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Disarmament :
for peace and development

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*Made by the swedish artist Carl Fredrik Reuterswård,
Statue set up in front of UNO in New York (USA)*

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the member movements belonging or not to the Federation

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Dear readers of VMR,

Warm greetings from international secretariat

This edition of VMR will be on one of the major critical issue of today which is disarmament for peace and development. The main article would give you an independent analysis of the current reality in Arms trade,terrorism, wars and conflicts and calls for disarmament.

Disarmament is the act of reducing, limiting, or abolishing weapons. Disarmament is often taken to mean total elimination of weapons of mass destruction like nuclear arms. General and Complete Disarmament refers to the removal of all weaponry, including conventional arms.

Nuclear weapons are a problem today. There are approximately 30,000 nuclear weapons in the world, belonging to nine countries: US, Russian Federation, UK, France, China, Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea. More than one thousand five hundred of them are ready to launch at a moment's notice, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A small exchange of approximately 50-100 nuclear weapons would be sufficient to plunge the world in a climate change disaster that would destroy earth's capacity to produce food crops. The top five countries profiting from the arms trade are the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council: the USA, UK, France, Russia, and China. From 1998 to 2001, the USA, the UK, and France earned more income from arms sales to developing countries than they gave in aid

Global military expenditure stands at over \$1.7 trillion in annual expenditure. This corresponds to 2.6 per cent of world gross domestic product (GDP), or approximately \$236 for each person in the world. The USA with its massive spending budget, is the principal determinant of the current world trend, and its military expenditure now accounts for 41% of the world total;

On 2 April 2013, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the landmark Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), regulating the international trade in conventional arms, from small arms to battle tanks, combat aircraft and warships. The treaty will foster peace and security by putting a stop to destabilizing arms flows to conflict regions. It will prevent human rights abusers and violators of the law of war from being supplied with arms. And it will help keep warlords, pirates, and gangs from acquiring these deadly tools.

“Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.” These lines open UNESCO’s Constitution. To be sustainable, peace must start with the dignity of every man and woman. It must be nurtured through their rights and the fulfillment of their aspirations. Peace is a commitment to a better future that starts today, on the basis of shared values, through dialogue, tolerance, respect and understanding. Peace cannot be lasting if billions of people remain deprived of economic, social and environmental justice

Let us sow the seeds of peace among the human hearts

Enjoy your reading

*George Dixon FERNANDEZ
General secretary*



Disarmament : for peace and development

The perspective of a world where all nations will live in harmony, where the means of destruction will be transformed into means of production for the well being of humanity and where peace will bring serenity, this perspective is almost as old as the war. This is already quoted in the Bible:

“They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. Every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid.”.(*Micah,4:1-8*)

*Extracted from “A world at peace and disarmed: a simple dream ”
The perspective of a world where nations live in harmony
By Gilbert Achcar, Professor of political science*

A FACT

Every day, according to the FAO, nearly 35.000 children die of hunger. In 2007, the annual military expenditure in the world amounted to 1.406 billion dollars, against 19 billion allocated to the fight against hunger and malnutrition. It is a genocide like no other one, that drowned by tons of information, we are too often indifferent. And yet there are means and ways, but they are not assigned in priority to the fight against hunger and malnutrition. However, it is clear and obvious that without peace, no development is possible. There is no best broth of radicalization, antipathy and aggressiveness than humiliation and exclusion. Wars ruin national economies, lead entire populations to exile, and plunge them into hunger and anxiety. The conquest of certain lands, violently sometimes, for pure economic interests, generates a spiral of violence, of actions and reactions, of interventions and retaliation...

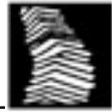
But nothing justifies attacks or violence. All terrorism, all acts of barbarism, all torture are to be strongly condemned. Wars are tragedies for all peoples and generally those are civilians, particularly women and children who are paying the heaviest price.

Faced with this : what to do?

More and more people are raising their voices almost everywhere in the world, whether coming from official bodies of the United Nations or from countries and civil society leaders to call for disarmament in all its forms.

Disarmament is the process whereby a State compromises to reduce or destroy all its fleet of military weapon. It is generally conducted under a bilateral or multilateral agreement. It corresponds to a willingness to reduce the risk of conflict, in a reasoned view of pacifism. It is a strong political act, both nationally and on the international scene, that can generate a fierce opposition. General and complete - disarmament or the gradual elimination of weapons of mass destruction - is one of the objectives set by the United Nations. Indeed, eliminate the danger of war, particularly nuclear war, and implement measures to stop and reverse the arms race is at the heart of the Organization's efforts. UN gave priority to the reduction, then to the elimination of nuclear weapons, the destruction of chemical weapons and the strengthening of the biological weapons bans.

But the external disarmament also involves an internal, personal disarmament. The only political will is not enough if we do not adopt these words of the Dalai Lama who adds: "the only true guarantee of peace is in itself."



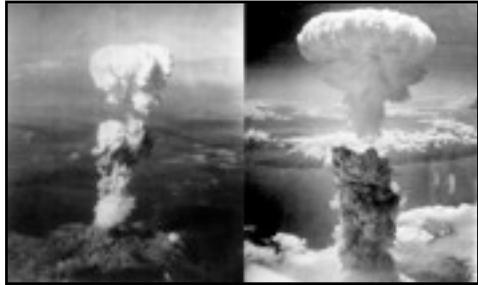
THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF ARMAMENTS

Weapons of mass destruction are weapons designed to kill a lot of people, both aiming at the civilians than the military. These weapons are generally not used on a very specific objective, but rather on an extended zone beyond kilometer, with devastating effects on people, infrastructure and the environment.

Due to their non selective action, 'massive', and their long-term effects, these weapons represent a risk of extermination of the population, including the striker in case of retaliation by weapons of mass destruction if the target country also has. They are so closely related to the concept of deterrence, and are the ultimate level of armament, with far-reaching implications in foreign policy.

The nuclear weapons:

Their effects being more destructive and predictable than those of chemical and biological, nuclear weapons are regarded as more reliable and perhaps even more credible than others. They may also evoke a certain idea of 'prestige', which can be explained by the technological prowess that represents the control of these weapons and the fact they have been related exclusively to the major powers.



Hiroshima and Nagasaki - August 1945

The chemical weapons:

Can be used in terrorist attacks against civilians. In addition, their development, manufacture and maintenance are much easier and cost much less than those of nuclear weapons. It prevents that, from a military point of view, chemical weapons are inferior to nuclear weapons because of their unpredictable effects and other disadvantages. However, chemical weapons are prohibited by international law since 1993.



The biological weapons:

Are even easier to manufacture than chemical or nuclear weapons, and much less expensive. Any country or any group determined to produce a biological agent can probably do with minimal investment, and even if the dissemination of biological agents is difficult, some means of dissemination can be obtained fairly easily. Their use is prohibited by an international convention since 1925, and their development and their possession since 1972.



*International symbol
of biological contamination*

Questions for the groups and the movements :

- *What is the status of the weapons in your country?*
- *What is the armament policies of your country?*



DISARMAMENT WHY ?

As mentioned above, peace and development will not intervene if countries, regions agree to disarm and live in a better understanding. Obstacles are many, because over the years, countries are armed to "enforce" their neighbors, for some they get atomic bomb wielding this weapon as ultimate threat in the event of aggression. We are therefore in the spiral wishing to disarmament but for this, it is necessary that all countries accept this principle and play the game, which is not won!

The position of the United Nations

The interest of a regional approach to disarmament has been recognized nearly 30 years ago. A group of governmental experts appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations concluded as early as 1981 that there was a vast potential, and to a large extent, unexplored for progress in the field of disarmament if the world 's approach was complemented by determined and systematic efforts at the level of the different regions.

The Group of experts came to a conclusion that progress in regional disarmament, equitable solution to problems and a fair conflicts regulation at the regional level, accompanied by confidence-building measures, would promote disarmament and easing tensions at the global level.

At the end of its exam of this issue, in 1993, the United Nations Disarmament Commission adopted guidelines and recommendations for regional approaches to disarmament. The Commission concluded that global and regional approaches on disarmament and arms control were complementary and that the two approaches should be undertaken simultaneously to promote peace and regional / international security.

Over the years, in various forums dealing with this issue of disarmament, work has resulted in last April to a Treaty on the arms trade (ATT). Adopted by the General Assembly on 2nd April 2013 the international community has for the first time adopted standards to regulate the international trade of conventional weapons and ammunition. It is open for signature at United Nations Headquarters in New York since June 3, 2013.

The arms trade treaty will enter into force 90 days after 50 States have deposited their instrument of ratification (or acceptance or approval). At the national level, once they have ratified, States should take all necessary measures to implement its provisions and designate the competent national authorities in order to have an effective and transparent national control regime.



The position of the Church

Reverse the current trend of the arms race includes a parallel struggle on two fronts: on one hand, an immediate fight and urgency of the Governments to reduce gradually and fairly arms, on the other hand, a struggle for more patient but no less necessary at the level of consciousness of the peoples to take the ethical cause of generating insecurity from violence, namely to address the physical and spiritual world's inequalities. (*Message of Pope John Paul II to the Special Session of the GA of the United Nations on Disarmament*).

Whether John Paul 2, other popes before him and certainly the holy Father, Pope François, the position of the Church is clear for disarmament but also accompanied by very clear measures for more than economic and social justice.



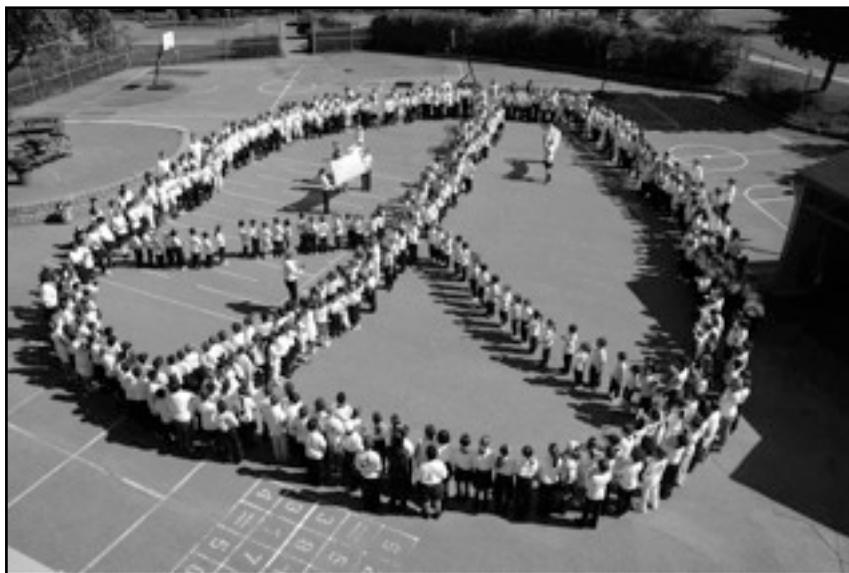
The position of the civil society

There are many actors that act specifically on objectives for economic and social development among the various networks of organizations for development and solidarity, trade unions, local communities, alongside the various agencies of the United Nations and other international institutions. The challenge is to convince all these actors that act for development or social justice is constitutive and must register in a global movement for a culture of peace. Many are already convinced that action to fight poverty and promote development is a way of working to the prevention of conflicts, to the stability of the countries, to the construction of a lasting peace. The challenge is that everyone understands that he works in the same direction, that of a fairer, more cooperative world, a world developing a culture of peace. «The culture of peace is also economic development» Daniel Durand

Stéphane Hessel and Albert Jacquard combine their voices to call for total nuclear disarmament: "Knowing that some of our leaders in the world continue to prepare the conditions for a nuclear war which could at any time be triggered, either intentionally or by mistake, each of us, insofar as it would not everything that is in its power to prevent would be jointly responsible for this huge crime against humanity. Because the existence of these weapons threatens the fate of humanity. Because the arsenals of the world contain the equivalent of 600,000 times the power of Hiroshima bombs. Because India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea hold these weapons in a geopolitical context of extreme fragility. Because with the advent of the military nuclear age, any deterrent force, any balance of terror, have become tragic illusions. Because it is not too late, and awareness and sensitization of the public is necessary.

Questions for the groups and the movements :

- *What is the position of your movement, your group regarding disarmament?*
- *Are you involved in associations, demonstrations militating for peace?*



Human chain forming the symbol of peace

AND WE : WHAT CAN WE DO ?

Facing this gigantic problem of disarmament we feel sometimes ourselves deprived and surely, it is quite difficult to enter this debate which goes beyond us by its geo-political and economic issues. However, do not be discouraged. Over the years, progress has been made and gave rise to numerous texts, treaties, conventions aimed at the abolition of the use of certain weapons or even giving the opportunity to enter into negotiations to initially reduce the proliferation of some weapons.

At our level, we can participate in many peace movements that exist around the world. Regularly, they organize marches for peace, events or publish texts that we can widely disseminate around us and in our movements.

And do not forget, disarmament must go hand in hand with more social, economic and environmental justice. Whenever we do something to realize these conditions, we are in the right direction. **The prevention of armed conflicts by United Nations is based on development of the theme «to fight poverty»** will not only save millions of human lives, but still give the States the means to fight terrorism, organized crime and the proliferation. "Development strengthens security for all."



Final declaration of the FIMARC
Executive Committee - March 2013

Alternatives to re-think development

The members of the FIMARC Executive Committee gathered from 25th to 29th April 2013 in ASSESSE (Belgium). Topic of the working session: “Rethinking development in times of multiple global crises: solutions and alternatives”. These training days were also had an objective to elaborate the future theme of the next World Assembly that will take place in May 2014 in Germany and will mark FIMARC’s 50th anniversary. Resource people intervened and proposed alternative paths to foster a more human kind of development.

In all continents, the neo-liberal economy, which aims at profit at any cost for a minority (commoditization of agriculture), endangers the future of rural life; consequences: individualism, migrations of the young people towards the exterior of their countries and continents, consumerism, imposed foreign life styles, lack of infrastructures. For a better future of rural people, it is necessary to organize ourselves collectively, to create alliances between producers and consumers and get fair prices for the products.

The corruption of many leaders undermines societies and maintains dictatorships. Rural life, unknown to most of the politicians who all have urban backgrounds, is never valued nor supported. States themselves sell their lands to multinational companies from China, India, etc., who come to produce industrial crops that are unknown to the farmers on a large scale (land-grabbing). The economy of certain countries imposed by the International Financial Institutions does not allow them more to assure the fundamental rights, such as food, health or education.

We have to make sure that the external aid (States, NGOs...) are not highjacked; we must also support civil societies, who are the only ones capable of implementing another governance.

Due to the very low price of farming products, farmers borrow money to buy the inputs. They cannot reimburse and are therefore forced to sell their lands and sometimes commit suicide. This triggers a rural exodus towards slums. Let’s raise farmers’ awareness and train them on the positive aspects of the cooperative system. In Europe, there is no longer one rural world but several rural worlds instead, both in isolated areas and in urban periphery. We have to take into account these new sociological data in order to establish new links between urban and rural areas. At the agricultural level, the trend is that farms should be bigger and bigger, whatever the consequences.

Let's support peasants' farming, which can better strengthen the relationships between producers and consumers.

- We need to strongly assert the expression of our rural identity through our values of solidarity and our relational values.
- We need to take into account the youth, women in all the political choice we make in our territories, education and training, hobbies, sports...
- Let's act to do to respect, defend and promote the rights of the peasants (in Latin America, 40% of the agricultural workers are women).
- We need to take part actively in the development of proximity collective services to meet the requirements of rural populations: health, transports, cultural activities...
- We need to develop food sovereignty in our rural communities focusing on a locally-based type of agriculture.

In order to meet, now, the challenges of agriculture to provide enough quality food for all:

- We need to assert strongly the main mission of agriculture, which is to feed human beings.
- We need to defend the rights of farmers to access natural resources: land, water, seeds...
- We need to foster sustainable agro-ecological production systems which protect the human health, the identity of our communities, environment and biodiversity and create jobs.
- We need to strengthen proximity food systems: local markets, short distribution chains such as AMAPS (Associations for the preservation of peasant farming), in France and Direct Marketing system of CCFM in South Korea etc.

Our hope is in our hands: our concrete knowledge to create real alternatives for another kind of development, our human resources and our community values.

FIMARC Executive Committee
Assesse, April 29/2013.



News from Coordination

FIMARC World Assembly 2014

FIMARC was founded in 1964 in Fatima Portugal and 2014 will be a new milestone in the history of FIMARC. The World Assembly of FIMARC will take place in Rural house (Volkersburg) which is 80 km away from the city of Wursberg in Germany. Our German movement KLB will host this 14th World Assembly as well as the 50th anniversary of the foundation of FIMARC. The theme of the General Assembly 2014 will be "At this time of global crisis, opening the paths of an alternative development" and the slogan will be "Democracy, autonomy and dignity for all" International seminar, Exposure visits, continental and world Assemblies, participation in catholic days in Germany, Panel debates, public conference and 50th anniversary celebrations will be the major programs of the GA 2014.

I urge all the movements and members to start preparing for the World Assembly and 50th anniversary of FIMARC.

I wish to receive your full support for the successful implementation of this great project. Soon you will receive more informations in this regard.

News from DECESE Kenya

The Residential organic Agriculture workshop of DESECE/KIDEP held at Mabanga Agricultural training Centre (A.T.C)

There has been a lot of rain in Kenya this year that caused even floods and a number of farmers lost their crops. However, the crops that remained are doing well. The field staff of DECESE with their motorcycles were busy helping the farmers who lost their crops to plant short term yielding crops to ensure that there is enough food in the families.

This year DECESE had organized two organic agriculture residential workshops and the number of participants expected was 38 farmers in each workshop. But due to the high demand from the farmers each workshop had more than 45 participants for this 5 days training.



*Participants of the Residential organic Agriculture workshop
organised by DECESE at Centre ATC in Mabanga, Kenya 2013
(photo DECESE)*



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