

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR F.M.M. SHAVA, PRESIDENT OF ECOSOC ON THE BRAINSTORMING SESSION ON “RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE, DISARMAMENT AND NON-PROLIFERATION FOR PROGRESS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT” : 23RD JANUARY 2017 : 15:00 HRS, UN CR8

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Discussion on the relationship between disarmament and development cannot be more relevant than now as the world embarks on the ambitious 2030 Agenda. That there is a symbiotic relationship between disarmament and development cannot be overemphasized. What needs the urgent attention of all UN Member States and observers, as well as various other critical stakeholders is the extent to which this relationship can actually be strengthened in a manner that brings tangible benefits and reduce risks and threats to billions of people.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In our efforts to explore how best to translate our various disarmament endeavors into sustainable development, primary focus should be placed on what actions countries can take both in their national capacities and in collective efforts. In this regard, it may be

necessary to look at SDG 16 as a critical guiding principle. Fundamentally, SDG 16 outlines how States can build and sustain peace within societies. It also specifically seeks to reduce violence and illicit financial and arms flows. It is an open secret that the widespread availability of arms of war poses a fundamental threat to sustainable global peace and security, without which development cannot be realized.

The 2030 Agenda seeks to leave no one behind. This is of direct relevance to the disarmament agenda. By its nature, disarmament seeks to eliminate unfair advantages of one group over another. Nevertheless, it is not enough to eliminate dangerous weapons, more benefits can be realized by diverting the resources realized from disarmament efforts towards socio-economic and environmental development endeavours. One direct way that Member States can effectively contribute towards this approach is for weapons producing countries to take broad measures to cut down on the production of arms, particularly small arms and light weapons. The over-production of Small Arms and Light Weapons inherently feeds into the illicit trade and their use, in the process condemning many into abject poverty. Reduction in arms production can free up resources for sustainable development efforts.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Giving a new impetus to our discussions on nuclear disarmament is necessary if the goals set under the 2030 Agenda are to be realized. Resources that are currently being channeled towards nuclear modernization could be re-directed towards such causes as the provision of quality education and health services. If the financial resources being channeled towards research in offensive nuclear technology could be diverted towards promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy, we could make progress on developing alternative sources of energy. As you know, stable and predictable energy is a critical requirement for economic development.

To foster a united understanding towards the need for strengthening the relationship between development and disarmament, Member States can build on the 1987 International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, and the Report of Governmental Experts on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development. These two frameworks can serve as a good basis for cooperation among UN Member States in pursuit of the identified objective.

In similar fashion, UN Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament can also become focal points for promoting this new dimension of strengthening the relationship between development and disarmament. While the regional centres are currently mainly focused on promoting disarmament, peace and security at regional level, a new emphasis can now be made on the need to view socio-economic and environmental development as an integral component. Funding released from regional disarmament efforts can thus be channeled towards capacity building measures to strengthen the development pillar. As we acknowledged in the 2030 Agenda, there can be no lasting peace without development.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Member States may also consider strengthening already existing confidence building measures in the field of conventional weapons by inserting the development dimension. For example, the data base containing information provided by Member States on the confidence building measures they engage in can be enriched by providing such information as statistics on money realized in disarmament and what development programmes that money was used for. The provision of such information may encourage more countries to utilize resources saved from disarmament towards development.

As I conclude, I believe that there is need for us to make conscious efforts to mainstream the development dimension in our discussion on disarmament. After all, without real progress with regards to disarmament, whatever development successes we register can be reversed in a flash.
