NOTE VERBALE DATED 11 SEPTEMBER 1987 FROM THE HEAD OF THE FRENCH DELEGATION ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE

The French delegation has the honour to transmit to the President of the International Conference on the Relationship Between Disarmament and Development the text of the statement made by H.E. Mr. de la Chevalerie at the closing meeting of the Conference.

The French delegation would like this text to be circulated as an official document of the International Conference on the Relationship Between Disarmament and Development.
The very fact that representatives of most of the countries of the world gathered here at United Nations Headquarters in New York to deal simultaneously with two of the most serious and most complex issues directly affecting the future of the international community was an event in itself. It is a source of gratification to France that it was able to contribute to that meeting.

It is very encouraging that, despite the difficulties and the legitimate - and sometimes conflicting - concerns of the participating countries, it has been possible to overcome differences and produce the kind of compromise document which my country had hoped for from the outset, after discussions which, though lengthy and laborious, were always characterized by a spirit of friendship.

... our Chairman of the Committee of the Whole has managed to come up with compromise formulations, which, as with any compromise, are unlikely to satisfy everyone, but embody concrete points of convergence on essential items.

We have all borne in mind that security plays a key role in the complex and difficult relationship between disarmament and development and that, to quote from the Joint Declaration by the Panel of Eminent Personalities, "disarmament, development and security" form the three pillars of peace.

We have all been prompted by the desire to take into account the aspirations of the most disadvantaged countries, the victims of insecurity. As was stated on behalf of the French Government by our Secretary of State at the opening of this Conference, we have been guided by the commitment to reconcile, in a single process of reflection and action, the pursuit of peace through security for all with the fulfilment by the international community as a whole of its pressing obligation of solidarity with its most indigent members.

We have sought to set our discussions within a political framework so as to produce an action programme likely to lead eventually to concrete measures. But, as in the case of any human undertaking, we have understood the need for realism and have realized that progress was attainable only to the extent that we could concentrate on limited objectives.

The French delegation welcomes the adoption by consensus of the Final Document. However, France regrets - and can only express reservations in this connection - that certain elements are not spelt out explicitly enough in the Final Document of our Conference.

For example, France takes the view that there is only a rough outline of the real problems of the relationship between disarmament and development.
To be sure, disarmament is a priority; but its attainment is subject to a number of conditions deriving not only from the realities of the world and the diversity of regional situations and problems, but also from the need to maintain stability.

In addition, our discussions failed to prompt substantial progress in the consideration of the nature of the potential links between the desired reduction in defence expenditure and the financing of development. In our opinion, there is no cause-and-effect relationship. It is already so difficult to evaluate disarmament dividends that, at the very least, there should be agreement on a method of evaluation. We note with regret that we have not yet reached that point.

Finally, our Document does not lay enough emphasis on a question that is very important to my Government: the visibility of military spending.

These, then, are the major points which I felt it my duty to make. But all in all our satisfaction with the work accomplished far outweighs these concerns.

We will be able to advance only one step at a time on the long road which we have today built in pursuit of development which might be facilitated by disarmament measures. But this process requires the active participation of all, and we cherish the hope that in future the country that gave the world George Washington and Martin Luther King will also lend its support.