



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Resumed Forty-eighth Session
OFFICIAL RECORDS

Tuesday, 12 May 1970,
at 11.15 a.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. J. B. P. MARAMIS (Indonesia).

AGENDA ITEM 8

Economic and social consequences of disarmament
(E/4811 and Add.1 and 2)

1. Mr. FRANZI (Italy) recalled that the economic and social consequences of disarmament had been studied for the first time ten years earlier. At that time it had been hoped that general disarmament could be achieved within a fairly short time, and the question had therefore been regarded as urgent. Since then, however, military expenditure, far from declining, had been constantly increasing.
2. Moreover, the Council's approach to the subject had changed: it was no longer a question, as it had been ten years earlier, of considering the disruption that general disarmament might produce within a country, but rather of ensuring that the resources which would thus be freed would be used to assist developing countries. In that connexion, the replies of Governments to the Secretary-General's questionnaire (E/4811 and Add.1 and 2) were disappointing. In particular, the two countries which had the highest level of military expenditure and in whose case disarmament would therefore have very significant consequences were contemplating measures for purely internal development and for improving the levels of living of their own peoples. The Council should therefore seek to ensure that the countries with the major responsibility in international affairs took account of the needs of international development.
3. Mr. POWER (Ireland) shared the view expressed by the representative of Italy and agreed that the nature of the problem had changed in the course of the past ten years. In fact, the General Assembly had declared at its twenty-fourth session that the Second United Nations Development Decade would also be a Disarmament Decade (see resolutions 2499 A (XXIV) and 2602 E (XXIV)). It was interesting to note the link thus formed between those two objectives. It was no longer denied by anyone that development was the responsibility of the entire world and of the United Nations in particular. Moreover, in its resolution 2602 E (XXIV) on the subject of general and complete disarmament, the General Assembly had recommended in paragraph 6 "that consideration be given to channelling a substantial part of the resources freed by measures in the field of disarmament to promote the economic development of developing countries". Military expenditure for the world as a whole amounted to some \$200,000 million and a study carried out in the United States revealed that in 1967 the resources *per capita* assigned to military objectives had been greater than those devoted to both health and education. If general and complete disarmament were achieved as a result, for example, of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, held at Geneva, the Economic and Social Council should seek to ensure that at least a part of the vast resources thus released was devoted to international development. The Council might therefore decide to draw attention to paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 2602 E (XXIV).
4. Mr. MOJSOV (Yugoslavia) said that, instead of becoming brighter, the hope for general and complete disarmament seemed to be fading. Military expenditure in 1968 had risen to \$173,000 million, which equalled the total national income of all the developing countries. It was therefore easy to imagine the advantages which developing countries might derive from disarmament, even if only part of the resources thus freed were devoted to their development.
5. However, from the replies submitted to the Secretary-General it appeared that the international community was not ready to accept general disarmament. Most countries admitted that under present conditions they were unable to follow the General Assembly's recommendations; on the contrary, they felt obliged to increase their military expenditure in order to be in a position to defend themselves. The great Powers, for their part, did not appear to be contemplating taking the measures recommended to them by allocating to international development the resources that might be freed by disarmament.
6. His delegation felt that the question should again be referred to the General Assembly for more detailed consideration, after which the Assembly could give the Economic and Social Council the opportunity to discuss it further.
7. Mr. LISOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his Government's position on the matter under consideration had been set out in detail in the economic programme for disarmament which it had submitted to the United Nations in 1962¹ and in its replies to previous questionnaires by the Secretary-General on that subject. His delegation shared the anxiety and concern expressed by previous speakers.
8. As far back as the beginning of the century, Lenin had concerned himself with the question of general and complete disarmament and had recommended that the resources used for military purposes should be devoted to the economic and social development of the whole world. In fact, the first decree signed by Lenin had contained an appeal to all nations that they should put an end to war and prepare for disarmament. Lenin had found the answer to

¹ See *Economic and Social Consequences of Disarmament* (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 62.IX.2), p. 172.

the questions which were being asked now: he had led the struggle against imperialism and capitalism, which were the root causes of policies of aggression because capitalist monopolies sought to appropriate the resources of the world and had developed science and technology primarily for military purposes. Unfortunately, nothing had changed in that respect and military supremacy was still one of the major objectives of capitalist policies. That policy of aggression obliged other countries to assign a significant part of their resources to military expenditure for self-defence. The \$200,000 million thus expended in the world as a whole might be devoted to economic and social progress. Moreover, the very fact of achieving general and complete disarmament would facilitate economic and social development by increasing mutual trust and freeing mankind from the threat of war.

9. While his delegation took the view that only general and complete disarmament would make it possible to bring about real international development, it did not deny that partial measures of disarmament would be useful, as evidenced by the fact that his Government had already signed a number of treaties and agreements and was taking part in conferences on the subject. It was reducing its military expenditure and devoting the funds thus released to the economic and social development of the country and to co-operation with developing countries. However, the chief merit of partial measures of disarmament was that they would help to create a favourable climate for the achievement of general disarmament, and it must be recognized that from an economic and social standpoint they could have very little effect on any country in the world. Only general and complete disarmament could open the way to the economic and social development of all the peoples of the world.

10. Mr. ALLEN (United Kingdom) said that his Government's position was clearly stated in document E/4811/Add.2. In the years to come the United Kingdom should be in a position to reduce the percentage of its gross national product devoted to defence and to increase its aid to the developing countries. Since the questionnaire addressed to Governments included no specific question on aid to developing countries, States could not be reproached for failing to give a definite reply on that subject. He wished only to add that the idea of disarmament was based on profound historical considerations dating from well before the beginning of the twentieth century.

11. Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan) said that he would like to comment on the Indian reply to the Secretary-General's note (see E/4811/Add.1). That reply was the only one in which a Member State was accused of committing aggression. He wished to emphasize that his country could not be considered a threat to India, which devoted considerable sums to defence and which had, moreover, always refused to discuss the substance of what was the most important problem so far as an improvement in relations between the two countries was concerned.

12. Mr. JHA (India), speaking in exercise of his right of reply, stated that although India's expenditure on defence might seem high, it was in fact the bare minimum required to protect the security of the country. In 1965 India had been obliged to take measures of self-defence. Referring to

the disputes between the two countries, he said that the so-called Kashmir dispute, to which the representative of Pakistan had referred, was not a dispute at all. Kashmir was an integral part of India like any other state of India. Moreover, Pakistan had consistently refused to discuss its differences with India in the spirit of the Tashkent Declaration of 1966. He also pointed out that his country's defence expenditure was 3.46 per cent of its gross national product, not 3.2 per cent as indicated in document E/4811/Add.1, and that it represented the minimum required to enable India to protect its long frontiers with two hostile neighbours.

13. Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan), speaking in exercise of his right of reply, said that in his Government's view the Kashmir issue was not an internal Indian problem.

14. Mr. AYOUB (Tunisia) said that his country had already stated its position on the agenda item under consideration, which the Council itself and other bodies had repeatedly had occasion to discuss in the past. Tunisia had always supported efforts to further the cause of general and complete world disarmament, and although it had to be recognized that the present international situation was not conducive to the attainment of that goal, the defenders of that cause should not allow themselves to be discouraged. The problem was not the economic and social consequences of disarmament, but disarmament itself, which implied the need for a change of attitude in the world. In Tunisia, where the armed forces themselves were engaged in economic and social development work, the economic and social consequences of disarmament on the economy of the country would be negligible, owing to the low proportion of expenditure allocated to defence.

15. In addition, Tunisia wished to express its special sympathy for those countries in the Middle East which were obliged to spend considerable sums in order to defend themselves against continual acts of aggression.

16. Mr. AZEVEDO BRITO (Brazil) stressed the importance of the agenda item before the Council and the connexion between disarmament and development itself. Only by utilizing the resources released by disarmament—especially if it were general and complete—would there be sufficient funds available to make an effective attack on the great scourges of mankind: poverty and want. Disarmament was therefore an urgent matter from an economic as well as political point of view.

17. Unfortunately, little progress had thus far been made in that regard, and it was also disturbing to note that instead of planning the utilization of resources to be released by disarmament to the benefit of developing countries, there is a growing concern for possible economic and social adjustments in those countries which are currently allotting substantial resources to building up military arsenals. Those countries will in fact be the major beneficiaries of disarmaments. Moreover, there could be no question that Brazil and the developing countries in general would also benefit extensively from disarmament by the countries which were at present diverting valuable resources from development and in so doing were posing a threat to world peace. His delegation hoped that the debate would

represent an incentive for positive and specific measures for general and complete disarmament and the allocation of the resources thereby released to the economic and social advancement of mankind.

18. The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should take note of documents E/4811 and Add.1 and 2 and

transmit them to the General Assembly together with any subsequent replies received in good time.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.