

Reinforcing this point four years later, the United Nations *1985 Report on the World Social Situation* begins:

“It is evident that the material foundations for achieving widely-shared social objectives exist on a global level, and that failure and pessimism derive not as much from limitations of the productive capacity of the world economy, as from the misdirection of resources...”

The misdirection of the world's resources – natural, financial, technical and above all human – is graphically illustrated by the analysis of global military expenditure and conflicts contained in this U.N. report.

In 1984, the world spent \$800 billion on its armed forces. This represents \$130 for each person in the world. Of this figure, fully 80 percent was spent on conventional arms. While the vast arsenals of the Warsaw Pact and NATO account for the largest portion of the \$800 billion, total spending by developing countries has increased at twice the rate of that in industrialized countries and today represents approximately a quarter of the world's total. Developing countries spent almost three times as much on their military as on health programmes.

Since 1945, most armed struggles have been fought on the territory of countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The majority of the dead and injured have been from developing nations.

So far, nations have been unable to advance development through disarmament savings. But at least a new examination of security has started in the past few years as the potential for global nuclear destruction and the realities of an interdependent world become better known. International economic cooperation would help to reduce the mistrust that results in so much human suffering. And, as the North-South Institute points out in a new analysis, *Disarmament and Development: Security in an Interdependent World*:

“Curbing the global arms build-up would have an even more salutary effect, for it would not only ease international tensions, but would also release substantial resources for the reduction of poverty worldwide.”