International Conference on the Relationship Between Disarmament and Development
24 August-11 September 1987
New York

Letter dated 20 August 1987 from the Permanent Representative of Mexico addressed to the Secretary-General of the Conference

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of my Government's comments on and proposed amendments to the draft for a Final Document of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development contained in annex III to document A/CONF.130/1.

I should be grateful if this letter and its enclosure could be circulated as an official document of the Conference.

(Signed) Mario MOYA PALENCIA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations
COMMENTS AND DRAFT AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAFT FOR A FINAL DOCUMENT OF THE CONFERENCE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT, CONTAINED IN ANNEX III OF DOCUMENT A/CONF.130/1

1. The Final Document of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development should be a succinct, clear and concrete expression of the relationship between disarmament and development.

Preamble

2. The paramount importance of disarmament and development should be underlined in paragraph 1. The first sentence should read:

"Disarmament and development are the two most urgent challenges facing the world today."

The third sentence of paragraph 1 should read:

"Disarmament and development are the two pillars ..."

3. Add the following new paragraph after paragraph 2 (taken from the draft Fortieth Anniversary Declaration, A/AC.222/L.5, para. 15):

"The world can either continue to underwrite the enormous cost of an unprecedented arms race or employ more fully its material and human resources for the social and economic development of mankind; it certainly cannot do both. Resources released through disarmament should be channelled to economic and social development programmes, especially for developing countries."

4. To avoid repetition, the first three sentences of paragraph 3 could be moved to paragraphs 5 and 6 which deal with the role of the United Nations. Amend the last sentence of paragraph 3 as follows:

"... the process of undertaking, at a political level, the multilateral consideration of the relationship between disarmament and development."

Role of the United Nations

5. Paragraphs 5 and 6 should be as follows:

"In the framework of the purposes enshrined in its Charter, the United Nations has a central role in the promotion of both disarmament and development. Since the early days of the United Nations the contrast between the global military expenditures and the unmet socio-economic needs have provided a strong moral appeal for relating disarmament and development. A variety of
proposals by a politically and geographically broad spectrum of Member States have demonstrated their interest in the relationship between disarmament and development. There is a growing recognition that there is a strong politico-economic case for it since both overarmament and underdevelopment constitute threats to international peace and security.

Review of the relationship between disarmament and development in all its aspects and dimensions with a view to reaching appropriate conclusions

6. This section is perhaps the most important. In its present form it places too much emphasis on security to the detriment of the main purpose of the Conference. Amend as follows:

Paragraph 11: In the first sentence, replace "crucial" by "central".

Paragraphs 12 and 13: Merge into a single paragraph and refer to the collective security system provisions in the Charter (point 7 of the Elements):

"Security is a priority concern for all Nations. An effective implementation of the collective security provisions of the Charter can, on the one hand, create conditions conducive to disarmament and, on the other hand, provide the environment of confidence for the successful pursuit of development. It would also reduce the need of Member States to seek security by exercising their right to individual and collective self-defence. It should be noted that the pursuit of national security regardless of its impact on the security of others can create general insecurity, thereby endangering the very security it aims at promoting."

7. Add the following at the end of paragraph 14:

"In this regard, it is desirable that negotiations on nuclear disarmament measures be accompanied by negotiations on balanced reductions of armed forces and conventional armaments, especially among the militarily most important States."

8. At the end of paragraph 15 add the following reference to the need for a political and negotiated solution to regional conflicts:

"International security will be guaranteed in turn to the extent that States undertake to find peaceful and negotiated solutions to regional conflicts that threaten world stability and resolve, in accordance with international law, all controversies that may emerge between them. In this manner one would create the necessary climate conducive to the attainment of effective disarmament agreements."

9. In paragraph 17 emphasis should be placed on the need to strengthen and broaden multilateralism as the most effective means to maintain international peace and security. The following text is proposed:
"In a world of growing interdependence among nations, interrelationship among global issues and mutuality of interests, there is a need for a collective approach to respond to the needs of humanity as a whole. That collective approach should be expressed in the commitment to strengthen and enhance multilateralism as the only firm and lasting basis for international peace and security, which for its part constitutes the framework to shape the relationship between disarmament and development."

Implications of the level and magnitude of the continuing military expenditures, in particular those of the nuclear-weapon States and other militarily important States, for the world economy and the international economic and social situation, particularly for developing countries, and elaboration of appropriate recommendations for remedial measures

10. This section could be much shorter. The figures selected should be sufficiently illustrative. One should include here a paragraph comparing the cost of the arms race with the regular budget of the United Nations. Another new paragraph could read as follows:

"The present world economic crisis should also be seen in the context of the arms race: burgeoning military expenditures generate in certain countries high deficits that cause interest rates to rise which, in turn, attract substantial flows of capital into a speculative market and away from development activities. In this sense, the whole world subsidizes the arms race and its irrational economy of war."

11. In paragraph 18 add the following sentences comparing military and economic aid from developed to developing countries:

"During the present decade, developing countries have spent more on arms procurement than they have received in economic assistance. The latter has been outstripped by military and security assistance."

12. In paragraph 19 add the following after the first sentence:

"Those increases have transformed arms exports into a significant fraction of their total trade." And add the following after the third sentence: "It should be noted, however, that some developing countries are also becoming important producers and even exporters of arms."

13. In paragraph 22, replace the text after the words "world economy" with the following:

"which is faced with a profound structural crisis, the most severe, widespread and prolonged of the last 50 years. The reversal it has produced in the development processes of developing countries has translated into a decline in per capita income, a deepening of social problems and enormous structural imbalances, internally and externally. This has generated immense balance-of-payments problems resulting from high interest rates, nominal and real, and the unprecedented trend in history of rendering developing countries..."
net exporters of financial resources, having accumulated a debt which in 1986 had reached $1 trillion; the continuous and increasingly acute deterioration of trade conditions which can be attributed to the persistent decline of commodity prices and the proliferation of protectionist barriers in the developed countries."

Ways and means of releasing additional resources through disarmament measures, for development purposes, in particular in favour of developing countries

14. This section leads into the Action Programme and the present draft does not correspond fully to points 16-19 of the 1986 Elements.

15. In paragraph 30 eliminate the last phrase, "both on a bilateral and multilateral basis", in order to avoid references to bilateral channels in a multilateral document.

16. Redraft paragraph 31 as follows, in order to bring it into line with point 16 of the Elements:

"There is a need for a conscious political decision by all States, particularly the major military spenders, to ensure that resources released as a result of disarmament measures are devoted to the economic and social development of all nations and contribute to bridging the economic gap between developed and developing countries. It would constitute a way of giving practical expression to the relationship between disarmament and development. These resources should be additional to those otherwise available for assistance to developing countries."

17. Change the end of the last sentence in paragraph 32 in order to make a reference to the International Development Strategy:

"... greater emphasis needs to be put on the effective implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade and on the adoption of an international development strategy for the next decade as a vital stabilizing element in international relations."

Action Programme

18. In paragraph 39, since the introductory phrase is in the future tense, the end of subparagraph (b) should read: "taking due account, as a first step, of the existing capabilities ...;" and eliminate subparagraph (c) since its inclusion would reduce the importance of the relationship between disarmament and development to a sort of "Blue helmets of the Red Cross".

19. In paragraph 41, add the following subparagraph:

"(d) Carry out analyses of the political, military and economic characteristics of the various regions of the world in order to recommend appropriate measures in each case regarding disarmament and development."
20. Add the following paragraph at the end of the draft:

"52. Recommends that, at its third Special Session on Disarmament, the General Assembly review the results of this International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development."