who engage in education or communication may contribute to disarmament education by being aware and creating an awareness of the factors underlying the production and acquisition of arms, of the social, political, economic and cultural repercussions of the arms race and of the grave danger for the survival of humanity of the existence and potential use of nuclear weapons.

Definition of disarmament

2. For the purposes of disarmament education, disarmament may be understood as any form of action aimed at limiting, controlling or reducing arms and, ultimately, general and complete disarmament under effective international control. It may also be understood as a process aimed at transforming the current system of armed nation States into a new world order of unarmed peace in which war is no longer an instrument of national policy and peoples determine their own future and live in security based on justice and solidarity.

Role of information

3. Disarmament education requires the collection and dissemination of reliable information from sources offering the highest degree of objectivity in accordance with a free and more balanced international flow of information. It should prepare learners, in the strictest respect for freedom of opinion, expression and information, to resist incitement to war, military propaganda and militarism in general.

Relation to economic and political realities

4. Disarmament education cannot, however, confine itself to the dissemination of data and information on disarmament projects and prospects or even to commenting on the hopes and ideals which inspired them. It should recognize fully the relationship disarmament has with achieving international security and realizing development. To be effective in this regard, disarmament education should be related to the lives and concerns of the learners and to the political realities within which disarmament is sought and should provide insight into the political, economic and social factors on which the security of peoples could be based.

Research and decision-making

5. In addition to reaching the general public, disarmament education has a more specific and equally crucial task of providing rational arguments for disarmament based on independent scientific research which can guide decision-makers and, to the extent possible, rectify perceptions of a potential adversary based on incomplete or inaccurate information.

Substantive approaches

6. As an approach to international peace and security, disarmament education should take due account of the principles of international law based on the Charter of the United Nations, in particular, the refraining from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of States, the peaceful settlement of disputes, non-intervention in domestic affairs and self-determination of peoples. It should also draw upon human rights and international humanitarian law applicable in time of armed conflict and consider alternative approaches to security, including such non-military defence systems as non-violent civilian action. The study of United Nations efforts, of confidence-building measures, of peace-keeping, of non-violent conflict resolution and of other means of controlling international violence take on special importance in this regard. Due attention should be accorded in programmes of disarmament education to the right of conscientious objection and the right to refuse to kill.

Disarmament education should provide an occasion to explore, without prejudging the issue, the implications for disarmament of the root causes of individual and collective violence and the objective and subjective causes of tensions, crises, disputes and conflicts which characterize the current national and international structures reflecting factors of inequality and injustice.

Links with human rights and development

7. As an integral part of peace education, disarmament education has essential links with human rights education and development education, in so far as each of the three terms - peace, human rights and development - must be defined in relation to the other two. Moreover, disarmament education offers an occasion to elucidate emerging concepts such as the individual and collective rights to peace and to development, based on the satisfaction of material and non-material human needs.

Pedagogical objectives

8. Whether conceived as education in the spirit of disarmament, as the incorporation of relevant materials in existing disciplines or as the development of a distinct field of study, disarmament education should apply the most imaginative educational methods, particularly those of participatory learning, geared to each specific cultural and social situation and level of education. It aims at teaching how to think about disarmament rather than what to think about it. It should therefore be problem-centred so as to develop the analytical and critical capacity to examine and evaluate practical steps towards the reduction of arms and the elimination of war as an acceptable international practice.

Values

9. Disarmament education should be based upon the values of international understanding, tolerance of ideological and cultural diversity and commitment to social justice and human solidarity.

Sectors of society concerned

10. Disarmament education should be the concern of all sectors of society and public opinion. Indeed, schools, non-formal and informal education circles such as the family, community organizations and the world of work, universities and other research centres and information media, all have a part to play in this task. Educators and communicators should strive to develop the most appropriate and effective language and teaching methods for each situation. The challenge is all the greater as the stakes are so high.

The measures to be encouraged with a view to developing disarmament education include the following:

(a) Establishment of an international documentation centre and of regional documentation centres to assist disarmament research and education;

(b) Organization, before the end of the Second Disarmament Decade, of a second World Congress on Disarmament Education, under the auspices of UNESCO;

(c) Preparation, translation into the national languages of as many countries as possible, and dissemination of teaching material suited to the various levels and types of education and to the socio-cultural environment;

(d) Organization of a programme of training courses and fellowships to prepare teachers to give instruction on relevant aspects of the disarmament problem.

After paragraph 19, add the following new paragraph:

"A special imaginative effort is required if the public information activities of the organs in the United Nations system dealing with disarmament are to have a real impact and help to mobilize public opinion in all regions of the world. Greater use should be made of really popular media, such as comic strips, films for a general audience, and radio and television programmes in order to create a public awareness of the disarmament problem. The assistance of non-governmental organizations should be enlisted in this connexion."