



DDA 2000 Update

UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS

December 2000

TOWARDS A NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE WORLD

For the third year in a row, the New Agenda Coalition (Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, New Zealand, Mexico, South Africa, Sweden) introduced a resolution entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda." The resolution (55/33 C) was adopted by the General Assembly on 20 November, by a vote of 154-3-3. In a significant development, three of the five nuclear-weapon States joined the majority.

The resolution thus is an endorsement of the political commitments incorporated in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), adopted in May this year.

In May, the 187 parties to the NPT, including all 5 nuclear-weapon States, agreed, among other things, to a set of 13 practical steps "for the systematic and progressive efforts" to implement the terms of article VI of the Treaty, that is, "to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament." Among them was an "unequivocal undertaking" by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimina-

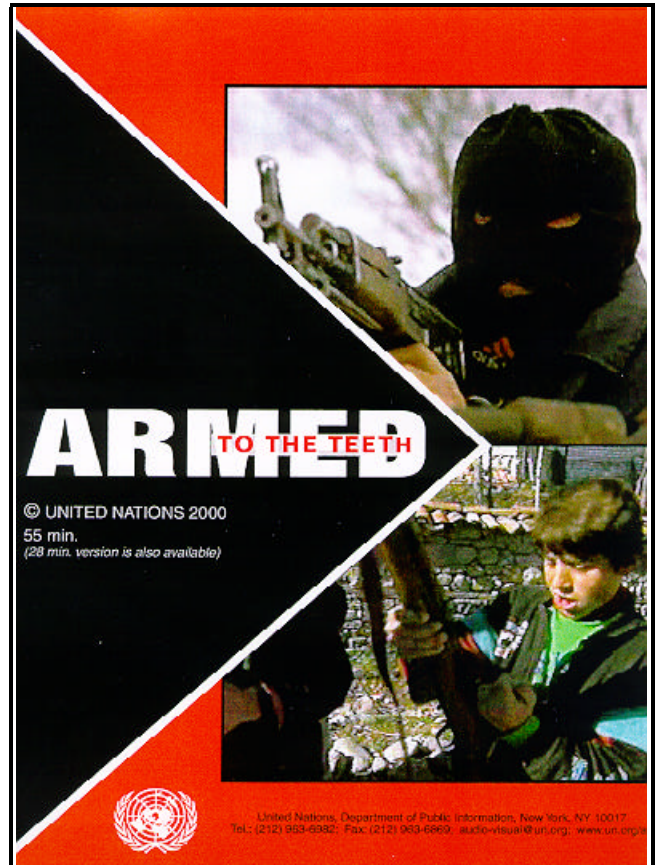
tion of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament." (Emphasis added.)

In the resolution, the Assembly took into consideration the commitment of the nuclear-weapon States to the "unequivocal undertaking" mentioned above and incorporated verbatim the other practical steps listed in the NPT Final Document. The Assembly thus politically reinforced such concepts as the *irreversibility* of nuclear disarmament, *transparency* with regard to nuclear-weapons capabilities, the *diminishing role for nuclear weapons* in security policies to minimize the risk that these weapons ever be used and the inclusion of *non-strategic nuclear weapons* in future nuclear disarmament negotiations.

China, the UK and the US voted in favour for the first time in the three-year history of the new agenda resolution. They did so principally because the wording in the resolution faithfully reflected the NPT Final Document.

Among those abstaining, the Russian Federation explained that the resolution took the agreement reached at the 2000 NPT out of context and that its adoption thus would mean that only part of its provisions would be implemented. France underlined that the text of the resolution did not reflect in a balanced

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Armed to the Teeth

“Small arms imperil human security in every way,” declared the Deputy Secretary-General, Louise Frechette, at the premiere of the United Nations documentary on small arms on 16 October at UN Headquarters. “No region, no country is immune from the devastating consequences of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons...[which] present a constant and fundamental threat to the UN’s conflict-prevention and humanitarian relief efforts, to our peace-keeping and peace-building operations, and severely hampers social and economic development.”

This timely video documentary seeks to convey an urgent message: that the proliferation of small arms is a global

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMISSIONS STUDY ON MISSILES IN ALL ITS ASPECTS

International awareness of the problem of missile proliferation, particularly ballistic missiles and its possible impact on peace and security, as well as the absence of norms in this area, continues to grow.

As in 1999, the General Assembly this year paid close attention to the issue of missiles. Following on an initiative introduced in 1999, the General Assembly, at its recent session, requested the Secretary-General, with the assistance of a panel of governmental experts to be established in 2001 on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, “to prepare a report for the consideration of the General Assembly at its 57th session on the issue of missiles in all its aspects”. (res. 55/33 A)

The resolution leaves the question of the scope of the study open for the panel of governmental experts to decide. During discussion on the resolution, some States stressed that the resolution should have addressed specifically the risks and threats to security that the proliferation of missiles and missile technology could pose. Other States argued for a universal, multilateral and non-discriminatory regime on missiles.

By adopting the resolution, the General Assembly has ensured that the issue will be carefully studied by the international community over the course of the next two years.

Related to this issue, the development and deployment of a national missile defence system by the US and the effect it would have on the 1972 US-Russian Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty) remained a topic of intense debate during the First Committee proceedings.

Many countries, nuclear-weapon States as well as non-nuclear-weapon States, while welcoming the announcement by the United States to

postpone the decision on the deployment of a national missile defence system, continued to express concern over the impact that such a system could have on the ABM Treaty and on global strategic stability.

The General Assembly called for continued efforts to strengthen the ABM Treaty to preserve its integrity and validity “so that it remains a cornerstone in maintaining global strategic stability and world peace and in promoting further strategic nuclear arms reductions”. (res. 55/33 B)

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DISARMAMENT EDUCATION BACK IN FOCUS

At its summer session in 2000, members of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, led by veteran campaigner for nuclear disarmament Ambassador Marín Bosch of Mexico, conveyed to the Secretary-General their deep concern over public and official complacency about the current dangers of nuclear war.

That lack of concern seems to have settled in the public mind as well as in the minds of legislators, parliamentarians and policy-makers. Most Board members agreed that it was essential that people be convinced of the nuclear dangers the world was still facing. Only that general awareness could bring about real change in government defence policies on these weapons, the only weapons of mass destruction not yet prohibited at the start of the 21st century.

In order to focus attention on this need, the Board recommended that a study on disarmament and non-proliferation education and training be carried out under UN auspices.

By resolution 55/33 E, adopted without a vote, the Secretary-General was requested to prepare, with the assistance of a group of governmental experts, a

study on disarmament and non-proliferation education over the course of the next two years. The resolution calls for the active involvement of the NGO education and disarmament community in the work of the experts. NGOs have a long and deep commitment to the field, as well as vast experience and many original and innovative ideas. It is expected that UN agencies, institutes and universities—such as UNESCO, UNIDIR, UNITAR, the UN University and the University for Peace—will also become associated with the exercise. UNESCO, for instance, held a World Congress on Disarmament Education in 1980, which elaborated an ambitious programme of action, much of which is still valid today.

The expert group is tasked with defining contemporary disarmament and non-proliferation education and training, assessing the current situation at the primary, secondary, university and post-graduate levels of education in all regions; recommending ways to promote this type of education; examining ways to use rapidly evolving pedagogical methods, including long-distance learning; recommending ways that organizations of the UN system can harmonize and coordinate their efforts in the field; and devising ways to introduce such education into post-conflict situations as contribution to peace-building.

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manner the agreements reached at the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

Three States that are not party to the NPT—India, Israel and Pakistan—voted against the resolution. Pakistan noted that the wording in one paragraph implied that certain States were allowed to have nuclear weapons, and held that that was unacceptable. India contended that it was a de facto nuclear-weapon State and that any realistic agenda should take that fact into account.

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BAMAKO DECLARATION

November-December 2000

The latest step taken by the OAU to promote a coordinated African approach to the 2001 UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNCITSALW) was the ministerial-level meeting it devoted to the problem, held in Bamako, Mali from 30 November to 1 December.

The situation is bleak: it is estimated that some 100 million illegal firearms (1/5 of the world total) are now circulating on the continent. The proliferation of these weapons has led to a tragic cycle: escalation of underlying social and political conflict into armed attack, retaliation, competitive re-armament, new profits for mercenaries and illegal arms traffickers, and further aggravation of the underlying conflict. It sets back economic development by creating disincentives to foreign investment, places obstacles on the path towards ensuring human rights, intensifies the suffering of refugees and internally displaced persons and robs whole societies—especially their youth—of hope in the future.

African governments, subregional economic bodies such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), research institutes and non-governmental organizations are taking up the challenge.

In adopting a “Bamako Declaration” at the end of the meeting, OAU Ministers appealed to arms supplier countries to take a number of specific steps to alleviate the problem. In addition, they called for partnership with international institutions, governments, civil society, donor agencies, regional economic communities and research centers. They also requested the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, among others, to play a more important role. They concluded by calling for a realistic and implementable programme of action to result from UNCITSALW and undertook to promote and defend the African common position articulated in the Declaration.

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BRASILIA DECLARATION

November 2000

Representatives of 22 Latin American and Caribbean States met in Brasilia from 22 to 24 November to prepare for the convening of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNCITSALW, 9-20 July 2001 in New York).

Adopting a “Brasilia Declaration”, the representatives acknowledged that the illicit trade in small arms in the region was mainly related to drug trafficking, terrorism, transnational organized crime, mercenary activities and other criminal acts and conduct. They underlined that crime prevention must be an integral part of the approach to combating the illicit trade in small arms.

The Declaration reaffirmed the right of States to self-defence, as provided for in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

It also called for UNCITSALW to adopt a political declaration and a global programme of action.

The Declaration recommended the adoption of concrete measures that would allow regions, subregions and individual countries to formulate plans that most adequately suit their needs.

The participants also acknowledged the important role that civil society had to play in achieving the goals of the Conference, especially in the area of educational initiatives and publicity campaigns.

The meeting also reiterated its full support for the candidacy of Ambassador Camilo Reyes Rodriguez of Colombia to chair the 2001 International Conference.

The meeting was organized by the Government of Brazil with the support of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-LiREC).

For the text of the Brasilia Declaration see <www.unlirec.org/news.html>

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*Towards a nuclear...
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The adoption of resolution 55/33 C by an overwhelming majority raised expectations for the implementation of the commitments made at the 2000 Review Conference of the NPT.

The next formal venue for consideration of nuclear disarmament issues at the multilateral level will be in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, which begins its 2001 session on 22 January.

Attention will be focused on the Conference and its ability to agree on a programme of work that would include, *inter alia*, the issue of nuclear disarmament.

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*Armed to the teeth
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problem and needs global solutions. It focuses on the widespread illicit trade and the easy availability of these weapons.

Estimated to be in the hundreds of thousands worldwide, there are enough of these weapons around to arm every twelfth person on earth.

The film also takes a grim, but necessary, look at the victims of these weapons, in the area of 300,000 a year, making the documentary particularly compelling and disturbing.

Striking also are the segments of the film dealing with child soldiers. Light weapons seem ready-made for small soldiers, estimated also at 300,000 worldwide.

The film was produced as a collaborative UN effort by the Departments for Disarmament Affairs and Public Information and received financial support from several governments and international organizations.

The documentary was made in 55-minute and 28-minute versions.

For further information, see DDA website, *Special Features*.

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REDESIGNED DISARMAMENT EXHIBIT OPENED

On 23 October 2000, Michael Douglas, a United Nations Messenger of Peace, demonstrated his strong support for public disarmament education and information by opening the recently redesigned and relocated disarmament exhibit, which is part of the UN guided tour. The guided tour is one of the UN's most effective information outreach tools to the general public, averaging more than 500,000 visitors each year.

Among the new elements is a large graphic of an inverted cone called *Overspending on weapons vs. People*. It succinctly shows the priority the world gives to military expenditures (\$US 780 billion) in contrast to what is spent on social development, health and the environment. The smallest point of the cone is taken up by building democracy (\$US 2 billion).

Reflecting the end of the cold war, the exhibit adds other new elements such as a section devoted to conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, with overblown

pictures of child soldiers from various conflicts. It also has an entire section on the issue of landmines and mines action. A display case contains samples of actual deactivated mines.

The exhibit gives priority to nuclear issues. Against the background of nuclear devastation, the visitor is reminded of the still extant threat to human existence posed by the 30,000 nuclear weapons it is estimated that are still stockpiled globally, many on high alert status. The displays from the previous exhibit—the clothing and other objects destroyed or remarkably preserved from the atomic bombing of Hiroshima in 1945—have been rearranged and put in new showcases. The haunting, scarred statue of St. Agnes, the only part of the cathedral that was not destroyed by the bombing of Nagasaki, was transferred as well.

The end of the cold war has also seen the signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1996 and the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention

in 1997. The verification of these agreements by their respective organizations takes pride of place in the sections dealing with these weapons.

As an actor and producer, Michael Douglas devotes his life to the creation of fiction. As a United Nations Messenger of Peace he would like people to appreciate the continued and still real dangers of nuclear war and the high price that countries pay for the excessive proliferation of small arms and landmines.

Mr. Douglas opened the exhibit at the end of a long morning participating in a first-time event at the United Nations, sharing ideas about UN advocacy with 50 other Messengers of Peace, like Muhammad Ali, and Goodwill Ambassadors, like Harry Belafonte for UNICEF, Gerri Halliwell for UNFPA and Nadine Gordimer for UNDP.

YOU ARE INVITED TO VISIT THE REDESIGNED DISARMAMENT EXHIBIT ON THE THIRD FLOOR OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUILDING, EAST CORRIDOR.

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<http://www.un.org/Dept/dda/DDAHome.htm>

Keep up to date on events by visiting our home page. It will also link you with other important sites dealing with disarmament and international security issues.

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