Letter dated 22 May 1986 from the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations

The Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General and, on instructions from its Government, has the honour to transmit the attached note.

The Permanent Mission of France would be grateful if the text of the note could be circulated as a document of the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development.

"For many years France has attached great importance to the initiation, within the United Nations, of a genuine debate on all the issues involved in the complex relationship to be established between disarmament and development.

"In 1955, and again in 1978, at the time of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, France submitted suggestions relating to the establishment of a special fund. Further, the President of the French Republic, in his statement before the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session in 1983, took the initiative of proposing the convening of an international conference to consider the relationship between disarmament and development, and stated France's intent to host the conference in Paris 'when the major military Powers have announced their agreement'.

"Resolution 40/155 of 16 December 1985, adopted by consensus, decided that an international conference should be held in Paris from 15 July to 2 August 1986, and that, in the wording of the resolution, it 'should be preceded by thorough preparation'.

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"However it was apparent at the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, held in New York from 1 to 11 April last, that the positions of the participating countries were still far apart.

"The fact that initial substantive discussions have been held should admittedly be viewed as a positive element. Nevertheless, it is clear that the proximity of the date selected for the Conference and the shortness of the third session of the Preparatory Committee will make it impossible to secure the consensus which would ensure that the Paris Conference played the positive role sought by France and the other co-sponsors of resolution 40/155.

"Moreover, such a conference could acquire its full significance only with the participation of all the major military Powers, to which end greater efforts are needed.

"Accordingly, France wishes the Conference to be postponed until 1987, so that better preparation can be guaranteed and the chances of success, which would otherwise be jeopardized, can be improved.

"In due course France intends to propose, with the support of other interested countries, that following consideration of the report of the Preparatory Committee the General Assembly should, at its forty-first session, make the necessary arrangements to continue preparations for the Conference. At that time, the usefulness of establishing a link with the organization and holding of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament could be clarified.

"France feels strongly that the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development should constitute a culmination and not simply a preliminary stage of the process of improving co-operation between all members of the international community in the non-military aspects of security.

"France remains convinced that this is an important topic for the United Nations and the Member States as a whole."