

Attached to this letter is a copy of the "guidelines" provided to each participant to help focus the preparation of the papers. In addition, each contributor was provided with a copy of the Government's Discussion Paper on "Military Expenditures in Developing Countries."

While I will not in this letter attempt to summarize the findings and perspectives that emerge from the papers, I would like to draw your attention to two broad perspectives that emerge from the papers.

I. First, the papers are frank in their expression of serious doubts about the efficacy of direct conditionality. While the analyses and assessments vary, it is not overstating the point to report that a key view reflected in these papers is that among Southern NGOs or NGO communities, while strongly sharing or endorsing the dual policy objectives of enhancing the effectiveness of ODA and promoting reductions in military spending, there is significant skepticism concerning the likely effect of aid conditionality as a means of promoting constructive changes in security policy and practice in developing countries. It is pointed out that security policy and levels of military spending are the product of a wide range of local, national and regional conditions. External political and economic pressures that do not address these basic conditions will not be effective in producing either new security policies or in shifting the levels of resources devoted to military forces. Conditionality is also questioned on grounds that it may tend to involve external Governments too directly in what are essentially domestic political concerns and debates regarding the direction of security policy. It is also noted that it is very difficult to generalize about what might be regarded as appropriate levels of military spending or armed forces. Appropriateness inevitably depends on a range of local, national and regional circumstances and conditions.

II. Second, the papers emphasize that military spending reductions depend on changes in security conditions and approaches, and thus the discussions focus on ways of changing the political and security conditions that shape local, national and regional security needs and policies and that influence levels of military spending. The papers thus offer a rich survey of possible measures which can be roughly divided into four categories of attention:

1. *Democratization of the security debate*: Donor initiatives to link aid and military spending can provide important openings for NGOs in recipient countries to address security issues (long considered the preserve of elite groups within the state structure). And while many NGOs in recipient countries are relatively new to addressing military/security issues, and thus not always well-equipped or prepared to make specific recommendations regarding security policy or appropriate levels of military spending, the donor community's steps to place the issue on the political agenda will help to promote public debate and the pursuit of alternative, human-centred, approaches to security.