



UNITED NATIONS

CONFERENCE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

International Conference on the Relationship Between Disarmament and Development

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LETTER DATED 11 SEPTEMBER 1987 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
ZIMBABWE TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
OF THE CONFERENCE

I have the honour to enclose herewith the statement made by me to the
concluding session of the International Conference on the Relationship between
Disarmament and Development on 11 September 1987.

I should be grateful if the statement could be circulated as a document of the
International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development.

(Signed) I. S. G. MUDENGE
Ambassador/Permanent Representative

Annex

STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ZIMBABWE TO THE
UNITED NATIONS AT THE 14th MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE, ON 11 SEPTEMBER 1987

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The non-aligned countries came to this Conference with clear aims and objectives of what they hoped to achieve. In the negotiations just concluded they outlined those objectives and argued for their acceptance with vigour and determination. Some of those ideas are contained in the document before us. Many, including some they held dear, have failed to command universal support, while others that have found their way into the document are so riddled with qualifying phrases as to be meaningless.

Many of us are going along with this document because of its broad message to the world rather than for all its specific arguments. There are a number of extraneous issues in this document. And some, like references to security, have been given extravagant and needless prominence in the document. The non-aligned countries argued hard and strenuously that this Conference is about disarmament and development - concepts that should not be made prisoners to security. That security is a subjective concept. And that some States can only feel secure if they have such a preponderant superiority militarily that no other State or possible combination of States can deny them their ambitions. And that this conception of security, if carried out to its logical conclusion, means security-obsessed States can only feel secure when all other States feel insecure. The world is already overarmed as it is. We pointed out that we can achieve security at substantially lower levels of armaments than the present levels of madness. It is this insane level of armaments itself which has become a major source of our insecurity. We are convinced that the funds currently being used to buy what some term "security" have dismally failed to achieve that illusory objective, and would be better used to eradicate non-military threats to security such as hunger, illiteracy and underdevelopment. Funds spent to fight these scourges would deny resources to the merchants of death and destruction. The marginal utility of funds utilized for such purposes, in terms of a real increase in security, is much greater. It is partly because of this line of reasoning that some of us tried so hard to show how disarmament and development can bring security, and not merely how the latter can result in the former as some of our interlocutors argued.

From the foregoing, it becomes clear why some of us regret that the document before us still contains formulations such as that in paragraph 13, which says "In the relationship between disarmament and development, security plays a crucial role" and that in paragraph 14, that "security is an overriding priority for all nations", which is "also fundamental for both disarmament and development". These formulations could be mischievously interpreted to imply that the issue of security is a sine qua non for both disarmament and development. Such an interpretation is one not shared by non-aligned countries.

Part of the mandate of the Conference from the Assembly also concerned the consideration of the "implications of the level of magnitude of the continuing

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military expenditures, in particular those of nuclear-weapon States and other militarily important States, for the world economy and international economic and social situation, particularly for developing countries" as well as "ways and means of releasing additional resources through disarmament measures for development purposes, in particular in favour of developing countries". This is a clear mandate. The issue here is about global military expenditures and the world economy. It is primarily about disarmament by those States whose military expenditures have the greatest effect on the world economy. And the mandate is mainly about the funds released in that context being used particularly in favour of developing countries. Yet instead of this thrust, the draft Final Document before us could be interpreted to mean that the arms expenditures of the smallest of us, which can have no conceivable impact on the global economy as a whole, are to be treated like those of the most powerful of us, whose mere sneezing makes us all catch influenza. Attempts have also been made to alter the focus away from the impact of disarmament on the world economy to the domestic military expenditures and their effects on national economies.

On this same subject of the release of resources through disarmament measures for development purposes, in particular in favour of developing countries, many of us argued very hard for the establishment of an international financial mechanism to facilitate the transfer of resources released through disarmament measures for socio-economic development. But we did not succeed. Instead the document has a vague provision promising to give further consideration "to the utilization of existing regional and international institutions for the reallocation of resources released through disarmament measures for socio-economic development, particularly in developing countries, taking due account of existing capabilities of the United Nations system". Frankly this is far less than we had hoped for.

A final general observation I wish to make concerns the follow-up process to review progress in the commitments undertaken here, especially with regard to the Action Programme. It is essential that the General Assembly keep under periodic review the relationship between disarmament and development, including the implementation of the Action Programme contained in the Final Document and also that the General Assembly, at its third special session devoted to disarmament, be requested to consider the results of this Conference. In some ways it is the small opening provided by this section of the document that persuaded a number of countries to temper their pessimism about the outcome of the Conference with caution.

No assessment of the outcome of this Conference can be oblivious of the circumstances in which it was held. For in certain "no show" quarters there were dire predictions that the Conference would be no more than an occasion for mud-slinging between developing and developed countries - with the former importuning the latter for money and the latter, faces set and in a mean mood, doing their best to hold on to their purses. This caricature has happily been proved to be unfounded.

The first success of this Conference is the fact that it was held and attended by many countries at a high political level. And its triumph is that it turned out to be a hard-bargaining international forum where the predicted