

**General Assembly**Distr.
GENERALA/38/237
25 May 1983

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

irty-eighth session
em 62 of the preliminary list*

GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

Note verbale dated 19 May 1983 from the Permanent Representative of
Austria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, upon the request of E. Cardinal Franz Koenig, Archbishop of Vienna, has the honour to bring to the attention of the Secretary-General the enclosed text of an appeal for peace by the shops of Austria, which was adopted at Vienna in April 1983.

The Permanent Representative would be grateful if this note and its annex were circulated as a document of the General Assembly under item 62 of the preliminary list.

* A/38/50/Rev.1.

ANNEX

APPEAL FOR PEACE BY THE BISHOPS OF AUSTRIA

For a long time many people have been concerned about peace. The reasons for concern multiply. Mistrust grows. Military stockpiles are built up.

New, decisive measures of nuclear rearmament threaten, if an agreement is not reached this year which could work as a signal for reversing the trend.

The year 1983 brings various anniversaries. Among them is the disconcerting tenth anniversary of the unsuccessful Vienna Troop-Reduction talks.

The situation gives occasion for reflection and for serious words.

We know that peace is more than reducing the means of destruction and alleviating international tensions.

We know that peace cannot thrive without the reduction of hate and mistrust, without security of the rights of man and the rights of peoples, without social justice.

We recall that peace is at the same time a "gift of God" and "entrusted to man" (Pope John Paul II)

Thus we declare:

- 1) All statesmen and all governments, all political forces and all people must finally realize that the use of force in conflicts is inhuman. War cannot anymore constitute a means to reach political goals.
- 2) Above all, weapons of mass destruction - nuclear, bacteriological and chemical-have to be rejected.

Everything has to be done to prevent their use including the political threat of their use and to promote their elimination.

- 3) This cannot be achieved at once. But it is necessary to reduce the dangers step by step, to enhance the chances of peace step by step.

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4) Therefore, we appeal to those carrying political responsibility, to undertake all efforts to ensure that East and West renounce to all so-called medium-range missiles - be they planned or already deployed. It is obvious that these missiles, in particular, contribute to the deterioration and the destabilization of the situation.

5) We appeal to the parties to the Vienna Troop-Reduction Conference to finally agree to "conventional" disarmament measures in the European region and thereby also to improve the chances for an elimination of the so-called tactical nuclear weapons.

6) We appeal to the great powers to initiate on all other levels at least the limitation and the gradual reduction of the means of destruction.

7) We call upon all, to recognize at last, that the prevention of a nuclear catastrophe is of primary interest to all peoples and States, regardless of different social structures, competing interests and ideological struggles. Securing survival is a common concern.

We appeal to the politicians of our country and of all other countries to spare no efforts to respond to the challenge of these insights and needs.

We call upon all Christians of our country, upon all Austrians and all people of good will to join this appeal.

Vienna, April 1983

THE MEMBERS OF THE AUSTRIAN CONFERENCE
OF BISHOPS
