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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 [76/37](#), pertains to the need for 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/77/50](#).



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I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 1 of its resolution [76/37](#), 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 on 11 September 1987 at the 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-seventh session on the implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.
4. On 11 February 2022, the Secretariat sent a note verbale to Member States seeking their views on the issue by 31 May 2022. At the time of writing, replies have been received from Burkina Faso, Cuba and Mexico. Any views received after 31 May will be posted on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs in the language of submission.¹ No addendum will be issued.

II. Implementation of General Assembly resolution [76/37](#)

5. During the reporting period, the United Nations continued its efforts to strengthen the interlinkages between disarmament and development, including in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Inter-agency coordination through the Coordinating Action on Small Arms mechanism has continued to play a vital role in that regard, in particular in respect of the need to integrate disarmament concerns and development concerns in the activities of the entities comprising the mechanism in order to better reflect the disarmament-development nexus.
6. The United Nations, through the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, has reaffirmed that peace, security and development are inextricably linked and that awareness and understanding of the interlinkages are a necessary precondition for sustainable economic and social development. The United Nations recognizes that the effective regulation and management of weapons can contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.
7. The critical link between the prevention and reduction of violence and development is made clear in Sustainable Development Goal 16, in particular target 16.4, which is focused on the need to significantly reduce illicit arms flows. The Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime have continued to perform their roles as co-custodians of Sustainable Development Goal indicator 16.4.2,² supporting States in the collection and management of data and information relating to illicit arms flows. Such efforts are facilitated by the illicit arms flows questionnaire in the context of the Protocol against the Illicit

¹ www.un.org/disarmament.

² Indicator 16.4.2: “Proportion of seized, found or surrendered arms whose illicit origin or context has been traced or established by a competent authority in line with international instruments”.

Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the national reports submitted by States on their implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The Coordinating Action on Small Arms mechanism has also facilitated the exchange of views and coordinated field actions in support of the implementation of activities under indicator 16.4.2. Last, the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation has provided financial support to implementing partners for the execution of quick-impact projects relating, in particular, to target 16.4.

8. In a bid to further strengthen the disarmament-development linkage at the country level, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme have overseen the further implementation of proposed activities within the framework of the Saving Lives Entity fund, a facility launched by the Secretary-General within the Peacebuilding Fund. Activities now under way in Cameroon, Jamaica and South Sudan are supporting Member States in addressing armed violence and illicit trafficking and misuse of small arms and light weapons as part of a comprehensive approach to sustainable security and development.

9. 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". 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. Accordingly, both the reduction of military expenditure and the promotion of transparency and confidence among States with regard to the matter have long been on the agenda of the United Nations. The continued relevance of both requires the full participation of all States in a consistent manner. The information provided by Member States through the instrument may serve as a basis for determining trends in military spending and fostering discussions among Member States on appropriate levels of such spending. It may also help to set the conditions for development through disarmament. The information submitted by States is available in the online database maintained by the Office.

III. Replies received from Governments

Burkina Faso

[Original: French]

[31 May 2022]

According to the human development index, Burkina Faso is one of the poorest countries in the world. Since its independence in 1960, Burkina Faso has been faced and continues to be faced with crises that have led to the proliferation and illicit traffic of arms in the country.

In addition, Burkina Faso is situated in the heart of West Africa and is a bridge between coastal Africa and the Sahelo-Saharan region. Owing to its geographical position, it has suffered and continues to suffer the impact of the various subregional crises.

The proliferation and illicit traffic of arms leads to transnational organized crime and armed attacks on the country's major roads, among other issues. Since April 2015, the country has faced an increasing threat of attacks and kidnappings by the terrorist armed groups plundering the country. In addition to weapons, there is the use of improvised explosive devices by terrorist armed groups.

In this insecure and unstable situation, the population is forced to abandon many income-generating activities. As a result of terrorism and insecurity, some parts of the country have been completely abandoned and the various resources there are not being exploited, which constitutes a real loss of revenue for the country and thus a brake on its development. For example, a number of gold mines are being forced to close down due to terrorism, which has a negative impact on gross domestic product. Terrorism has forced members of the labour force to leave their areas of production and move to urban or peri-urban centres, where they become welfare recipients.

Disarming the terrorist armed groups could therefore re-start economic activities in some parts of the country, in particular those facing serious security challenges. This would without a doubt relaunch the country's development.

In view of the above, Burkina Faso is convinced that there is a close link between disarmament and development. Disarmament is thus a powerful factor in the development of communities and the country as a whole. Disarmament and, in turn, the promotion of peace and security, are prerequisites for development.

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[27 May 2022]

We have witnessed the discouraging situation brought about by the numerous crises arising from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in all countries, but primarily in those of the South. The international community cannot be content with the action taken to promote development. Achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will require a renewed commitment.

According to the United Nations trade and development body, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, based on its Trade and Development Report 2021 Update published on 24 March 2022, projected global economic growth for 2022 has been revised down from 3.6 per cent to 2.6 per cent, indicating an economic slowdown. This could generate financial shockwaves capable of pushing some developing countries into a spiral of insolvency, recession and arrested development.

In its annual report *Social Panorama of Latin America*, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean estimates that the number of people living in extreme poverty increased by nearly 5 million in that region alone between 2020 and 2021. This means that the number of people living in extreme poverty has increased from 81 million to 86 million.

The efforts of the United Nations and its Member States are also threatened by drought, rising temperatures, sea-level rise and other phenomena associated with the negative effects of climate change. As shown in the report *Drought in numbers: restoration for readiness and resilience*, presented at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification, more than 2.3 billion people face water stress in 2022, and nearly 160 million children are exposed to severe and prolonged droughts.

In this context, implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development becomes even more necessary. Adopted by the General Assembly on 4 December 1986, the Declaration establishes that resources released through disarmament measures should be redirected to development.

Conflicts and the arms race undermine international efforts to promote progress. In its Mid-Year Trends Report 2021, published in November 2021, the Office of the

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees refers to the impact of conflict and violence on the displacement of those fleeing them and indicates that by mid-2021 almost 51 million people were displaced within their own countries.

In 2020, global military spending amounted to \$1.981 trillion, an increase of 2.6 per cent compared with 2019, according to statistics from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

These figures confirm the need for a United Nations-supervised international fund, to which half of current military expenditure should be allocated, in order to help the least developed countries achieve sustainable economic development.

The United Nations must play a central role in the interrelationship between disarmament and development, in particular through the implementation of the provisions on the relationship between disarmament and development of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly and the 1987 action programme of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, a conference at which Cuba had the high honour of being one of the Vice-Chairs. The action programme provides for the adoption of measures to reduce the level and magnitude of military expenditures and reallocate those resources to social and economic development, particularly in developing countries.

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

The commitment and political will of the Government of Cuba can be seen in various ways, including the contribution to the country's economic, social and environmental development by the Youth Labour Armies, which are part of the Revolutionary Armed Forces. The members of the Youth Labour Armies are involved in agricultural and industrial production, in construction and in evacuation and search and rescue operations during natural and climatic disasters.

The objectives set forth in Cuban laws and in the National Economic and Social Development Plan 2030 pertain not only to economic and social development but also to ongoing commitments in respect of nuclear, biological and chemical disarmament.

Cuba allocates the majority of its public resources to spheres that contribute directly to sustainable development. Its expenditure on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021 is estimated to be more than 16 billion Cuban pesos, for vaccinating the Cuban population, procuring medicines and related materials, and supporting wage guarantees for justified and necessary work interruptions.

Under the 2022 State Budget Act, budgeted expenditure of 224.58 billion Cuban pesos is planned. Of that amount, 69 per cent will be allocated to education, health care, assistance and social security..

General and complete disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament, under effective international control, remains an urgent and imperative task for humankind. Member States must respect and strictly comply with their obligations under international agreements on disarmament and arms control. The arms race must be stopped and those substantial resources reallocated to ensure a dignified life for all human beings on the planet and to achieve sustainable development that contributes to the well-being of future generations.

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]
[30 May 2022]

This document is submitted by Mexico in accordance with General Assembly resolution 76/37, entitled “Relationship between disarmament and development”, in which the Assembly asks 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, with a view to reducing the ever-widening gap between developed and developing countries.

In the current international context, which is marked by a pandemic caused by the spread of SARS-CoV-2 and the convergence of financial, economic, energy, environmental, social and food crises, the economic resources devoted to sustaining and increasing arsenals contrast sharply with those devoted to development and disarmament in the world. Although some States have had to reduce their military spending in order to meet health needs, such spending remains excessive worldwide.

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, global military spending in 2021 amounted to \$2.1 trillion for the first time in history. This represents an increase of 0.7 per cent compared with the previous year and accounts for 2.2 per cent of the world’s gross domestic product. Global military spending therefore reached record levels in the second year of the pandemic, despite the drop in economic growth.

These worrying figures and the announcement by some States of their intention to improve, increase or refine their military arsenals contrast starkly with a time when global health needs must continue to be urgently addressed, when poverty has increased as a result of the prevailing health situation and the decline in economic growth, and when it is pressing to achieve the goals of sustainable development. It is therefore unjustifiable that enormous economic resources continue to be allocated to maintaining, increasing and modernizing military arsenals.

Mexico is determined to assume its responsibility in building a more equitable, just and peaceful world. In that regard, it participates in all multilateral efforts to achieve general and complete disarmament, which contributes to reducing global arms spending, and to encourage the channelling of more resources to international cooperation and development assistance.

Mexico has focused on developing strategic documents, visions and analyses, which has given it a general and specific view of arms trafficking issues.

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 spending and increased confidence-building.

In addition, aware of the link between preventing and reducing violence and social development, Mexico has implemented various public policies at the national level, including in particular the following:

- The “Yes to Disarmament, Yes to Peace” campaign continued to be implemented nationwide in 2021. This public policy seeks to help reduce the high rates of violence by raising public awareness of the risks of owning firearms and ammunition. The campaign involves encouraging civilians to surrender their weapons in exchange for an economic benefit or a benefit in kind for their family (economic resources, basic necessities or household appliances). Between 21 January 2019 and 20 September 2021, 5,966 handguns, long guns and

grenades and 1,091,055 rounds of ammunition were recovered and destroyed. In exchange, economic benefits equivalent to 18,654,471.50 Mexican pesos were distributed. These economic resources benefited 4,596 people, of whom 1,667 were women and 2,929 were men. The campaign is an inter-institutional social initiative undertaken in coordination with civil society, the Catholic church and the three levels of government, with the participation of the Ministry of Defence and the involvement at the local level of the following ministries: the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Public Safety, the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, the Ministry for Women and the Ministry of Inclusion and Social Welfare.

- Under the National Development Plan 2018–2024, action is being taken in Mexico to promote development with a view to combating and preventing crime and violence. For example, the building of a network of places of innovation, freedom, art, education and knowledge (PILARES programme) continues in Mexico City. These places, located primarily in the most marginalized and violent neighbourhoods, give communities access to educational, training and development opportunities, made possible through access to cyberschools, entrepreneurship workshops and training for various trades.
- Social programmes in Mexico focus on families living in highly marginalized areas or areas with high rates of violence, or in areas with a majority indigenous population, with a view to addressing the structural obstacles to development. The budget allocated to social programmes in 2021 was 185,392.4 million Mexican pesos (\$9,133.7 million). Resources allocated to the programme relating to the welfare pension for older persons amounted to 135,662.1 million Mexican pesos (\$6,683.6 million) in 2021. The resources of the programme relating to the welfare allowance for persons with permanent disabilities totalled 16,614.0 million Mexican pesos (\$818.5 million) in 2021.

For Mexico, social policy builds a country with well-being. Social programmes in Mexico are guided by the principle of correcting social injustices and promoting economic growth, without affecting peaceful coexistence, solidarity ties, cultural diversity or the environment.
