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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISARMAMENT
AND DEVELOPMENT: REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE
OF FOURTEEN ON THE LOME DECLARATION AND PROGRAMME OF ACTION

24 August - 11 September, 1987

NEW YORK



The Forty-fourth Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity had set up a Committee of 14 (Angola, Egypt, Ethiopia, Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Mozambique, Nigeria, Uganda, Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, Senegal, Togo and Zambia) to consider in depth the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted in Lome in August 1985, on Disarmament, Development and Security in Africa.

This Committee, in carrying out its mandate, had recommended during our Forty-sixth Session that all OAU Member States should participate actively in the International Conference on the relationship between disarmament and development scheduled to take place in New York from 24 August to 11 September 1987.

It had also requested the Group of Experts of Member Countries serving on this Committee at the UN, to prepare a document reflecting Africa's position on matters connected with relation between disarmament and development. This group met in Lome from 6 to 9 July 1987 at the United Nations Regional Centre for Disarmament and Development in Africa) and drew up a Document approved by the Council of Ministers and Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

One hundred and fifty (150) States and one hundred and eighty three (183) Non-Governmental Organizations took part in the International Conference on the relationship between Disarmament and Development which was held in New York from 24 August to 11 September 1987. The Conference was held in a severe atmosphere and there were no serious disagreements or unexpected developments.

The Conference, initially scheduled to take place in Paris in July 1986, had to be postponed for a year to give time to the Preparatory Committee to complete its work. This Committee set up in December 1984 held four sessions in two and a half years which made it possible to know each other's position on the question of disarmament and development and to outline in general terms the results that could be

reasonably expected from the Conference.

The document that the Preparatory Committee submitted to the Conference was accepted in its broad outlines as a final document.

In that document, the International Community with the exception of the United States, for the first time, recognized a link between disarmament and development and the need to take this link into account when taking political decisions. In order to give concrete expression to this relationship, the Conference adopted a Programme of Action in two parts:

1. A Commitment was made: to assess the nature and volume of resources which could be made available through arms limitation and disarmament and to consider including on the agenda of future negotiations on disarmament, provisions that might facilitate this process.
2. An appeal was launched to participants to continue to consider the adoption of the following measures which should reflect concretely the commitment made.
 - (a) the reduction in the level and volume of military spending and the utilization of the resources thus provided for economic and social development, in particular, in the developing countries;
 - (b) the utilization of existing regional and international institutions to ensure the redeployment of these resources;
 - (c) the redeployment, as a matter of priority and within the framework of the United Nations, of a portion of the resources currently utilized for military purposes for emergency aid and for solving the most pressing development problems, whilst awaiting genuine disarmament;

- (d) the acknowledgement of the importance of non-military threats to the security of states (fluctuation in the prices of commodities, international monetary instability, deterioration of terms of trade, debt problem) and the need to take appropriate steps at the international level, particularly in favour of the developing countries.

Addressing the United Nations and non-governmental organisations, the Conference requested more information and sensitization activities regarding the objectives of disarmament and development within the framework of strengthening international peace and security.

This final document, which was unanimously adopted, does not meet entirely all the concerns expressed, particularly by Third World Countries, during the Conference.

Besides, this could not be otherwise in view of the fact that the only alternative to a compromise was to cause the Western Nations to evoke their power of veto and to leave without a final document. In fact, although for the Third World Countries, the contents of the document constituted a minimum, for the Western Nations on the contrary, they represented a maximum.

The Third World Countries in particular, hoped to be able to obtain from the Conference a greater and more extensive commitment than the mere assessment of the resources that would be made available from disarmament measures. They wished that in addition to resource assessment a commitment could be made on reducing military budgets, particularly the definition of ways and methods of reducing such budgets and that an International Fund could be set up to ensure the management and re-allocation of the resources thus provided from the reduction in military expenditures.

However, the Western Countries will only accept, as in the past, the principle of reducing expenditures and subject to any concrete action

in this field to the publication of military budgets, a pre-condition for their assessment, comparison and reduction. They will insist that all UN Member States use the standardized instrument for publishing military expenditures, if they are to ensure a possible reduction in those budgets.

The Socialist Countries, for their part, although agreeable to the idea of establishing an International Disarmament Fund for development purposes, will as before, refuse to subscribe to the idea of using the instrument in question, by emphasizing that the figures published annually by the different States (and updated by a United Nations group of experts alone should be used and that the standardized instrument for the publication of military expenditures is a standard form to be filled in detail, heading by heading and chapter by chapter, a thing the Socialist Countries have always rejected on security grounds.)

In the absence of any agreement on the fundamental question of publication of military budgets, the Conference only urged States to try, as defined in the Programme of Action, to adopt appropriate measures to reduce the level and volume of their military expenditures.

As long as no method could be found to make it possible to release additional funds for development, the idea of the International Fund becomes somewhat premature. The existing institutions of the United Nations System would therefore be used in the event of disarmament resources being released and reallocated.

With regard to the reallocation of the resources presently earmarked for military purposes including human and material resources for specific development projects, this idea encountered three objections:

1. Some countries felt that the aim of the Conference was to "disarm" in order to "develop" and not to use the present military resources for development purposes;
2. Other countries claimed that such an approach could justify the increase in world military expenditure, for, the more these expenditures increased, the greater would be the portion allocated to development projects;



3. Finally, for other countries, the idea could be interpreted as a militarisation of development aid.

Some countries asserted that such a measure in no way prejudiced the need to achieve genuine disarmament. But pending "general and complete" disarmament, it was justifiable to use the human and technical resources available in the military field not only for emergency relief work, as is presently the case, but also for specific projects in infrastructural projects and installations for example.

Of course, this would be a voluntary action on the part of States (applicants and suppliers), which should be promoted and co-ordinated within the framework of the United Nations.

For the sake of consensus, a compromise was accepted: a paragraph restating this idea was included in the text but simply as a measure to be envisaged.

Regarding the priority issues for Africa, namely, the strengthening of the effectiveness of nuclear-free zones, the creation of zones of peace and cooperation, and the need to promote measures aimed at building confidence and encouraging disarmament and development at regional level, the Conference reaffirmed the importance of these issues for international peace and security, as well as the validity of the objectives and principles recognized by the final document of the First Special Session of the General Assembly on Disarmament.

What remained was the problem of following up the results achieved by the Conference.

The Socialist group had presented two proposals:

1. that a meeting of the Security Council be convened at the highest level to consider the question of disarmament and development;
2. that in four or five years time, a new evaluation Conference be held under the aegis of the United Nations.

The Western Countries immediately rejected the first proposal because, in their judgement, the Security Council, which is mainly responsible for the maintenance of International Peace and Security, was not the most appropriate body to follow up an international conference such as that on disarmament and development.

Similarly, while not opposed to the principle of convening an evaluation Conference on a date to be fixed later, depending on circumstances, they indicated that it would be premature to set a date for such a Conference.

They would rather propose that the General Assembly be seized of the matter, leaving open the possibility that, at the level of the General Assembly, the United States (whose absence was deplored by some countries in their interventions) could be persuaded to reconsider their position on the Conference especially in favour of a future agreement with the USSR on the elimination of short and medium range missiles in Europe.

The Socialists finally supported the proposal after Mexico had amended it to request that the Third Special Session of the General Assembly on disarmament - scheduled to take place from 31 May to 25 June 1988, include in its agenda, the consideration of the Programme of Action drawn up by the Conference.

The General Assembly was therefore invited to review the implementation of the Programme of Action contained in the final Document periodically and during its Third Special Session on Disarmament.

Those expecting the Conference to adopt a concrete and practical Programme of Action in well defined phases, would, no doubt, be disappointed.

Those however, who appreciated the complex nature of disarmament related problems, especially in its relation to development, the conference would, at worst, have been a partial success.

The final document that it adopted was indeed a constructive effort which marked the beginning of a process that would be long and during which many things would have to be defined and spelt out. The crucial problem of the publication of military budgets on which depended the consideration of proposals such as the tax to be levied on these budgets, would no doubt figure prominently in future discussions to be held during the follow-up of the results of the Conference.

On the whole, the final document contained positive and encouraging facts.

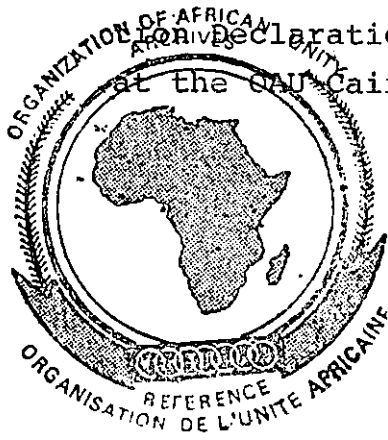
- Indeed, for the first time, the international community acknowledged, on the basis of economic data, that there was a choice to be made between pursuing the arms race and promoting economic and social development in the world, but that the two could not be done concurrently;

- It also acknowledged that there was a moral and political relationship between disarmament and development and that it was necessary to take into account that relationship in political decision making;

- The international community further acknowledged the need to give that relationship concrete expression through specific measures at the national, regional and international levels.

What would be needed therefore would be to work out a formula for African contribution to the follow-up of the results of the Conference. That contribution should be viewed in a wider context of the concerns of Member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The next special session of the United Nations General Assembly on Disarmament, scheduled to be held in New York from 31 May to 25 June 1988 should provide an opportunity to reflect on the problems related to this follow-up and on other aspects of questions connected with disarmament, in particular South Africa's nuclear capability seen through the African Denuclearization Declaration adopted by the OAU Heads of State and Government at the OAU Cairo Summit in 1964.



Consequently, the Council of Ministers should entrust to a specific organ (the group of states of the Ad hoc Committee of 14 for example, under the authority of the African Group at the United Nations which had already prepared a similar document) the task of defining, in collaboration with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, Africa's contribution to the next extra-ordinary Session on Disarmament.

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International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and development: Report of the chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Fourteen on the Lome Declaration and Programme of Action

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