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Speech by the
Right Honourable Joe Clark,
Secretary of State for External
Affairs, at the International
Conference on the Relationship
between Disarmament and
Development

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Mr. President,

May I first congratulate you on your appointment as President of this very important international conference. I offer my personal support for the serious task ahead of you and my sincere best wishes for a successful outcome.

We are not discussing a theoretical problem. Ten days ago, I was briefly in Mozambique where I met, among others, Canadians involved in non-governmental organizations operating clinics and other projects in that country. They face every day the prospect that the projects on which they are working - development projects of the finest kind - will be bombed or attacked. They face the dilemma that projects launched to help people in need in fact make those people targets of attack. I am not here arguing that arms create that conflict; but, certainly, when a clinic becomes a target, arms are the enemy of development.

Let me begin my remarks by noting, as Canada usually does, that the test of this conference will be what we do, not what we say. There is rhetoric enough on the evil of arms and the need for development. What we must seek to achieve here is practical cooperation, not mutual recrimination. The work of the preparatory meetings has been encouraging, but that atmosphere must continue if we are to protect the principle which Canada assumes all participants share - namely, that less money must be spent on arms, and more money must be spent on development. The relevant question is how do we make progress, not whom do we blame.

Our purpose is to increase real security, for individual nations, and for the world. Progress toward development, and progress toward disarmament, can both contribute to that security, but their relationship is not simple. This conference can be most useful if it probes beneath the assumption that there can be an automatic transfer of funds from arms to development. We must understand why governments spend on arms - and understand also that there is simply no evidence - no reason to believe - that governments are likely to disarm, at the expense of what they consider their security, in order to divert funds to development. If we are serious, the reality we must recognize is that the level of a nation's security is the main criterion against which efforts for disarmament must be measured, not the level of economic

gain. Security is the touchstone, and again, the reality is that each nation will judge its own security on its own terms.

I mean security in its broadest sense - not just military strength. The sense of economic and social well-being is an important factor in a nation's overall security. Seen in this light, development can make a major contribution to overcoming non-military threats. It can contribute to the establishment of a stable international system that will, in its turn, reduce the relative importance of military strength as an instrument of security.

It is fitting that, at the request of the general assembly, this conference is being held under UN auspices. It was, of course, the United Nations that pioneered the study of the linkage between disarmament and development. The 3-year study by 27 experts, headed by Inga Thorsson, inspired this conference. The Canadian Government commissioned a popular version of that study, entitled: "Safe and Sound: Disarmament and Development in the Eighties".

From the time of its establishment in the devastating wake of the Second World War, the United Nations has been dedicated to four key principles:

- Freedom from the scourge of war;
- Faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person;
- respect for international obligations;
- and the promotion of social progress and better living standards.

Our success in upholding these principles depends in large measure on the degree of commitment of individual Member-States to the disarmament and development processes. Indeed, our success in pursuing these objectives can mean the difference between a decent quality of life and deprivation, poverty or even death.

Canadians hope that this conference will rekindle the flagging political will upon which real progress depends.

Our goal should be to issue a consensus statement at the end. It will be a lost opportunity if we do not

unite to state clearly that the security of everyone will be strengthened by both disarmament and development. Neither process can be held hostage to the other, but progress in one can facilitate progress in the other.

It is not surprising that world attention is focussed on global military expenditures. It now amounts to \$1 trillion per year, or nearly 6 per cent of gross world output. Rather than disarmament, arsenals of conventional weapons have proliferated. Efforts to reduce stocks of nuclear weapons have seen very little success. There is documented evidence of the repeated use of chemical weapons, in breach of the Geneva Protocol of 1925. The armaments industry and trade in arms absorb vast quantities of resources, which would be better devoted to civilian use. Even allowing the preoccupation of governments with the security of their citizens, the level of arms expenditure frequently exceeds reasonable security requirements.

There is, of course, the promise of a significant reduction in nuclear arms as a result of the initiatives of the United States and the Soviet Union and the negotiations at Geneva. Obviously, arms control is everybody's business. But the two superpowers have the power to make the changes we can only recommend, and we should welcome the seriousness with which both those nations appear to be approaching the Geneva negotiations.

Concerning development, all of us are aware of the world's enormous economic problems - slow growth, trade disputes, contraction of financial flows to developing countries, increased debt burdens, and the almost impossible plight of the poorest nations. These problems are made worse by looming scarcities of raw materials, declining prospects for economic growth, and the long-term price we pay for degrading our environment. In human terms, that means hunger, illiteracy, high unemployment and inadequate housing and social services.

Genuine progress in development is occurring, involving some countries more than others, but nowhere is it enough. Nonetheless, as we make our assessments, it is worth noting which of the countries with stronger economies contribute most to international economic development, and which contribute least. I am speaking, of course, of development assistance, not military aid.

Of course, some of the most important progress in international development has come as the result of multilateral actions, including through the agencies and

efforts of the United Nations. That has been especially true when UN efforts have focussed on practical, constructive and clearly defined activities.

Through its child survival strategy, UNICEF has reduced infant mortality worldwide. The UN commissioner for refugees has provided legal protection and material assistance to millions of people fleeing war and persecution. The United Nations Development Programme has helped nations build viable economies by supporting 8500 projects in 150 countries. Smallpox has been eliminated through the work of the World Health Organization. The UN has also provided an essential forum for debate on global development issues, most recently at the successful special session on Africa.

Those achievements were the result of careful planning, the setting of realistic goals and reliance on practical measures. The lesson for this conference is clear when we turn to disarmament, where the record of the United Nations - and of its member states - has been less impressive. Twenty years ago, the UN's performance in this field offered prospects for real progress. More recently, the focus of attention here on nuclear weapons has often been at the expense of interest in other problems of arms control - problems that might be easier to solve. Nuclear weapons issues dominate the resolutions of the First Committee, yet global levels of conventional arms are high and rising, and that is a problem which many members states could help resolve by their own action.

As a first step now, we should attach higher priority to the development of confidence-building measures, which are a prerequisite to any major arms limitation agreement. In Europe, where the confrontation between east and west is most direct, the Stockholm Conference has made a valuable contribution to increased security. In Central America, there appears to be a prospect of agreement because the countries involved have worked together in a spirit of co-operation and taken actions which contribute to mutual confidence. These examples differ in form, but demonstrate that small, steady, practical steps can create the confidence that leads to progress. We should increase our efforts to promote such cooperation at the regional level.

Canada is strongly committed to both development and disarmament as fundamental policy objectives. In allocating resources at home, the Canadian government seeks to achieve an equitable balance between a healthy economy driven by a vigorous private sector, and the

fulfillment of basic human needs for all. Programmes such as universal subsidized medical care, child support and unemployment insurance are examples of solidly established Canadian benefits.

Canadians have, by tradition, a strong sense of obligation to help improve economic and social conditions in less fortunate parts of the world. From a modest contribution to the United Nations Technical Assistance Programme in 1949, Canada's development assistance programmes have expanded to cover all continents and a broad range of international institutions. To date, Canada has provided a total of \$24 billion in official development assistance. The major portion of that has been directed at the poorest countries and people.

The Canadian development assistance effort extends well beyond the provision of grants. Efforts to seek a more open trading environment and acceptable arrangements on international debt constitute an integral element of Canada's relations with the developing world. Finally, Canadians in the private sector, from individuals and non-profit organizations to businesses, all contribute in various ways to development in the third world. Since 1980, Canada has disbursed more than 100 million dollars under its industrial cooperation programme which focuses on joint ventures in, and the transfer of technology to, the third world, particularly its private sector.

The control and reduction of armaments - both conventional and nuclear weapons - constitute a major Canadian foreign policy objective. We participate in all multilateral forums where arms control issues are considered and engage in a wide range of bilateral consultations and discussions. We have established specific priorities in the pursuit of this important goal. A major priority is the development of confidence-building measures such as the improvement of the technology and methodology of verification of arms limitations or reductions.

Mr. President, I strongly urge my fellow delegations at this conference to work towards the adoption of a consensus document. We agree on the goals, though not yet on the means. To dwell on our differences is to doom this conference. The four preparatory meetings - particularly the 19 elements and 10-point action programme agreed to at the third preparatory meeting - show that a fair and reasonable balance of views can be reached. To compromise on details is to protect the principle that more money must be spent on development, less on arms.

We need the commitment of all states if we are to make progress. We should examine the potential developmental benefits of disarmament measures. These can include redirecting spending to social purposes; reducing public debts; stimulating economic growth, trade and private investment; and increasing official development assistance.

We should emphasize the importance of cooperation at the regional level, and the necessity of supporting existing global and regional institutions which promote cooperation. The conference document should support current arms control and disarmament negotiations, and acknowledge the necessity of confidence-building measures in that context.

Finally, the protection of individual rights and freedoms is so basic to both disarmament and development that it is often overlooked. The individual has a key role to play in these processes, but must be provided freedom and opportunity to become involved. In this context, I welcome the attendance of so many non-governmental observers here. My delegation will follow closely their contributions to the conference.

The final document should be brief and consistent. We should keep our objectives clearly in view as the conference proceeds. Canada has approached the draft document, as transmitted, with an open mind, although we believe that certain parts will require substantial modification if we want consensus. We hope that others will have an equally strong commitment to making this conference work.

If we are to succeed, the United Nations must deal effectively with the distortions that scar human life on this planet, distortions that mean that one person in six lives in abject poverty, while arms expenditures rise.

This contrast is highlighted frequently by respected studies such as those on world military and social expenditures produced by Ruth Leger Sivard and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, among others. It is highlighted even more starkly by the poverty and suffering I have encountered during visits to development projects in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America.

One useful purpose of this conference could be to return the global spotlight to the costs of the continuing arms race. But spotlights aren't enough. We need practical solutions to enable us to devote fewer resources to weapons and more to development. Security in the interdependent world of today demands both disarmament and development.