DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Addendum

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FINLAND

[Original: English]

[21 May 1984]

The Government of Finland attaches great importance to the subject on the relationship between disarmament and development. The release of resources from military purposes through disarmament represents an important potential source for financing social and economic development in both industrialized and developing countries.

On the basis of her long-standing interest, Finland has supported the follow-up of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Study on the relationship between disarmament and development" (A/36/356 and Corr.1) carried out by a group of governmental experts during the years 1978 to 1981. These recommendations contain guidelines for Member States and the United Nations system in this field. In accordance with resolutions 37/84 and 38/71 A, jointly sponsored by the Nordic countries and other delegations, the General Assembly will take up questions regarding the reallocation and conversion of resources at its fortieth session.

With regard to the views and proposals concerning items (a) through (e) in paragraph 2 of resolution 38/71 B, the Government of Finland would like to stress the importance of further studies with a view to contributing to specific agreements on the implementation of measures giving effect to the broadly supported objective of releasing funds from the arms race to development objectives.

The question of the establishment of an international fund for development has been a central issue in the search for a practical solution to the problem of the arms race and underdevelopment. The Government of Finland has taken a positive attitude towards the establishment of a fund as one of the alternative arrangements for transferring resources freed through disarmament to social and economic development, in particular in developing countries, which should be further studied by the relevant existing international institutions. In this connection, reference is made to the study being prepared at the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) on the modalities for the establishment of an international disarmament fund for development.

The proposal made by the President of France in his address on 28 September 1983 to the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly to convene a United Nations conference on the relationship between disarmament and development reflects a need to provide for a fundamental political assessment of the dimensions of the problem. Finland will consider the proposal favourably. The conference should make full use of the ongoing expert studies and their recommendations as well as the conclusions of the General Assembly. A widest possible participation should be secured for the conference.

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The United Kingdom attaches considerable importance to questions both of disarmament and development, and has played an active role in discussions of the problems connected with any possible increases in development aid. One way in which such increases might be possible could occur as part of the wider programme of resource reallocations in the future as a result of balanced and verifiable measures of arms limitation and disarmament. Such measures could make possible reductions in the present high levels of military expenditure in the world. This high level of defence expenditure is currently being borne by a large number of Member States of the United Nations.

It was with these considerations in mind that the United Kingdom supported the establishment of the United Nations study on the relationship between disarmament and development (A/36/356 and Corr.1) and made a direct and active contribution to the group's work. It was with regret that we noted that it was not possible for the group to agree its final report on the basis of consensus. Although the United Kingdom expert, in common with other members of the group, was obliged to enter reservations on certain parts of the final report the United Kingdom voted in favour of the resolution (36/92 G) which welcomed it.

However, as the United Kingdom representative stated at that time, while we share the tentative conclusions contained in the report, we continue to believe that any relationship between disarmament and development must be considered in the context of the more complex triangular relationship of security/disarmament/development. This triangular relationship must always be to the fore in any discussion of problems connected with this topic. It must equally form the bedrock of any proposals for solutions to the difficulties arising from the security preoccupations which currently determine the priorities and level of resource allocations made by Governments in the world today. It is unhelpful to extract one particular facet of this equation and concentrate all efforts on finding ways of resolving it, while ignoring other, equally important, and intimately linked problems. To treat one particular facet, for example the problem of development, in isolation from other equally crucial problems, such as the search for realistic, balanced and verifiable measures of arms limitation and disarmament or the need to secure an adequate degree of security, at the minimum levels of armaments, for all States, risks promoting sterile debate.

The United Kingdom has stated on many occasions that it views the current level of military spending in the world as excessive and that such high levels of military spending represent an unfortunate and ultimately unproductive allocation of resources. But allocation of resources to the defence sector are not made out of a gratuitous wish to see such resources denied to other equally vital areas. Such allocations are made because States perceive themselves to be confronted by external threats to which the only adequate and practicable response is a concomitant strengthening of their own defences. It is the belief of the United
Kingdom that the need to retain a balance between different political and economic systems remains necessary, if peace is to be maintained and enhanced.

At the same time improvements in the overall level of international security are required. This need demands a renewed and sustained search for worthwhile and balanced measures of arms limitation and disarmament. With the negotiation of agreements which are both practicable and verifiable, and the consequent rise in international confidence in the fabric of international security arrangements, discussions can be on the methods by which any resources released by these measures could be redistributed to other areas of economic and social development.

The United Kingdom wishes to re-emphasize its belief that there is no automatic link between the process of disarmament, the reallocation of resources which may result from such a process, and the provision of development aid. The United Kingdom currently provides the fifth largest amount of development aid in the world today, and its aid programme is concentrated on the poorest and least developed countries of the world. It is the conviction of the United Kingdom that the search for disarmament, improved international security and development are equally important goals.

Progress in one area is not however conditional on achieving objectives in the other. Each needs to be pursued with equal vigour. In this regard it is important to remember that a number of worthwhile measures of disarmament may not immediately release sizeable resources for deployment in alternative sectors. However, if at some time in the future such a reallocation of resources should become a practicable prospect, it would then be for individual Governments to decide how such a reallocation should be made, taking into account other priorities current at the relevant time. These might include improvements in the level of housing, health, education and other social services for their own citizens, as well as development assistance.

These factors underline the importance of all States, and especially the developing countries, devoting new attention to means by which they can encourage their own development programmes. Expressions of concern over the resource allocation policies of other Governments and, in particular, the policies of the most militarily significant States, are insufficient. There is ample evidence that in many developing countries the share of national output allocated to defence has been increasing at a rapid rate, and that such allocations are considerably in excess of allocations made for investments in industry as a whole. This is a trend which should cause the world community particular concern as it is taking place in States where the need for investment in sectors which can directly contribute to development is most pressing. As well as hindering development programmes, such investment in military production and procurement can only further increase general perceptions of insecurity amongst Governments.

This tendency among developing nations is particularly regrettable at a time of world-wide economic stringency, which is unlikely to disappear in the near future. When scarce resources are stretched in all countries, it is important that those at lower levels of development can identify the means by which they may improve their social and economic situation from their own resources. A major step
forward in this regard would be the conclusion of regional agreements designed to lower levels of armaments and military spending in particular areas, and thus to allow States in these regions to divert resources to other uses.

The United Kingdom remains willing to consider at any time new ideas or proposals which may be put forward as a means of helping to advance the debate on these important topics of development, disarmament and international security. In this regard it believes that the proposal for a United Nations conference on the relationship between disarmament and development merits serious consideration. The United Kingdom looks forward to discussing with other interested States what positive results could be expected from such a conference. However, it must be borne in mind that for any conference to be worthwhile it must take place in an atmosphere of realism and with a clear appreciation of the nature of worthwhile and practical recommendations which might be discussed and which would command general support. Adequate preparations must therefore be an essential prerequisite of any such conference.

The United Kingdom would not wish preparations for any future conference on the relationship between disarmament and development to divert attention from the important work which is already being carried out in this area. In this regard the United Kingdom awaits with interest the report by UNIDIR on the subject of the creation of an international fund for disarmament and development. The United Kingdom expects that the report will contain useful information which can be of assistance in establishing the practical possibilities of this proposal. The United Kingdom also believes that all countries should continue to aim to reach the present internationally accepted level of development assistance targets. The search for new approaches and methods, the questions of development, disarmament and international security cannot be allowed to obscure the efforts of some developed countries to meet these targets. It is to be regretted that this objective is not shared by all developed countries.

YUGOSLAVIA

[Original: English]
[16 May 1984]

The views of Yugoslavia concerning the interrelationship between disarmament and development are well known. They have been unequivocally expressed in relevant international fora. Yugoslavia has always pointed to the inadmissibility of ever increasing expenditures on armaments and neglect of the solution of the problems of development in the world, particularly the development of developing countries. Yugoslavia has always underlined that the widening of the gap between developed and developing countries is one of the most important problems of contemporary international relations; that this problem is at the core of the present, extremely unstable global situation and that, unless it is resolved, it will threaten most dangerously international relations and peace and security in the world.

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Within the United Nations, as well as within governmental and private institutions, a great number of studies on development and disarmament has been elaborated, among which of particular importance are the recent reports of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on disarmament and development and on economic and social consequences of the arms race and military expenditures. All the studies emphasize the close interrelationship between sustained economic and social development and disarmament. They also emphasize that, by achieving progress in disarmament, considerable funds could be released for solving economic and social problems facing many countries, particularly the developing ones. They have been hardest hit by the devastating consequences of the present crisis of world economy and of international economic relations, and many of them, particularly the least developed ones, have been brought into a most critical situation.

The resources allocated for armaments have today reached the amount of about 800 billion dollars per annum. However peace and security in the world have not been promoted but, on the contrary, the continual development of new systems of weapons has led to an ever greater instability. Engagement of such enormous resources for unproductive purposes impedes the development and utilization of national resources for the fulfilment of growing social needs, and thus the basic prerequisite of stability in international relations is also being endangered.

Any reduction of military expenditures would have a positive impact on solving developmental tasks, particularly those regarding economic and social progress of the developing countries. There have been many proposals and initiatives to that end. A considerable number of resolutions and recommendations were adopted in the United Nations General Assembly. Regrettably, these initiatives and proposals, recommendations and conclusions have not been implemented in spite of the widely held view that their realization would have multiple and positive effects.

That is why Yugoslavia, together with other non-aligned and developing countries, has always called for urgent and effective measures aimed at disarmament, being aware of great possibilities which would thus be opened, inter alia, for the creation of more favourable international conditions for development, particularly for the economic and social progress of the developing countries. It should be underlined, however, that the solution of development problems in the world is so acute that it has to be sought without delay. This would also greatly contribute to the opening of the process of disarmament itself.

The Government of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia supports all constructive proposals to that end, including the convening of a conference. However, the measures conducive to the reallocation of resources from military to developmental purposes should be primarily undertaken by countries possessing the biggest nuclear arsenals, other nuclear Powers and militarily significant countries - the biggest consumers of resources for military purposes.

A conference that would deal with those problems should focus on the adoption of measures conducive to the genuine reduction of military expenditures and reallocation of resources thus released for the needs of the developing countries. Undoubtedly, a successful outcome of such a conference should be preceded by very detailed preparations and by broad consultations.