LETTER DATED 11 SEPTEMBER 1987 FROM THE DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MEXICO TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE

I have the honour to request you to have circulated as a document the statement made by Mexico at the closing meeting of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development.

(Signed)  Miguel MARIN-BOSCH
Ambassador
Deputy Permanent Representative
of Mexico to the United Nations
Annex

STATEMENT MADE BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MEXICO TO THE
UNITED NATIONS AT THE 14TH MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE,
HELD ON 11 SEPTEMBER 1987

The relationship between disarmament and development, a question of vital
importance to Mexico, has been under close scrutiny by the international community
for the past three weeks. In addition to the broad participation of Governments,
this Conference has generated considerable interest among non-governmental
organizations, whose contribution we all recognize. The very holding of the
Conference is an unmistakable sign of the priority and significance which we attach
to this issue.

In the opinion of my country, the disarmament/development equation embodies
and crystallizes the major objectives of the United Nations and, consequently, the
most cherished aspirations of mankind; hence our keen interest in working out
genuine disarmament measures, particularly in the nuclear field, and fostering
international co-operation for development.

The link between disarmament and development - an undeniable historical
reality which was recognized by the United Nations from the outset - is becoming
increasingly relevant with the intensification of the arms race and the
exacerbation of the problems of economic development. On 7 August 1986, at the
closure of the second summit meeting of the Group of 6, held at Ixtapa, Mexico,
President de la Madrid stated:

"Our call to disarm is also an appeal for the well-being of all peoples.
The arms buildup and the ensuing economic maladjustment are causing a daily
deterioration in the living conditions of many millions. There can be no
moral or political justification for the colossal squandering of economic
resources and the waste of human talent in the futile pursuit of military
supremacy. We think it is also unacceptable that the most disadvantaged
countries should be subsidizing the arms race through the transfers promoted
by the very unbalanced structure of international trade and finance."

Mexico supported the convening of this Conference and participated actively
both in the preparatory stage and in the work that is being completed today. We
believe that one of the objectives of the Conference was to strengthen
multilateralism and consolidate 40 years of United Nations efforts towards
disarmament and development.

In his statement at the opening meeting, on 24 August 1987,
Mr. Bernardo Sepúlveda, our Minister for Foreign Affairs, expressed the hope that
"the action programme emerging from the Conference would guide the United Nations
in its future work" and would include "practical and realistic measures for the
reallocation of limited resources in accordance with the priorities of human
welfare demanded by mankind".

Unfortunately, the Document emanating from this Conference contains no
suggestions regarding the possible establishment of a fund to channel towards
Development projects in developing countries the resources released as a result of disarmament measures. Likewise, the text ignores many of the positions concerning disarmament and development which were supported by the United Nations General Assembly. Accordingly, some might see in it a retreat from the 1974 and 1978 compromise texts, relating to the new international economic order and disarmament respectively.

Again, while the Document acknowledges the historic importance of the Conference, it establishes virtually no mechanisms for the follow-up and implementation of the action programme. On the other hand, the Document attaches far too much importance to the concept of security and to related questions which may be incompatible with the spirit of the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter, to the detriment of the system of collective security envisaged at San Francisco. What is more, that could lead us to include security as a permanent factor in any future discussion of the disarmament/development equation.

In view of the foregoing, it is imperative for all States Members of the United Nations to be mindful of the potential dangers of gradually undermining 40 years of United Nations efforts towards disarmament and development. In any future consideration of these items, our developing countries must be more vigorous in defending our own positions, so as to prevent others from diverting us from the course which we have been pursuing for years. We must therefore remain on the look-out against any attempt to forestall and perhaps even distort the essential objectives which have brought us together in this forum.

Once again, we have seen how form may affect content in our deliberations. My country has always had serious misgivings about those rules of procedure which, while appearing all well and good in the abstract, may come to hamper or even paralyse the parliamentary functioning of multilateral forums. For us, a consensus is a collective decision that does not call for a vote; but we have never considered it to be a means of ensuring the acceptance of minority viewpoints. Consensus cannot be an end in itself. The search for consensus must not be at the expense of the legitimate and internationally recognized aspirations of the majority.

In any event, we consider consensus not to be a form of veto in disguise, but to be a method of work the success of which depends on the a priori recognition of the need for negotiations in good faith and for a political will to make mutual concessions. This is the normal process of multilateral diplomacy. Only time will tell whether the Document emanating from this Conference will represent any progress towards disarmament and development. My country wishes to place its position clearly on record here and now.