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General and complete disarmament

Relationship between disarmament and development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [73/37](#), pertains to the further strengthening of the relationship between disarmament and development within the United Nations and also contains information received from Member States on the subject.

* [A/74/50](#).



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I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 1 of its resolution [73/37](#), on the relationship between disarmament and development, the General Assembly stressed the central role of the United Nations in the relationship between disarmament and development and requested the Secretary-General to strengthen further the role of the Organization in that field.

2. In paragraph 2 of the resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to take action, through appropriate organs and within available resources, for the implementation of the action programme adopted at the 1987 International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development (see [A/CONF.130/39](#)).

3. In paragraph 6 of the resolution, the General Assembly reiterated its invitation to Member States to provide the Secretary-General with information regarding measures and efforts to devote part of the resources made available by the implementation of disarmament and arms limitation agreements to economic and social development. Furthermore, in paragraph 7, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its seventy-fourth session on the implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

4. On 6 February 2019, the Secretariat sent a note verbale to Member States seeking their views on the issue. At the time of writing, replies have been received from Cuba, Iraq, Mexico, Qatar and Ukraine. The European Union also sent its views. The information is contained in sections III and IV below. Any views received after 15 May 2019 will be posted on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs¹ in the language of submission. No addenda will be issued.

II. Implementation of General Assembly resolution [73/37](#)

5. During the reporting period, the United Nations continued to strengthen its role regarding the relationship between disarmament and development. This has included the coordination of efforts towards achieving the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; ongoing inter-agency coordination on matters affecting peace, security and development, in particular through the Coordinating Action on Small Arms, the coordination mechanism on small arms, the arms trade and ammunition issues chaired by the Office for Disarmament Affairs; and the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action, chaired by the Mine Action Service. In addition, the United Nations system continues to promote transparency and confidence-building in military spending.

6. In full awareness of the interconnected nature of peace, security and development, the United Nations considers that solid and enforced arms regulation and adequate weapons management comprise the preconditions necessary for a safe and stable environment, itself a condition necessary for the achievement of sustainable social and economic development. The reduction in the risk of armed conflict and violence, brought about by low levels of illicit arms flows, creates a precondition for post-conflict reconstruction that could lead to enhanced investment opportunities.

7. Under target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, an ambitious objective of significantly reducing illicit arms flows has been set. The United Nations endeavours to assist States in further strengthening their capacity in this regard. In addition, the Office for Disarmament Affairs has continued to work with the United

¹ www.un.org/disarmament.

Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in coordinating efforts within the Secretariat towards reporting, collecting and monitoring data with regard to indicator 16.4.2 of the Goals. The Coordinating Action on Small Arms mechanism has continued to serve as the most relevant inter-agency mechanism for the issue of disarmament and development, as well as the means through which United Nations entities coordinate their work on arms trade issues and the implementation of indicator 16.4.2.

8. In accordance with Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations, all Member States have committed themselves to the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources. In addition, since 1981, the Office for Disarmament Affairs has maintained the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures, a voluntary transparency instrument through which Member States report their levels of annual military spending. The reduction of military expenditure has long been on the agenda of the United Nations, as has the promotion of transparency and confidence among States with regard to the matter. The information provided by Member States through the Report not only serves as a basis for determining trends in military spending and fostering discussions among Member States on appropriate levels of such spending, but also sets the conditions for development through disarmament. The information submitted by States is available in the online database maintained by the Office.²

III. Replies received from Governments

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]

[26 April 2019]

Almost 20 years after the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals and five years after the adoption of the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the international community cannot be complacent in its efforts to promote the development of every country.

Scourges such as extreme poverty persist in the world. Currently, 10 per cent of the global population, i.e. 736 million people, are living on less than \$1.90 a day.

According to the *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2018*, after a prolonged decline, hunger is on the rise again. Many indicators, including the proportion of undernourished people worldwide, the number of children suffering from stunting and the number of children suffering from wasting (low weight for height), have also worsened over previous years.

Moreover, total official development assistance (ODA) fell from €131 billion in 2016 to €130 billion in 2017, a decline of 0.6 per cent. According to the *Sustainable Development Goals Report*, ODA as a share of gross national income has remained at 0.31 per cent, significantly short of the 0.7 per cent agreed in Monterrey.

The efforts of the United Nations and its Member States are also threatened by drought, conflict and disasters linked to climate change. In the context of disaster-related economic losses totalling \$300 billion, the Declaration on the Right to Development becomes even more critical. Adopted by the General Assembly in 1986, this document establishes that resources derived from disarmament measures should be redirected to development efforts.

According to statistics from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, total world military expenditure rose to \$1.739 trillion in 2017. This figure

² www.unroca.org/.

confirms the need for a United Nations-managed international fund to which half of current military expenditures are allocated in order to help less developed countries achieve sustainable economic development.

The United Nations plays a central role in the relationship between disarmament and development and, in particular, in the implementation of the action programme adopted at the 1987 International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development. This programme provides for the adoption of measures to reduce the level and magnitude of military expenditures and reallocate these resources for social and economic development, particularly for developing countries.

In Cuba, the Youth Labour Armies, which are part of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, contribute to the country's socio-economic and environmental development. They are involved in agricultural and industrial production, construction, search and rescue during natural disasters, and protection of the social and economic infrastructure.

This focus has been constant since the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959. Our historic leader, Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro Ruz, in his speech to the officers of the Armed Forces on 4 November 1969, said "It is a highly revolutionary event that in a underdeveloped country such as ours, in a country that must confront hard work, our armed forces do not constitute a privileged sector of the population, as is the case in almost all of the countries of Latin America. They do not constitute an unproductive sector of the country; rather, the armed forces constitute fundamental factors in the development and the work of the country."

Cuba devotes the majority of its public resources to spheres that contribute directly to sustainable development. Under to the 2017 State budget law, Cuba will devote 23.7 per cent of its expenditures to education; 27.5 per cent to public health and social assistance; 17.2 per cent to social security and 4.6 per cent to culture and sports.

Cuba will continue to fulfil its commitments under the action programme adopted at the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development.

The international community must take practical and urgent steps to reallocate the resources now being used for military purposes to economic and social development activities fostering a life of dignity for all.

Iraq

[Original: Arabic]
[13 May 2019]

The Republic of Iraq affirms that the right to development is an inalienable human right and that equality of opportunity is a prerogative of both nations and their peoples. The Government of the Republic of Iraq is convinced that the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations regarding international cooperation can contribute to solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian nature and to strengthening the culture of peace and disarmament.

International peace and security are fundamental components in the realization of the right to development. In accordance with the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, we reaffirm that there is a close relationship between disarmament and development, and that progress in the former would help greatly in the realization of the latter. Resources released as a result of the implementation of disarmament measures should be devoted to the economic and

social development and the well-being of all peoples, especially the peoples of developing countries. Iraq stresses the need for a multilateral approach to issues relating to disarmament and development. The Republic of Iraq believes that the United Nations and the competent international organizations have a vital role to play in that area.

Iraq believes that economic, social, cultural and technical cooperation among States will help to strengthen the relations among them, ensuring that any problems between them will disappear or will, at least, be capable of resolution by peaceful means. The goals of development and stronger inter-State relations should therefore be considered complementary to the purposes and principles for which international organizations are striving, and will ultimately help to ensure that resources are employed in the service of development instead of being wasted on armaments. This, in turn, would be conducive to regional and international peace and security.

Efforts must be made to achieve development goals by encouraging the international community to adopt and apply unilateral, bilateral and multilateral disarmament measures, which would inevitably contribute to the realization of those goals. Reallocating some of the resources that are currently being spent on armaments and military forces to development would result in significant progress towards achieving development goals. In that regard, the Republic of Iraq endorses the position that the resources of developing countries must not be spent on armament at a time when they are needed for social and economic development. Peaceful resolution of conflicts and the promotion of peace, democracy, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and an end to the arms race would all help to leverage resources for development. The Government of Iraq supports adoption of the 17 goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Goal 16, which includes the target of significantly reducing illicit arms flows by the end of 2030.

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]
[13 May 2019]

In 2018, \$1.739 trillion was spent on conventional and nuclear weapons, and between 2008–2012 and 2013–2017, the volume of international arms transfers increased by 10 per cent, to its highest level since the end of the cold war.

Mexico deplores the threat and harm to international peace and security and community development posed by the growing number and complexity of armed conflicts and the violence generated by crime in all its forms.

Mexico is fully aware that there should be a balance between the resources allocated to military spending and those allocated to development. In this light, it recognizes that, for the well-being of the people, its social assistance programmes primarily target families living in predominantly indigenous areas, high poverty areas or high violence areas.

The welfare policy of the Government of Mexico ensures full enjoyment of rights without exclusion or discrimination. Its approach is based on the universal nature of human and social rights, the human life cycle, social and community participation, the territorial perspective, transparency and honesty.

Mexico has focused its international and national commitment to disarmament and development on the generation of strategic documents, visions and analyses, which has given it a comprehensive and specific view of the problems related to arms trafficking.

The budget for these social programmes was 106,645 million pesos for the 2018 financial year, increasing to 150,606 million pesos in the 2019 financial year. Additional measures include:

(a) Implementation of the firearms exchange campaign. Civilians voluntarily surrender their weapons in exchange for a reward (cash, groceries or household appliances). Between 1 January and 30 November 2018, 5,442 firearms, 387,316 pieces of ammunition and 2,745 magazines were exchanged.

(b) Mexico also participates in international meetings aimed at mitigating the effects of nuclear and conventional weapons and in multilateral forums focused on achieving general and complete disarmament, reducing military weapons expenditures and encouraging more resources to be channelled to development, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

(c) In strict compliance with the resolutions of the United Nations and the Organization of American States, Mexico promotes cooperation in activities related to disarmament, transparency in military expenditures and increasing confidence-building measures.

Qatar

[Original: Arabic]
[15 May 2019]

The State of Qatar has acceded to all treaties banning weapons of mass destruction and internationally prohibited weapons.

In 2007, Qatar promulgated Act No. 17 on chemical weapons, subsequently amended by Act No. 16 of 2013. In 2016, it promulgated Act No. 4 on biological weapons. In 2018, it promulgated Act No. 3 on a national system for accounting for and monitoring nuclear materials.

On a periodic basis, the Doha Regional Centre for Training on Conventions on Weapons of Mass Destruction holds sessions and workshops at all levels to raise awareness of the importance of conventions on weapons of mass destruction.

The Centre, in cooperation with the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), has organized 32 international programmes on various provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Those activities were funded in full by voluntary contributions provided to OPCW by the State of Qatar. The Doha Regional Centre has been widely recognized as an outstanding training centre in the field of weapons of mass destruction that exemplifies the relationship between disarmament and development.

The State of Qatar possesses only conventional weapons, and only to the extent that they are necessary for its security in the light of circumstances in the surrounding region. Weapons expenditures represent only a small portion of the public budget.

Qatar focuses on advancement in areas such as health, education, culture and development projects to serve future generations.

Development and infrastructure projects receive due care and attention from the State, so that they can serve as models under our comprehensive national development plan, Qatar National Vision 2030, based on the principle that development is an essential prerequisite for the progress and prosperity of our citizens.

Ukraine

[Original: English]

[15 May 2019]

Ukraine understands the importance of redirecting expenditures from military to civil purposes. We fully support the endeavours of States and diverse international governmental and non-governmental organizations to take measures in this regard.

However, since 2014, Ukraine has been facing severe military aggression from Russia. The Russian terrorist forces continue to conduct offensives in the east of Ukraine. The aggressor State builds up its military capacities in the occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, impeding security not only in the Black Sea area but also in the whole south of Europe, as well as in the Middle East.

Under such conditions, Ukraine is forced to increase financing for military purposes in order to defend its territorial integrity and sovereignty. Currently, the invader State makes it impossible to seek economic and social development through the implementation of disarmament and arms limitation measures. Our efforts are directed towards the restoration of peace and security in the country and the reinstatement of control over internationally recognized borders.

Therefore, only the full compliance by all Member States, primarily by Russia, with the Charter of the United Nations with regard to Ukraine could create the indispensable preconditions for achieving economic and social development in the sense of General Assembly resolution [73/37](#) on the relationship between disarmament and development.

IV. Reply received from the European Union

[Original: English]

[15 May 2019]

Disarmament and development are interrelated, notably regarding the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. As already recognized in 2001 in the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the illicit trade in such arms and weapons has a wide range of humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences and causes a serious threat to peace, reconciliation, safety, security, stability and sustainable development at the individual, local, national, regional and international levels. The links between armed violence, conflict and poor development are well established. Through target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, States have committed themselves, by 2030, to significantly reducing illicit financial and arms flows, strengthening the recovery and return of stolen assets and combating all forms of organized crime. Therefore, in addition to addressing security goals, supporting actions should be aimed at mitigating and preventing the negative effects on sustainable development of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. As indicated in the European Union strategy against illicit firearms, small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, which was adopted by the Council of the European Union on 19 November 2018, the European Union is committed to contributing to the effort to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 16.4 (by 2030, significantly reduce illicit arms flows), by helping States and regions to formulate and implement national and regional indicators.

In a concrete follow-up to the European Union strategy, it provides considerable assistance, through a number of projects, to various countries and regional organizations to strengthen the action against illicit small arms and light weapons.

Since 2004, more than €100 million has been contracted out to small arms and light weapons control projects. The priorities include: stockpile management; the destruction of surplus and confiscated small arms and light weapons; capacity-building for the marking, record-keeping and tracing of small arms and light weapons; and tracking the sources of illicit weapons and ammunition in conflict-affected areas. The European Union is also assisting countries in enhancing their national arms transfer control systems to prevent weapons from falling into unauthorized hands. The European Union also financially supports the activities of the Office for Disarmament Affairs that are in support of gender-mainstreamed policies, programmes and actions in the fight against small arms trafficking and misuse, in line with the women and peace and security agenda.

Further to combating illicit small arms and light weapons, the European Union also supports projects addressing the threats of anti-personnel landmines and explosive remnants of war, and chemical and biological weapons. All States members of the European Union are parties to the conventions banning anti-personnel landmines, biological and chemical weapons and nuclear tests, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Arms Trade Treaty, which are aimed at effectively regulating international trade in conventional weapons and preventing the illicit trade thereof. Since 2004, the European Council has committed more than €250 million to the implementation and universalization of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms export control treaties and conventions. The European Union and its member States also support export control regimes on chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear dual-use goods and missile technology. The European Union puts major emphasis on globally enhancing the security of dual-use chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear materials, whose malevolent use poses a risk to international development. With a budget of €155 million for the period 2014–2020, the European Union Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative provides a platform for voluntary regionalized cooperation with 61 partner countries on all chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear-related hazards. Special attention is thereby paid to terrorism-related threats.

Through various development-related financial instruments, the European Union also funds projects relevant to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration within its larger post-conflict peacebuilding efforts.