



UNITED NATIONS

International Conference on the Relationship Between Disarmament and Development

24 August-11 September 1987
New York

Distr.
GENERAL

A/CONF.130/38
11 September 1987

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 11 SEPTEMBER 1987 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
INDIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL
FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS

Placed below is the text of the statement made by His Excellency
Mr. K. Natwar Singh, Minister of State for External Affairs of India, at the
closing session of the International Conference on the Relationship between
Disarmament and Development. The statement was made in his capacity as President
of the Conference.

I shall be grateful if the statement could be circulated as a document of the
Conference.

(Signed) C. R. GHAREKHAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative to the
United Nations

Annex

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OF
INDIA AND PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE AT THE 14TH MEETING
OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, ON 11 SEPTEMBER 1987

I am glad to have an opportunity to share my perceptions with you this afternoon at the close of this important meeting - the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development. After several days of vigorous work and resolute effort on your part, it has been possible for us to adopt document A/CONF.130/21 by consensus. This is no mean achievement. I do not propose to go into details of the document. You are familiar with them. We have been able to agree on acceptable formulations on each of the three items on the agenda of the Conference, including the Action Programme.

It is only appropriate that I recall that it was President Mitterand of France whose vision and statesmanship provided the inspiration for this Conference. It was his suggestion at the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly, in 1983, that led to the call at the next session, in 1984, for the convening of such a Conference.

The Document puts together issues and ideas with very deep and wide significance. The international community has, with an overwhelming majority, agreed that there exists a close and multi-dimensional relationship between disarmament and development. I respect the shrines of other peoples' minds. Nevertheless, I find it incomprehensible that such a relationship should be denied in some influential quarters. While a number of studies by experts well versed in both these fields have for some time pointed to the existence of such a relationship, this is the first occasion when it has been possible for Governments to agree at a political level on the fact and the substance of this linkage, clearly, unequivocally, and to recognize the need to give it practical expression. We have struck the right non-violent blow, for the right reason, at the right time, in the right forum. The United Nations needed such an outcome. Multilateralism has been strengthened.

The Document underlines the far-reaching implications of the global arms race for the world economy and for international economic relations. While the question of human survival will remain the main argument against the arms race, we now have available to us an array of forceful arguments, based on economic considerations, against the arms race. The significance of this aspect had until now not been sufficiently appreciated. If this Conference has helped in bringing home these arguments to policy-makers in Governments all over the world and in influencing their thinking on these key issues it will, in my judgement, have served its purpose eminently.

Of course, the utility of such conferences is not limited to their impact on the policies and thinking of Governments. They have an appeal to a wider audience - to enlightened and forward-looking individuals and professionals, universities and organizations and, indeed, to humanity at large.

I am particularly happy at the presence of a large number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) at the Conference. It is necessary and important for us to reach out through them to all sections of society.

I look upon the consensual adoption of this Document as yet another step in the direction of arresting the retreat from multilateralism we have been witness to in recent years. It is my feeling that there are signs now of a realization that these years have been a wasted period in the history of international economic relations. It appears that there is fairly widespread concern that the onslaughts on multilateralism have been counter-productive and that there is a common desire to put the concept of multilateralism back on the pedestal it deserves to be on. I see the present Conference, and the recently concluded seventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), as portending a new pragmatism on the part of us all. If so, this would be a most welcome development and it is my hope that this promising trend will be strengthened in the coming years, in the course of follow-up action of this Conference and in other important international forums.

...

What has this Conference achieved? It is a legitimate question. I shall attempt an answer. Although some of us may subscribe to the doctrine of infallibility, a majority of us do realize that we are imperfect beings dealing with fantastically complex issues for which there are no easy solutions. Even modest success is worthy of the profoundest respect.

Diplomacy is like a circle. It never ends. There is no ready-made diplomatic pharmacopia to which we can turn for answers. All we can do is what we have done during the past three weeks, i.e. to deliberate, reflect, ponder, discuss, hope. We have posed the right questions. We have come up with remedial suggestions.

That we met is important. That we conducted our deliberations in a constructive and conciliatory spirit is important. It is not every day that so many sovereign nations arrive at a consensus on such vital matters. There is no going back. Our work for the future is now cut out. This is no ordinary achievement.

In conclusion, may I say that while there is no room for complacency, we have every reason to be satisfied with the advance towards our shared goal of the common good and prosperity of all that we have been able to make on this occasion. This Conference, important as it has been, is only the first step on a long journey. Let us ensure that subsequent steps are not unduly delayed.
