



# DDA 1999 Update

UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS

September 1999

## WEAPONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

### Gramsh, Albania

On 17 September a colorful public ceremony, attended by the President of Albania, local authorities, village elders, school children and a thousand others, in the presence of UN and UNDP officials, was held in which weapons collected in the Gramsh Pilot Project (GPP) were symbolically destroyed by mechanical cutting in the main square of the district of Gramsh in central Albania. Soon after, a ribbon was cut to launch a road construction project, employing local young people and filling a long-sought community need.

Following the chaotic events in March 1997, when some 600,000 weapons were removed by civilians from military depots throughout Albania, President Rexhep Meidani, in February 1998, asked the Secretary-General for United Nations assistance in the retrieval of the weapons. An evaluation mission led by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Jayantha Dhanapala, recommended a weapons for development programme beginning with a pilot project in the Gramsh district.

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***“Give a community a better chance for development and it would be willing to discard weapons. Raise a community’s stakes in peace and it would be more determined to shun violence.”***

USG Dhanapala, at the GPP ceremony on 17 September 1999.



UNDP Photo

**NJE ARME PAK  
NJE JETE ME SHUME**

**Program Pilot Gramshit  
Gramsh Pilot Project**

**ONE LESS WEAPON  
ONE LIFE MORE**

## CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT CONCLUDES 1999 SESSION

On 8 September, the President of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), Ambassador Leslie Luck of Australia, brought down the gavel on the Conference's 1999 session. The Conference never reached agreement on the adoption of a programme of work for its 1999 session, and thus was not able to undertake substantive work. However, the extensive consultations highlighted the arduous, yet necessary pre-negotiating role of the Conference.

Successive Presidents throughout the session made efforts to forge compromises on a programme of work. A number of proposals were put forward by different delegations, groups of delegations as well as by the Presidents themselves. Although they contained some common elements, it was evident that further consultations were needed on two subjects: nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

At the end of the session, Ambassador Luck, in a statement included in the Conference's Annual Report to the General Assembly, said that a large measure of convergence had been preserved around proposals that could be a basis for a possible agreement. He concluded that there was a strong collective interest in commencing substantive work as soon as possible during the 2000 session. The Conference entrusted Ambassador Luck, and his successor as President, Ambassador Kreid of Austria, to jointly conduct consultations during the inter-sessional months in order to achieve that goal.

Not surprisingly, members of the Conference, as well as commentators on its work, widely acknowledged that the international political climate had a detrimental influence on

multilateral disarmament discussions in the CD, the UN Disarmament Commission and other multilateral forums. For instance, the conflict in Kosovo, the announcement of NATO's new Strategic Concept in April and the decision by the United States to increase funding for missile defence systems led to tensions among the nuclear-weapon States and between developed and developing countries. The Kashmir dispute and the release of India's draft nuclear doctrine heightened tensions between India and Pakistan, which faced off in testing nuclear devices in May 1998.

### FIVE NEW MEMBERS

The Conference's 5 August 1999 decision to admit five new members into its ranks—Ecuador, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Tunisia—expanded its membership to 66 countries. Requests for membership from another 21 countries are still on the table. A number of delegations again raised the call for universal membership of the Conference, while others stressed the importance of considering the effects of admitting new members on the efficient and practical functioning of a negotiating body that operated by consensus. ❖UNDDA

### BREAKING GROUND ON SMALL ARMS: LATIN AMERICAN ISSUES

#### *Lima, Peru*

Ending three days of discussion on 25 June, representatives of ministries of foreign affairs from Latin America and the Caribbean, from military and police institutions, and from regional organizations, as well as international experts on small arms, called for the root causes of illicit arms trafficking to be addressed and for the flow of arms into the region to be curbed.

In the final round of statements, participants in the seminar organized under the auspices of the Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA) through the UN Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean pointed out some of the key roles that the UN could play in regional disarmament: ensuring a constant flow of information on the item; offering a permanent forum for debate among all the parties involved in combating arms trafficking; and supporting the implementation of current regional agreements on disarmament.

The activities of the Lima Centre could be of particular assistance to the region. The Centre recently resumed its work in Lima, after a suspension of activities for three years.

The revitalized Centre reopened with the support of the Peruvian Government and upon requests of the UN General Assembly in order to give greater prominence to the contribution of disarmament to international peace and security. The Centre is directed by Mr. Péricles Gasparini, former senior researcher at the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), who resides in Lima. ❖UNDDA

***"Not long ago they fought each other. Now they fight together. At Nicaragua's Peace Promoter Network, former soldiers from the Sandinista and Resistance armies are using their military skills to set examples of discipline, sacrifice and self-examination in the reconstruction of this Central American nation."***

*"People Building Peace, 35 Inspiring Stories Around the World", from the chapter THERAPY AND RECONSTRUCTION, European Centre for Conflict Prevention, Utrecht, The Netherlands, 1999*

## WORKSHOP ON ILLICIT TRAFFICKING IN SMALL ARMS: AFRICAN ISSUES

Lomé, Togo

From 2 to 4 August 1999, delegates from more than 25 African countries attended a workshop on illicit trafficking in small arms in Africa organized by the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa in Lomé, Togo. The workshop agenda contained three main issues reflecting the provisions of resolution 53/77 T adopted by the General Assembly in 1998: the magnitude of illicit trafficking in small arms in the region; measures to combat small arms trafficking; and the role of the UN in collecting, organizing and disseminating information on the subject. ❖UNDDA

## INFORMATION SECURITY

UNIDIR and DDA co-sponsored a discussion meeting in Geneva on 25 and 26 August to raise awareness among Member States of the security problems arising from rapidly advancing information and telecommunications technology.

The meeting looked at the revolution in military affairs (exploitation of advanced technologies to develop new modes of war), information operations (attempts to manage popular or elite perceptions across borders through overt or covert means of persuasion), and infrastructure protection (development of trustworthy network information systems). It questioned whether consideration should be given to how information operations could be used under international legal auspices for enforcement, and how effective, if at all, efforts would be to limit their development, control their proliferation or restrict their use. It agreed that practical measures could be implemented to improve the security of the

global information infrastructure.

In the age of networking, it was felt, solutions will be developed on a variety of levels and by a variety of actors.

The subject of information security was placed for the first time on the agenda of the General Assembly in 1998 on the initiative of Russia, and States have reported their views to the current Assembly (A/54/213).

## DISARMAMENT STRATEGY FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Kyoto, Japan

The Fourth United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues took place in Kyoto from 27 to 30 July, organized by the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (Kathmandu Centre). Seventy diplomats, politicians, journalists and scholars from inside and outside the region discussed:

- ◆ confidence-building measures, maritime issues, the role of regional organizations, the UN and civil society, and human security in Asia and the Pacific;
- ◆ conflict avoidance and tension reduction on the Korean peninsula; building confidence and promoting dialogue, and multifaceted cooperation in Northeast Asia;
- ◆ nuclear disarmament initiatives, prospects for the 2000 NPT Review Conference, missiles control and disarmament;
- ◆ guidelines on conventional disarmament, military expenditures and the regional arms trade;
- ◆ disarmament agenda for the next decade, including compliance with and strengthening of existing disarmament agreements.

The report of the Tokyo Forum, "Facing Nuclear Dangers: An Action Plan for the 21st Century", adopted just two days before, was presented by Mr. Yasushi Akashi, former President of the Hiroshima Peace Institute and former Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs. ❖UNDDA

***"For the United Nations, there is no higher goal, no deeper commitment and no greater ambition than preventing armed conflict."***

Report of the Secretary-General to the 54th session of the General Assembly

## SECURITY CONCEPTS IN THE CHANGING WORLD

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

The concept of security in the post-cold war period is not a static notion in the light of evolving views on the powers and functions of the nation State in relation to its neighbours, its region and the international community. The UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific organized a regional meeting to examine security concepts in the changing world from 3 to 5 August 1999, in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

Participants from universities and governments focused their attention on military and nuclear doctrines, the security of small States, information technology and national defence, the definition of security itself and nuclear-weapon-free zones. The consolidation of Mongolia's declaration of its nuclear-weapon-free status and the implications of single-State nuclear-weapon-free zones received much attention. ❖UNDDA



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## Weapons for development (continued from page 1)

Formally launched in November 1998, the project's objective was to assist the Government of Albania in collecting the weapons and ammunition taken and to create incentives for the civilians to surrender them. Even with the suspension for two months of the project owing to the influx of Kosovo refugees, 6,000 weapons and 100 tonnes of ammunition have been voluntarily surrendered and stored for destruction. The project is overseen by a National Steering Committee, with the participation of the Albanian Ministry of Local Government, a representative of the Gramsh district, the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs and the UN Development Programme.

The GPP project has greatly improved citizen security. Since the beginning of the project, no homicides have been reported in Gramsh and the number of armed confrontations has fallen dramatically.

### **Community-driven development projects**

The first phase of the development activities has begun in specific communities with the upgrading of the physical infrastructure, such as access roads, the urban lighting system and telecommunications equipment, renovating a post office and constructing a footbridge. The second phase envisages more road

rehabilitation and bridge construction. The project also features a public awareness programme, which has generated national and international interest and financial support. Countries such as Andorra, Belgium, Italy, Japan, Norway, the United Kingdom and the European Union have made or pledged generous contributions in support of the project. UNDP has committed a large sum from its core resources. And Save the Children has become a partner to the Project by providing backpack school kits for all first-grade students in the Gramsh district.

### **Expanding the programme**

At the ceremony in Gramsh, the Under-Secretary-General appealed to the international community to consider providing further support for the expansion of the weapons for development model to other parts of Albania. Around the world there were at least twenty other locations where the possibilities of recurring violence could be mitigated by offering the civilian population a combined package of improved citizen security, voluntary weapons surrender and community-based employment-creating and income-generating development incentives, particularly for the youth. ❖UNDDA

Keep up to date on events by visiting DDA at: <http://www.un.org/Depts/dda/DDAHome.htm>. It will also link you with other important sites dealing with disarmament and international security issues.

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