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INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PEACE

Letter dated 6 April 1987 from the Permanent Representative of  
the German Democratic Republic to the United Nations addressed  
to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the comments of the German Democratic Republic on the International Year of Peace 1986, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 41/9 (see annex), and as an enclosure the list of major national activities of the German Democratic Republic in the second half of the International Year of Peace (see appendix).

I should be grateful if you would have the comments and the enclosure circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 26 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Harry OTT  
Ambassador Extraordinary  
and Plenipotentiary  
Deputy Minister for  
Foreign Affairs

\* A/42/50.

ANNEX

Comments of the German Democratic Republic in reply to the note dated 3 February 1987 of the Secretary-General and pursuant to General Assembly resolution 41/9 on the International Year of Peace 1986

The United Nations-proclaimed International Year of Peace 1986 saw tireless efforts by peace forces throughout the world on behalf of disarmament, détente and a healthier international climate. Aware of the need for ensuring humanity's survival, Governments, responsible politicians, social forces and movements have given fresh and substantial impulses to the struggle for the maintenance of peace with a multitude of initiatives and activities. The people and the Government of the socialist German State have contributed their share to fulfilling the objectives of the International Year of Peace both nationally and internationally.

On 1 September 1986, World Peace Day and day of trade union action for peace, Erich Honecker, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party and Chairman of the Council of State of the German Democratic Republic received a representative delegation of the peace movement of the German Democratic Republic. The delegation handed over to the Leader of the German Democratic Republic a peace chronicle entitled "The German Democratic Republic in the International Year of Peace", giving an account of the wide range of activities undertaken by citizens of the German Democratic Republic towards peace and international understanding. With the submission of the peace chronicle to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the German Democratic Republic and Chairman of the National Committee of the German Democratic Republic for the International Year of Peace, Oskar Fischer, and through the circulation of the document among ranking figures of the world-wide peace movement, the international public was informed of the dedicated endeavours made by the German Democratic Republic and its population in the cause of peace and disarmament.

Supplementing the letter of 11 September 1986 (A/41/601), the present comments contain a list of major national activities of the German Democratic Republic in the second half of the international peace year (see appendix).

Also in 1986, the German Democratic Republic did everything it could to defuse the situation particularly in Europe and to assist in drawing up concrete measures in the pursuit of disarmament, as well as of normalcy and predictability in international relations. Believing that, notwithstanding the complexity of matters, there is no single problem in the world that could not be solved through negotiations and on the basis of respect for the interests of the parties concerned, the German Democratic Republic has persisted in its policy of dialogue and co-operation. There has been evidence to show that dialogue is well capable of setting the stage for agreements to improve the international situation.

Like the overwhelming majority of States, the German Democratic Republic welcomed the opportunity that opened up at the Reykjavik summit meeting between the

leading representatives of the Soviet Union and the United States. Making it a reality is indeed an urgent task. The German Democratic Republic fully supports the most recent, path-breaking initiative launched by the Soviet Union, with a view to immediately concluding a separate agreement with the United States on the total elimination of intermediate range missiles in Europe. Such an initial bold step would bring the prospect of a nuclear-weapon-free Europe and of reductions in nuclear armories in general within arm's reach. The German Democratic Republic remains ready to agree with the Government of the Soviet Union on eliminating the enhanced-range missile systems deployed in the German Democratic Republic as a response to the stationing of Pershing II and cruise missiles in western Europe. In this connection, Erich Honecker, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party and Chairman of the Council of State of the German Democratic Republic proposed to Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl that representatives of the two Governments should meet for an exchange of views on how the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany could help to materialize the opportunity offered by the new Soviet proposal.

The Soviet Union's comprehensive and far-reaching peace programme and the Budapest proposals of the Warsaw Treaty States outline realistic and practicable ways towards a peaceful future of humanity. The underlying aim of the joint initiative of socialist States for the creation of a comprehensive system of international peace and security is to prevent the world from sliding into the abyss of nuclear self-annihilation and to bring the patterns of thought and approaches in line with the realities of the nuclear and space age, as well as to restructure international relations in a common effort to preserve peace. Realization of the joint political initiative of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and the Social Democratic Party in regard to the establishment of a zone free from chemical weapons and a nuclear-weapon-free corridor in central Europe would be a concrete step towards the safeguarding of peace.

The German Democratic Republic agrees with the clear statements in support of peace and security that are contained in the Mexico Declaration (see A/41/518-S/18277) adopted by the representatives of the six-State initiative for peace and disarmament and in the documents of the Eighth Summit Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/41/697-S/18392). The successful conclusion of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe shows that results can be achieved if and when the States involved display the requisite political will and a sense of realism. At the Vienna follow-up meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, the German Democratic Republic is among those States which speak up for using all opportunities to agree on arms limitation and disarmament measures and conclude new accords promoting equitable co-operation among States in all fields.

The German Democratic Republic has taken a determined stand for and submitted constructive proposals towards enhancing the role of the United Nations and co-ordinating the activities of States with a view to strengthening peace and security, bringing about disarmament and promoting the advancement and full exercise of human rights. In so doing, it acts on the premise that the challenges of the nuclear and space age can only be met through the concerted action of States and that the United Nations provides the suitable universal frame for that effort.

The activities undertaken world-wide in observing the International Year of Peace have graphically illustrated that there are real opportunities today to resolve international problems peacefully and to usher in an era in which peoples can shape their lives and seek progress in an environment of equal security for all. It is imperative now to follow up and breathe life into the many initiatives launched for the defence of life and the existence of our planet. Nations on Earth will gain nothing from massive arms build-ups and confrontation; they will only benefit by disarmament, détente and co-operation.

It is with confidence in the strength of sanity and dialogue that the German Democratic Republic will undertake energetic efforts to ensure that the United Nations-proclaimed International Year of Peace 1986 will only be followed by years of peace for all generations to come.

## APPENDIX

### List of major national activities of the German Democratic Republic in the second half of the International Year of Peace

#### I. DESIRE FOR PEACE EXPRESSED BY MILLIONS

##### True to the anti-Fascist legacy, forward to new deeds for socialism and peace

The series of powerful demonstrations and mass rallies at which the population of the German Democratic Republic called for disarmament and peace was continued on 14 September 1986 with a traditional rally in the capital of the German Democratic Republic and wreath-layings in all county capitals on the occasion of the International Day to Commemorate the Victims of Fascist Terror and the Day of Action to Combat Fascism and Imperialist War. Two hundred thousand inhabitants of Berlin as well as guests from 29 countries and Berlin (West) gathered at the August-Bebel-Platz in central Berlin in order to say: "Never again Fascism, never again war!".

##### "Give the world a chance - children need peace"

At the memorial to the victims of Fascism and militarism in Berlin, athletes of the German Democratic Republic took over the torch of the First Earth Run on 30 September 1986. Hundreds of athletes joined the runners from nearly 50 countries in the relay for peace and international understanding that had crossed all continents. At a meeting, children from Berlin and other cities pledged their support for the cause of the world-embracing run.

The commitment to peace and solidarity was impressively mirrored in the "freedom to peace" solidarity concerts broadcast by the radio stations of the German Democratic Republic. As a result of the active anti-imperialist solidarity of the people of the German Democratic Republic, the Solidarity Committee had raised more than M200 million by the end of the year.

#### II. BROAD SECTIONS OF THE SOCIETY AND ORGANIZATIONS WORKING FOR PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

In numerous activities, scholars and scientists of the German Democratic Republic showed their single-minded and vigorous dedication to the maintenance and safeguarding of peace and to promoting ways of thinking and political action that effectively respond to the needs of the nuclear and space age. Cases in point are discussions among former students of Albert Einstein, activities of the Committee of the German Democratic Republic for Scientific Questions concerning the Safeguarding of Peace and Disarmament, the Advisory Councils on Space Issues and for a Comprehensive Ban on Chemical Weapons (both being affiliated with the Peace Council) and the Committee of Physicians of the German Democratic Republic for the Prevention of Nuclear War.

Employing their own specific means, artists and cultural workers made an impressive and moving plea for ridding mankind of the threat of nuclear war. "Films of the world for peace in the world" was the traditional motto of the twenty-ninth International Documentary and Short Film Week for Cinema and Television held at Leipzig from 21 to 27 November 1986, with 224 film and video clip entries from 53 countries, Berlin (West), the African National Congress, the Committee of Anti-Fascist Chile, the Palestine Liberation Organization, the United Nations and the United Nations Children's Fund. During the Documentary and Short Film Week in November, members of the artists' unions of the German Democratic Republic organized a big peace festival at the Leipzig Moritzbastei cultural centre. On 9 November 1986, renowned artists performed in a day-long programme for the benefit of the United Nations Children's Fund, mottoed "For a happy childhood in a peaceful world - for international understanding and solidarity", which took place at Berlin's Palace of the Republic with 30,000 spectators attending.

The issue of peace was also at the centre of a great number of other events sponsored by various artists' unions of the German Democratic Republic. For instance, in the county of Dresden, 34 authors read on 84 occasions from their books before a total of 2,400 people, with the overall motto being "May art become a barrier against war". Writers and singers of political and satirical songs of the German Democratic Republic met on 21 December at the Berliner Volksbühne for their fifth Peace Festival.

The peace issue figured prominently at many sport events, including tournaments to pay homage to the heroes of anti-Fascist resistance, such as the competitions dedicated to Werner Seelenbinder, district sports festivals and peace runs.

The Peace Commission of the Presidium of the German Red Cross of the German Democratic Republic sponsored a peace manifestation on 1986 World Peace Day at the Memorial Site of Lichtenburg, Prettin. The participants pledged to contribute their share to the strengthening of socialism and thus to help safeguard peace.

As a specific contribution to the International Year of Peace, the Berlin Conference of European Catholics sponsored an international session of Magdeburg from 19 to 21 September 1986 entitled "Truth will free you! Criteria for and consequences of Christian media work in the face of the danger of a nuclear catastrophe". Some 100 catholic publicists from over 20 countries discussed ways in which they could work together in the service of peace. Another event marked by the need for intensified efforts towards peace and disarmament was the symposium on "Catholicism and Catholic publicity in a highly endangered world" on 30 October 1986 in Berlin, sponsored by the journal Begegnung (encounters).

Consultations between international delegations of the Christian Peace Conference and the Berlin Conference of European Catholics held at Prague on 20 and 21 November gave a major impetus to co-operation among the peace forces in the follow-up to the World Congress. Both movements pledged to redouble their efforts to preserve and safeguard peace in line with the objectives of the International Year of Peace.

The Union of Jewish Communities in the German Democratic Republic, mindful of the community members' own ordeals during the time of Hitlerite fascism, continued to be active in the last months of the Peace Year, too, in order to speak up for the preservation of peace and for removing the threat of humanity's annihilation. On the occasion of the day on which the Jewish Memorial Cemetery of Troebitz was first consecrated 20 years before, members of the Union - together with guests from home and abroad - expressed their resolve to do everything in their power for the maintenance of peace. Also, 9 November, the day on which, 48 years before, the Nazis launched their Crystal Night pogrom, was observed as a day of action for peace.

### III. INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

From 8 to 11 September 1986, the League for the United Nations in the German Democratic Republic hosted at Berlin an international conference of European associations for the United Nations on peace, security and co-operation in Europe. The conference adopted a resolution calling for the immediate cessation of all nuclear testing and for the elimination of all nuclear weapons by the year 2000. All United Nations leagues were called upon to integrate that resolution in their work.

The Confederation of Free German Trade Unions hosted the Eleventh World Trade Union Congress in the capital of the German Democratic Republic in September 1986. Participating were 1,014 delegates and observers from 145 countries, who represented 432 trade union organizations with a total membership of 296 million. The discussion, in which 350 speakers took the floor, was marked by the awareness that peace is the central issue for all trade unionist work. The Congress adopted a message appealing to all States Members of the United Nations immediately to take measures in order to bring about international agreements on the cessation of the arms race, the discontinuance of all nuclear testing and the elimination of nuclear and any other means of mass destruction.

The Free German Youth Organization worked actively for the preservation and the strengthening of peace at the twenty-second assembly session of the World Federation of Democratic Youth, held in November 1986 at Budapest. The assembly unanimously adopted an appeal to the youth of the world to build a world-wide coalition in the struggle for the elimination of nuclear weaponries.

The Democratic Women's League of Germany continued the lively exchange of views and experience regarding the contribution of women to prevention of a nuclear inferno, and to the safeguarding of peace on earth and in space. In the framework of exchanges of delegations with 17 women's organizations, representatives shared experience gained and discussed topical tasks in the struggle for the preservation of peace.

Other international activities of the social forces united in the peace movement of the German Democratic Republic were geared to promote the strengthening and broadening of a world-wide coalition of common sense and realism. A particular highlight in these efforts was the World Congress on the occasion of the

International Year of Peace at Copenhagen in October 1986 in which the German Democratic Republic participated with a delegation the composition of which was representative of the wide spectrum of peace forces in the German Democratic Republic. The Congress was essential in encouraging the peace forces in their optimism and enhancing the awareness of the need for still more resolute action. The Copenhagen Appeal is also resolutely supported by the peace movement of the German Democratic Republic.

Representatives of the Peace Council of the German Democratic Republic participated in a multitude of sessions, conferences and peace rallies abroad. In addition, the Council continued pursuing contacts and relations with over 300 peace movements in 130 countries of all continents. In 1986 it received 66 delegations from 28 countries, while 31 delegations of the Peace Council stayed abroad. Furthermore, the Council had talks with more than 400 guests from 42 countries and Berlin (West). Other social organizations like the Writers' Union and the Journalists' Union had also been active in the international arena in the cause of peace.

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