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General and complete disarmament

Relationship between disarmament and development

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum**

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* [A/68/150](#).

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II. Replies received from Member States

Mexico

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General aspects

In today's international environment, marked by a convergence of financial, economic, energy, environmental, social and food crises, there is a stark contrast between the financial resources dedicated to maintaining and updating arsenals and those dedicated to development and disarmament in the world. It is, therefore, unacceptable and disturbing that global military spending has grown by 45 per cent in the last decade, while problems related to economic and social underdevelopment, such as worldwide poverty, become more acute.

The alarming acceleration of the arms race, which now accounts for over \$1.75 trillion annually, is taking up much too large a proportion of the world's human, financial and material resources. Such resources could otherwise be used to promote the eradication of hunger and provide development assistance to that end, promote agricultural development and overcome the food security crisis. According to United Nations figures, \$128 billion is spent on development assistance, while \$0.65 billion is spent on disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.¹

As a country that assumes its global responsibilities, and in line with its tradition of pacifism and defence of just causes, Mexico supports global and regional efforts to further progress towards general and complete disarmament, as well as to regulate and control conventional weapons with indiscriminate effects that have serious humanitarian consequences for the civilian population, adversely affect the social and economic development of the countries concerned and fuel conflict and armed violence.

Actions at the national level

Mexico has always been very careful to maintain an appropriate balance among the needs of the State, in order to provide the security necessary for creating optimal conditions for development, avoid the excessive stockpiling of weapons, allocate only those resources that are strictly necessary for acquiring weapons and ensure that they are geared to self-defence.

Mexico is facing the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and is implementing measures to combat this scourge. To that end, it promotes a comprehensive approach, encompassing the link between the demand for weapons and poverty, insecurity and injustice. Mexico recognizes that development-oriented approaches can reduce the availability and misuse of weapons and, ultimately, contribute to human security.

¹ See the United Nations Secretary-General's statement "The world is over-armed and peace is underfunded", at <http://www.un.org/disarmament/over-armed/>.

In this regard, Mexico is taking the following actions aimed at disarmament and combating the trafficking and illegal possession of small arms in order to promote development, social prevention and a culture of peace:

- The Ministry of Defence, in coordination with the state governments and the Federal District, is implementing the programmes “Weapons exchange”, “War toys-for-educational toys swap” and “Voluntary arms trade-in: it’s for your family”, which invite civilians to surrender weapons in their possession in exchange for an economic or in-kind reward, such as cash, food, electronics or household appliances.
- Women’s involvement has been integrated in the implementation of these programmes in order to promote the gender perspective in public policies on security, disarmament and arms control. Women have played a vital role in rebuilding the social fabric in Mexico because they offer a sensitivity that is essential for raising public awareness of the importance of disarmament and the ban on the illicit possession of weapons. Furthermore, with this measure, Mexico is implementing Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals concerning the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment, and is complying with its National Development Plan.
- To complement the weapons exchange programme, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior have embarked on arms registration campaigns with the aim of regularizing and maintaining strict control of weapons, in accordance with the Federal Firearms and Explosives Act. This prevents the diversion of weapons to the illicit market and limits their potential to result in humanitarian consequences, human rights violations and adverse effects on the population’s economic and social development.

Consequently, from December 2006 to December 2012, the Government of Mexico seized a total of 144,038 weapons, collected a total of 55,590 weapons under the weapons exchange programme and destroyed some 147,800 weapons, in accordance with the Federal Firearms and Explosives Act.

- In compliance with the National Development Plan, government security agencies promote social development initiatives among the poor, in order to combat and prevent crime and violence. To this end, two complementary approaches are being taken: the social prevention of violence, which promotes and fosters social development, and crime-fighting through timely and effective police action.

Actions at the multilateral level

Mexico is determined to assume its global responsibility in building a more equitable, just and peaceful world.

Since the establishment of the United Nations, advocacy of the prohibition and total elimination of weapons of mass destruction has been a key element of Mexico’s position in multilateral contexts, in line with its foreign policy and the principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations.

The regime established in 1967 with the adoption of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco) undoubtedly marked a significant step towards general and complete

disarmament and international peace and security. In this way, Latin American diplomacy, spearheaded by Mexico, gave rise to the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area. The Treaty of Tlatelolco was a source of inspiration for the establishment of four denuclearized zones across the globe: the South Pacific, South-East Asia, the African continent and Central Asia, in addition to the declaration of Mongolia as a nuclear-weapon-free State, which brings the total to 115 countries worldwide.

The Treaty of Tlatelolco is of great significance for preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and promoting international peace and security. At the same time, it recognizes the right of the Latin American and Caribbean countries to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in order to expedite the economic and social development of their peoples.

Since they first came into existence, nuclear weapons have increased the hazards and risks to human life. The destructive capacity of these weapons is so great that it threatens the survival of humanity as a whole; furthermore, a nuclear explosion would have a catastrophic and irreversible impact on health, climate change and the security and development of countries.

Currently, 868 million people (12.5 per cent of the world's population) are undernourished in terms of energy intake, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. At the same time, the nuclear-weapon States' expenditures on the production, maintenance and modernization of their nuclear arsenals amount to some \$300 million per day. Accordingly, global annual spending on nuclear weapons is estimated at approximately \$105 billion. This expenditure represents a diversion of public resources that should be allocated to food and nutrition, health, education, climate change mitigation, development assistance and other vital resources.²

This is why Mexico participates in all multilateral efforts aimed at general and complete disarmament, so as to help reduce global spending on weapons and encourage the channelling of more resources to international development cooperation and assistance, in compliance with the Millennium Development Goals.

Mexico has played an active role within the United Nations in devising the new post-2015 development agenda, ensuring that it includes clear and measurable targets, with the requisite flexibility to meet the needs and priorities of each country and region. It is essential to consider, in reviewing progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, the contribution that disarmament could make to that end, in accordance with the United Nations General Assembly's call on the international community to devote part of the resources made available by the implementation of disarmament and arms limitation agreements to economic and social development, with a view to reducing the gap between developed and developing countries, thus moving towards full achievement of the Goals.

In strict compliance with the resolutions of the United Nations and the Organization of American States, Mexico promotes cooperation in activities relating to disarmament and transparency in military expenditures.

² See Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "The State of Food and Agriculture 2013. Food systems for better nutrition". Available at <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofa/en/>.

In this regard, Mexico reports annually on its military expenditures, in compliance with the General Assembly resolution entitled “Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures”. The report of Mexico on military spending for 2012 shows a reduction of about 11.55 per cent compared to 2011 (military spending fell from 77,655,226,497 Mexican pesos in 2011 to 68,680,584,825 Mexican pesos in 2012).

Furthermore, Mexico actively participated in the second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 27 August to 7 September 2012. Mexico was in favour of recognizing in the outcome document of the Conference both the relationship between armed violence and development and the gender perspective in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Mexico played an active and constructive role in the negotiation process that led to the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty by the United Nations General Assembly on 2 April 2013, and signed the Treaty when it was opened for signature on 3 June 2013. This multilateral instrument contains provisions that will help to prevent the diversion of arms to the illicit market and will promote cooperation and transparency among States, with the aim of reducing human suffering and strengthening development efforts.

In addition, Mexico has participated in meetings on the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, at which it has reaffirmed the importance of the effective fulfilment of international commitments arising from existing agreements on disarmament and arms control and reduction, which can help to counter the negative impact of armed violence on the social and economic development of the population in countries affected by this problem.

In this forum, Mexico has recognized the need to maintain close cooperation and coordination in implementing international programmes and mechanisms that aim to prohibit and prevent illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in order to prevent the proliferation of these weapons from hindering development and feeding the spiral of violence.
