

This paper reviews the origins of disarmament-development advocacy, examines some of the efforts to establish a link, including UN studies, and reviews the debate at the 1987 International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development (ICRDD). This look at the 1987 UN Conference reveals the various national points of view about this relationship, and provides a window on the larger international tensions that are at the root of much of international relations today. The examination ends with a look at Canada's position in the debate.

### FROM BAD TO WORSE

It is useful to begin by taking brief note of the world's economic problems and levels of arms spending. The World Bank gives a clear picture of the past decade.

Since 1980 matters have turned from bad to worse: economic growth rates have slowed, real wages have dropped, and growth in employment has faltered in most developing countries. Precipitous declines in commodity prices have cut rural incomes, and governments have reduced their real spending on social services.<sup>1</sup>

Pointing to deteriorating economic conditions and mounting debt difficulties the United Nations says the world economy is in "uncharted waters."

The present situation once again raises serious concern about the ability of the existing international economic system to cope with these strains. Political tensions have risen....These challenges pose serious risks.<sup>2</sup>

Policy-makers in Southern nations go further. They draw a direct link between deepening poverty and local, regional and international conflict. The Mexico City-based Director of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbeans, Gabriel Siri, told the CIIPS-sponsored Roundtable on Negotiations for Peace in Central America in May 1988:

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<sup>1</sup> World Development Report 1988, World Bank, p.4.

<sup>2</sup> World Economic Survey, United Nations 1988, Ch. 1, p.1.