Message from the President of the Socialist Republic of Romania addressed to the President of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development

I have the signal honour to transmit to you herewith the message which His Excellency Mr. Nicolae Ceaușescu, President of the Socialist Republic of Romania, has seen fit to address to the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development.

I request you to circulate this message as an official document of the Conference.

(Signed) Traian POP
Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs
Head of the Romanian delegation
Annex

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF ROMANIA,
NICOLAE CEAUSESCU, TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

1. The organization of an international conference on the relationship between
disarmament and development marks an important stage in the fight for international
peace and security and for economic and social progress for all peoples. I should
like to take this opportunity to convey to all attending this important world-wide
meeting my warm greetings and best wishes.

2. The Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development is
taking place against the background of an international situation which remains
particularly serious and complex, chiefly because of the accelerating arms race and
the stockpiling of vast quantities of weapons, nuclear weapons in particular, which
are capable of destroying the entire planet several times over. Military
expenditure has increased at an unprecedented rate, absorbing and diverting
enormous financial, material and human resources to destructive ends. At the same
time, in various parts of the world where conflicts and tension prevail, there is
still recourse to force and brutal interference in the internal affairs of other
States.

3. The world economy also faces serious problems that are capable of harming all
States, in particular the developing countries. The developing countries' collective
debt, which now stands at more than one trillion dollars, has continued to
grow and the inequalities separating the poor from the rich countries have
deepened; this may have very damaging effects on the development of all peoples and
on international life as a whole.

4. It could with justice be argued that we have arrived at an intolerable
paradox: immense resources are being squandered on weaponry and on perfecting and
amassing ever more sophisticated means of mass destruction, while innumerable
serious economic and social problems in the world remain unsolved.

5. It is a fact that, in many countries, unemployment is seriously affecting the
lives of many millions of families, and that in a large number of countries young
people have no guaranteed job or prospects in life. This, in turn, is likely to
lead to such evils as increasing criminality and drug use, which degrade human
beings.

6. It is also a most perturbing fact that even today, in the midst of the modern
scientific and technical revolution, illiteracy affects a large proportion of the
human race and is present even in the most advanced capitalist countries.
Likewise, tens, if not hundreds, of millions of people on every continent have
their lives cut short by sickness and malnutrition.

7. All these ills, with their profound effects on progress, continue to exist and
even to flourish, while, year after year, the arms race swallows gigantic sums of
money, becoming an unsustainably heavy burden on all peoples.
8. In the light of these facts, it is increasingly clear that, without a reduction in military expenditure - which, this year, is also in excess of a trillion dollars - the world's grave social and economic problems cannot be remedied.

9. Given the close interrelationship between disarmament and development, Romania pronounces itself firmly in favour of bringing about an end to the arms race, urgent and genuine steps towards disarmament and the elimination of nuclear weapons, and substantial cuts in conventional weapons, armed forces and military spending.

10. In the spirit of its general policy of disarmament, co-operation and peace, and in the desire to make a concrete contribution to efforts to cut military spending, Romania decided last year, in a national referendum in which virtually all Romanians took part, to reduce its military manpower, weaponry and spending unilaterally by 5 per cent. The resources thus released have been allocated to the economic development process and to socio-cultural activities for the benefit of society as a whole.

11. Believing that circumstances are conducive to a reduction in military spending by all States, Romania proposes that all States attending the Conference should adopt an appeal urging that military budgets be frozen at the 1987 level and, as a first step, be reduced by at least 5 per cent, the savings to be used both for their own socio-economic needs and to increase contributions to United Nations technical assistance programmes. The adoption of such measures will release immense material, financial and human resources for use in the pursuit of development, bring about more rapid economic progress for all peoples and ensure that ever-larger sums go to support the efforts of the developing countries.

12. In view of the foregoing, Romania believes that this International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development should issue a strong appeal for intensified negotiations in all disarmament forums, with a view to the adoption within the United Nations of a comprehensive programme for nuclear and conventional disarmament and a substantial reduction in military spending.

13. We also propose that every disarmament measure should result in an appropriate increase in the resources available for development programmes. As a general rule, all agreements on the subject of disarmament ought to contain clauses stipulating that the resources released will be used exclusively for peaceful purposes.

14. It would thus be possible to set up an international development fund under United Nations auspices, which could be constantly replenished with the savings resulting from disarmament measures. A reduction of at least 20 to 30 per cent in military spending would release substantial sums which could be of use in coping with the grave social problems currently confronting the world, in particular the developing countries.

15. Another major feature of the disarmament-development relationship is the fact that, at present, the arms race is monopolizing the creative energies of a large number of scientists and absorbing a large proportion of the world-wide resources allocated to scientific and technological research. There is also the damaging
effect which monopolies and military secrecy exert on the transfer of up-to-date technology from the developed to the developing countries in areas vital to economic and social progress.

16. Accordingly, measures to ensure that science and technology are used exclusively for peaceful purposes and to shift the emphasis of scientific and technological research from the military sphere to the remedying of the serious economic and social problems caused by under-development, which affects two thirds of the world, must be taken without delay, and agreement must be reached on ways and means of enabling all countries and peoples to benefit, without hindrance and on a truly equal footing, from the latest advances in the technical and scientific revolution.

17. Romania also believes that it is time to examine, at the United Nations, the practical aspects of reallocating the resources used for military purposes to peaceful applications beneficial to the progress and well-being of all peoples.

18. Generally speaking, we believe that, given the current circumstances, it is imperative that peoples and progressive forces throughout the world step up the campaign for the abandonment of the use and threats of force in international relations and for the settlement of all disputes between States through peaceful negotiation alone.

19. Everything possible must be done to enable the principles of complete equality of rights, respect for national independence and sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs, mutual benefit, and the right of every people to develop freely and independently, in accordance with its desires and without outside interference, to flourish in relations between all States the world over. Only on this basis is it possible to ensure normal relations between States and a lasting climate of détente, security and broad international co-operation.

20. In the future, as in the past, our country will make every effort to assist in strengthening the policy of peace, co-operation and disarmament, for it believes that such a policy is highly beneficial to the progress and the development of the Romanian people and of all peoples the world over and to the common cause of peace and collaboration in every part of the world.

21. With these reflections, I should like once again to wish the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development every success in its work.