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

I have the honour to request that my plenary statement on 11 September 1987, a
copy of which is attached, be circulated as a document of the International
Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development.

(Signed) David K. McDowell
Permanent Representative of
New Zealand to the
United Nations
STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NEW ZEALAND
AT THE 14TH MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, ON
11 SEPTEMBER 1987

My delegation has asked for the floor not to reinterpret the document before us - the Final Document of this Conference on Disarmament and Development - not to qualify in any way our acceptance of it, not to state the obvious - that it could have been better - not to set up straw men in order to knock them down. We stand here in order to celebrate the adoption of this consensus declaration.

Those who have taken part in four preparatory meetings, three weeks of debate and prolonged discussion on this intriguing subject can be forgiven for suffering at this moment from fatigue of the tongue and fatigue of the drafting hand. But our proximity to the process should not obscure the significance of our achievement.

We have a consensus before us, subscribed to by the overwhelming majority of the world community, which for the first time formally recognizes that two of the most pressing of global preoccupations - development and disarmament - should not be considered independently of each other. We have acknowledged quite explicitly that over-armament and underdevelopment each impedes the search for security. We have signalled that global, regional and national insecurity all tend to frustrate our best endeavours in the pursuit of arms control, disarmament and development.

Two weeks ago in this chamber the New Zealand Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control, Hon. Russell Marshall, called for a message of hope, a signal that the international community, faced with the choice between pursuing the arms race or investing resources in social and economic development, would ultimately opt for the more rational option.

The consensus represents such a message of hope. It will not transform attitudes overnight. But it marks the beginning of a process of persuading peoples and policy-makers that real peace, real security, depend upon the putting together of comprehensive and all-embracing security policies which address the needs of all countries and all regions.

This Document must not be simply faxed home to capitals for pigeon-holing. We, the membership, contribute to bringing this Organization into disrepute when we do not take our own work sufficiently seriously to incorporate into policy and action the conclusions we have drawn.

For its part New Zealand takes very seriously the commitments we have just entered into. Each of the elements of the Action Programme in the Final Document will be examined carefully with a view to their fullest possible implementation. There are obvious starting points contained in the Action Programme. Each one of
us is to analyse the economic and social consequences of our military expenditure. All are to inform our publics and the United Nations of the results. And all are urged to provide objective information on military budgets.

With the help of this basic information and analytical material we can begin finally to ensure that national policies fully reflect the incontestable truth - that excessive military expenditure can only jeopardize security - including economic and social security - nationally, regionally and globally.

We have recognized in our Document that resources allocated to military expenditures are diverted from other potentially more productive areas. We have also acknowledged that the production and stockpiling of armaments, particularly of nuclear and chemical weapons, pose a significant threat to the environment. One aspect of the production of nuclear weapons is their testing. New Zealand has never ceased in its insistence that all nuclear testing should be banned. We welcome the unanimous recognition by all participants in this Conference of the environmental threat of such activities. This will hearten our resolve to press for the early conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

I conclude by paying tribute to the role played in this Conference by the non-governmental organizations (NGOs). We know in our country how important these organizations are in helping shape public opinion on both disarmament and development questions and in helping set up peace studies and development education courses in our schools and other institutions of learning. We have welcomed two non-governmental representatives as full members of our delegation. We are pleased by the acknowledgement in the consensus of the NGO role in promoting disarmament and development objectives and the link through the security relationship. And we now look forward to working further with the people of these organizations in spreading the message of hope we have just adopted.