The Leadership Challenges of Demilitarization in Africa
Arusha, Tanzania, July 22-24, 1998

Summary of the conference report

Introduction: Militarization in Africa

Africa is both the most unstable and the poorest continent in the world. In spite of palpable progress in some African countries in the process of democratic consolidation, constant periods of violence and armed conflict periodically emerge in different regions. Although the majority of these are civil conflicts, the present war between Ethiopia and Eritrea shows that there is still great potential for armed conflict among states. Other countries like Rwanda and Burundi have been the sites of large-scale massacres of civilians that shocked the world in recent years.

Militarization in Africa goes beyond the usurpation of political power by the military. While in some instances the military exerts direct political control, in others, civilian governments rely heavily on military repression. In still other states, the powers of a civilian political leadership are countered by an economy and a society that remain heavily militarized. In countries where the state is weak or has ceased to exist, the long history of militarization has brought about a gradual diffusion of violence through the splintering of official militaries and the emergence of guerrillas and warlords. The ever-growing number of child soldiers ensures that the legacy of violence will be felt for some time even after the conflicts are over.

Some aspects of Africa's militarization include:

- oversized defense establishments that exceed the state's legitimate security needs, imposing a huge financial burden on the economy and adversely affecting development. Governments often use the existence of non-state actors engaged in armed confrontation with state authorities as justification for these build-ups;
- frequent civil wars and armed hostilities resulting from struggles for political recognition, territorial claims, ideological incompatibilities, ambition for political power, ethnic and religious rivalries, or governments instigating conflicts in neighboring countries;
- violent takeovers of constitutionally and democratically elected governments by the military, either as an institution or by individual officers;
- widespread proliferation of illegal weapons; and
- undemocratic governance and political instability, caused for the most part by dictatorial regimes.

With few exceptions, militarization is greatest among the poorest African societies. Faced with dwindling resources, minuscule foreign investment, reduced development assistance and a booming population growth, it is clear most African countries can ill afford the waste of oversized standing armies and enormous military budgets. Yet to date demilitarization has received little attention as a viable security and development option in Africa.
The Conference

With the purpose of discussing the intricate causes of conflict, as well as the possible strategies to halt the vicious cycle of violence, poverty and militarization, the Africa Leadership Forum, the United Nations Development Programme and the Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress convened the conference on *The Leadership Challenges of Demilitarization in Africa*. The conference was also made possible thanks to generous funding by the governments of Canada and The Netherlands, as well as by the World Bank's Post Conflict Unit.

Some one hundred and twenty individuals from twenty-seven countries gathered from July 22-24 in Arusha, Tanzania to discuss these and other issues. Participants engaged in discussions on the political, social, economic and philosophical ramifications of demilitarization. Furthermore, the conference aimed to provide a forum for exploration of the demilitarization experiences of Costa Rica, Panama and Haiti, with the hope that the lessons learned in these countries could be of service to African nations. Finally, the conference also aimed to provide a suitable forum for creating a working group that would advocate for demilitarization in Africa.

Roots of Militarization in Africa

The opening session and the first thematic unit discussed some of the causes and manifestations of Africa's militarization. Firstly, participants noted that the roots of militarization in Africa extend beyond the region. Some of these underlying causes include:

- The decolonization process
- The Cold War
- Intra- and inter-state war
- Arms merchants and mercenaries
- Underdevelopment

The arms trade—both legal and illegal—received particular attention as a factor that greatly contributes to violence and insecurity in Africa, both by bolstering the possibility of armed conflict and by consuming scarce resources that could be better invested in health and education. The issue of economic, political and social underdevelopment was also highlighted as one of the principal causes of violence in Africa. Uneducated people are more liable to opt for violent means of change. On the contrary, if people have a stake in peace, by enjoying a good standard of living, they will have something valuable to lose if there is conflict.

Although one of the speakers initially described militarization in Africa as a consequence of structural problems (authoritarian rule, weak states, abuse of basic human rights, socioeconomic deprivation and inequality, etc.) others remarked that militarization is also a problem in its own right. They cited examples such as a culture of impunity within military, police and intelligence structures produced by protracted periods of authoritarian rule. Furthermore, the flow of arms helps to foster a culture of violence in the population, and increases the likelihood of armed conflict and insecurity. In some cases, arms merchants—who frequently provide weapons to both sides on a conflict—may even help trigger wars to ensure demand for their wares. Finally,
former combatants and military personnel demobilized into a society devoid of economic opportunity may turn to the mercenary trade or to delinquency as sources of income.

The Arms Trade

Dealing specifically with the flow of arms, participants noted with concern that the end of the Cold War, together with the military downsizing and modernization that has taken place in countries such as those of the former Eastern block, has unleashed a cascade of weapons. These arms end up in conflict areas like Africa, Central Asia, and else-where. Furthermore, new NATO countries (as well as potential new members participating in the Partnership for Peace program) are adapting their weapons to NATO standards. Consequently, unless they are destroyed, massive amounts of old and obsolete weapons can be dumped into the market.

A key strategy to stem the arms trade is to single out the responsibility of particular countries in facilitating the transfer of arms to conflict areas. By determining where the weapons come from, where they are going, who is paying for them, who is involved, and which channels are used, such parties can be held publicly responsible for their actions. The stigma of being an accessory to human rights abuses can provide crucial incentives both for the state to improve its behavior and for the international community to take action. In this regard, NGOs and communities can play a key role, by reporting their findings and by exerting pressure on governments and international bodies.

Measures to control the arms trade should include both the demand and the supply sides of the problem. Some mechanisms to control the flow of arms include:

- binding international codes of conducts for arms exports;
- conventions to curb illicit arms trafficking;
- multilateral arms-trade conventions;
- national and regional controls on the private arms trade;
- international bans on the use of inhumane weapons;
- international arms embargoes;
- transparency mechanisms;
- voluntary import moratoria; and
- arms destruction and buy-back schemes.

Many arms suppliers justify their arms transfers by arguing that if they do not sell the weapons others will. This is why it is important to develop a comprehensive international agreement that establishes ethical criteria to control the arms trade. For example, the International Code of Conduct on Arms Transfers, endorsed by a Commission of seventeen Nobel Peace Laureates, would require that arms are not provided to governments which are undemocratic, have poor human rights records, are engaged in international aggression, or do not participate in the UN Registry of Conventional Arms. The European Union has already approved a similar agreement and efforts are underway in the US to promote a domestic code of conduct.
New Forms of Militarization in Africa

In spite of important efforts to demilitarize (see following section), there are also new forms of militarization and violence taking place in Africa. Some characteristics are:

- **Location.** These wars are typically carried out in poor, marginal African countries, many of them far from the former staging grounds of the Cold War.

- **Lack of political agenda.** Unlike the earlier liberation wars, the warlords involved in today's violence often have no political agenda. Rather, they are essentially local entrepreneurs who manipulate violence, territorial acquisition and commerce for personal gain, and attempt to dismember or reconstitute states as the opportunity arises.

- **Control.** Conventional armies and intervention techniques designed to address conflicts between states have proven inadequate in dealing with these new forms of conflict. In warlord scenarios, the lack of clear political objectives makes mediation difficult. In many cases, large national armies fragment when faced with these new formations and may themselves become part of the new warlord equation. In addition, the lack of an ideological bond makes the warlord himself more vulnerable to challenges from within the ranks of his own force, leading to splintering and a proliferation of factions.

- **Victims.** Civilians, rather than states, are often the targets of these new forms of violence. The objective of these wars is not to destroy the state, but to destroy the social fabric and to make cohabitation impossible.

- **Privatization and commercialization of security.** Unlike warlords, security entrepreneurs are former military professionals allegedly working for states in order to fill security vacuums. Private firms are also emerging in response to a decline in the state's capacity to guarantee security.

Issues in Demilitarization

Demilitarization is not the product of specific actions alone, but rather is a qualitative process that should be examined in terms of its totality. There are currently important examples of demilitarization taking place in Africa:

- downsizing military budgets;
- demobilizing and reintegrating soldiers and former combatants;
- redefining the role of the military, with particular emphasis on collateral functions, such as national development and peacekeeping;
- restructuring security-related institutions in order to facilitate civil and parliamentary control and to initiate a process of reconciliation between armed forces and civil society; and
- reformulating security paradigms and structures, favoring collective security measures that emphasize the importance of regional stability and acknowledge Africa's autonomous capacity to deal with conflict issues.

While efforts to address militarization must pay close attention to regional and national dynamics, there are a number of measures applicable to all situations. These include:
• **Controlling weapons flows in the region.** Arms control efforts must address both the underlying social factors that create the demand for weapons and the social consequences of weapons proliferation and armed violence. It was argued that, to date, efforts to control arms flows have placed undue emphasis on the supply side of the equation, framing the problem solely in technical and legal terms.

• **Addressing fundamental issues of governance and economic justice.** Demilitarization efforts must begin by addressing the fundamental issues of unemployment, poverty, economic inequality, reintegration, corruption and human rights. The effect of these conditions is particularly disturbing among Africa’s youth who, in the absence of adequate opportunities for education, employment and self-realization, are turning to armed struggle as a means of subsistence.

• **Counteracting the cultural basis of militarism.** The cultural roots of militarism, and particularly its relationship to masculinity, must be addressed in order to forge effective and lasting demilitarization in any society. Whereas many societies equate guns with manliness, participants suggested that African cultural traditions should reaffirm positive qualities such as tolerance, reconciliation, harmony, innovation, invention and development.

• **Re-conceptualizing security and its institutions.** Participants argued that demilitarization should create a better balance between human security and state security. Defense forces should remain as an important instrument of last resort but be no longer the dominant security institution. In this model several government departments share the responsibility for ensuring security, with the national parliament being the ultimate responsible body. In addition, NGOs contribute to the policymaking process and are an essential aspect of an early warning system, particularly with regard to ethnic conflict and the monitoring of human rights abuses.

• **Promoting dialogue, transparency, public oversight, participation and access to information.** Security matters should involve an open and wide-ranging dialogue between the government (both executive and legislative branches), political parties, civil associations, NGOs and defense and security forces.

• **Enhancing democratic principles in the military.** Within the armed forces, military relationships, rules and non-military activities can be shaped to reflect democratic principles. Participants argued that if the army itself is not run as a democratic institution, it cannot sustain democratic relations with the rest of civil society.

• **Supporting a social and political movement for these measures.** Effective and lasting demilitarization requires not just specific policy measures but a social and political movement to reflect the will of the people. Such a movement should be inclusive of all interests and communities, and should pay particular attention to the voices of women.

**Military Conversion**

Another issue that the conference dealt with more extensively was that of military conversion. Drawing from the South African experience, five areas of conversion were outlined:

• Human resources conversion
• Base closure and economic readjustment
• Land return
• Clean-up and weapons disposal
• Armament and industry conversion

Effective conversion presupposes a high level of political and institutional will. Conversion must be linked to strong normative commitments, including the government's desire to oversee a significant level of demilitarization and disarmament both in its own country and throughout the region. Weapons will only be destroyed as part of a genuine commitment to demilitarization; otherwise they will simply be sold or donated to other countries.

A national conversion strategy is necessary in order to develop a consistent philosophy and ensure adequate coordination among the state agencies and institutions involved in the process. This strategy should not only reflect the perspectives of the military but also take into account the institutional capabilities of the government and armed forces, and the capability of civil and political society to participate in the conversion process. The conversion strategy must also be consistent with other aspects of government policy.

Stable and highly participatory civil-military-relations increase the viability of a national conversion strategy. Good prospects for regional stability, peace and development, and limited arms flows into the country also increase the chances of success. In addition, ideally the process should engage in substantial dialogue with civil and political society in order to assure true legitimacy.

**Reintegration of Former Combatants and Child Soldiers**

The reintegration of combatants and child soldiers is a key factor in the future stability of countries as they make the transition from war to peace. This process can pave the way for a resumption of productive development policies, offering long-term benefits to war-torn communities. Reintegration helps prevent further outbreaks of violence and curbs the culture of violence that lives on in societies during and after periods of war.

Effective and comprehensive reintegration strategies must provide for resettlement and rehabilitation counseling for demobilized combatants. Employment issues are also crucial, as ex-combatants need to be trained and successfully absorbed into the private sector, which may be reluctant to hire them. Institutions involved in reintegration must also address the needs of child soldiers, orphans, war victims and children born in exile.

Today's reintegration efforts face a host of obstacles, including sparse funding, shrinking social resources, a dominant culture of violence, and weakened state institutions. Furthermore it was noted that there is an ex-combatant mentality among children and adults who have tasted the personal power that comes from carrying a weapon. They have become accustomed to getting what they want in a short period of time, and tend to resist the poorly funded, low-paying reintegration programs.

Former child soldiers present the greatest challenges for reintegration into post-conflict
communities. In Sierra Leone and Liberia the war created jobs for young people and often became a substitute for school, since many could not afford school fees and were unemployed. In war, many children found that they could get whatever they wanted with the help of a gun. The gun became a status symbol, providing them with luxuries and, in some cases, feeding their families.

Armed conflict has a devastating impact on child development; it affects children's attitudes, relationships, moral values, and understanding of reality. They cope with conflict and pain by exhibiting defiance, violence, and anti-social behavior. Many cannot return home to resume life with their surviving relatives because they feel an incredible sense of guilt over actions committed as soldiers or observed during battle. Other child soldiers are rejected by their surviving families because of their participation in the savagery of war. These young people are alienated from their communities, psychologically numbed, and left with severe adjustment problems.

It is not possible to develop a prescription or pattern for reintegration that can be imposed on any given country. Rather, strategies for reintegration should be appropriate to local conditions and should reflect the social, political and cultural realities experienced by ex-combatants, their families and their communities. It is important to work with the local community as much as possible, taking into account its traditional cultural practices and strategies for reconciliation.

In planning the integration of ex-combatants, including child soldiers, the following factors must be taken into consideration:

- Manner and nature of recruitment
- Type of combat-related activity
- Age and length of service
- Gender
- Health
- Family matters

Participation is an important element in reintegration. The problems of ex-combatants and child soldiers have complex political, social and economic dimensions. Therefore, addressing their problems requires the full participation of government institutions, religious bodies, local communities, NGOs and politicians.

The Central American Demilitarization Experience

One of the main goals of the conference was to share the full demilitarization experience of Costa Rica, Panama and Haiti with the African participants. The full demilitarization model, or abolition of armies, is an alternative security option that so far has received little attention. Indeed, to many people it is difficult to conceive of a state without an army. Yet, Costa Rica has thrived without an army for the last fifty years amidst the threats of the Cold War geopolitics, which resulted in civil wars in most of its neighboring countries. Panama and Haiti have more
recently initiated their own demilitarization processes, but also have valuable lessons to share.

While it is clear that each country has its own unique circumstances, and that what has served in one country or region may not work in others, just the fact of knowing that under certain circumstances it is possible to do without an army by itself can have positive effects. Perhaps the main contribution is to contest the long-standing myth that an army is an indispensable component of any modern state. If the abolition of armies has been possible for some countries, others can surely take steps towards partial demilitarization, including the downsizing of armies and military budgets. These measures would free resources that could better be employed in human development needs. Other steps in partial demilitarization include limiting the role of the military, freeing police from military control, reasserting civilian authority over military and police, and developing a new political culture that emphasizes a more professional approach to public security.

The case of Costa Rica demonstrates the advantages of abolishing an army. This measure allowed the country to:

- redirect its resources to economic and social development, thereby placing it among the most developed countries in Latin America;
- create a climate of institutional stability and develop electoral processes; and
- enjoy a greater level of autonomy in Central American and world politics.

Furthermore, it was argued that the decision to eliminate an army should not be justified based on the presence of external threats. Costa Rica abolished its army in 1948, a time when there were considerable international and regional tensions threatening the political stability of the state. During such a chaotic period, some may think it would have been more logical to reinforce the armed forces rather than dismantle them. However, although Costa Rica demilitarized in the midst of an extremely turbulent era, its sovereignty and institutional integrity remained unharmed. In fact, abolition actually helped neutralize many of the sources of tension in the country. For example:

- By eliminating the military, the government was able to delegitimize violence as a means of change, thus allowing the new political sector to govern.
- Demilitarization neutralized the contradictions that existed in the inner circle of the triumphant party, creating a peaceful climate conducive to such measures as the nationalization of the banking system.
- Abolishing the army also neutralized disputes between the army as well as between an important faction of the army and the majority sector of the government.
- Demilitarization helped diminish the threats of the Cold War era, such as pressure from the United States for the military unification of Central America in the 1960s, or the involvement of Costa Rica in the region's armed conflicts.

Abolition of the military does not imply a lack of defense, but rather a redefinition of national security mechanisms. After the Costa Rican army demobilized, a number of emerging conflicts jeopardized the country's territorial and institutional sovereignty. The first occurred in December
1948, just days after the decision to abolish the armed forces was announced. Exiled members of the Costa Rican ruling elite, defeated in the armed conflict earlier that year, staged an invasion of Costa Rica with the help of the Nicaraguan National Guard. In 1955, the same coalition once again tried to invade the country. On these two occasions, and again in 1978, Costa Rica invoked the Inter-American Reciprocal Defense Treaty (TIAR) to resolve the conflict through international intervention.

In a disarmed democracy such as Costa Rica, the approach to security must be redefined to go beyond the traditional military understanding of the concept. Key elements of this approach include:

- understanding security as a condition for development, not an end in itself;
- defining security not as a purely military concept but as an integrated one that encompasses a variety of factors --economic, social, environmental and political-- which together facilitate socially equitable and sustainable development; and
- promoting this new vision of security as a product of free and peaceful interaction between the state and its citizens, not a mechanism for the state to control those citizens.

This redefined understanding of security also calls for alternative security mechanisms, both external and internal. Mechanisms for defense against external threats include diplomacy, international law, collective security treaties and expanded police force duties. On many occasions, Costa Rica has resolved bilateral and regional conflicts through diplomatic efforts. When diplomacy has failed, it has employed regional security agreements such as the TIAR.

In the absence of an army, the Costa Rican police force has assumed the basic function of territorial defense in addition to its traditional duties. The Border Police and Maritime Watch Service supplement this corps and are specially trained to perform a specific task of territorial defense. They offer protection and a basic reaction to minor incursions but do not possess an operational capacity for aggression.

With regard to internal security, developed, functioning and accessible democratic institutions are of critical importance. In the past, Latin American armies have often arbitrated internal conflict. However, in a demilitarized country with viable democratic institutions, this function is the responsibility of political actors. Strengthening democratic institutions, promoting a culture of negotiation and peaceful conflict resolution and investing in equitable social development are the best security policies. Equally fundamental is the development of a system of judicial administration. The judiciary, including tribunals, police, and a prison system, must be relatively independent, effective, efficient and accessible.

**Applying the Central American Demilitarization Experience to Africa**

In Costa Rica, Panama and Haiti, full demilitarization was possible after an armed conflict defeated the ruling elite, and discredited the army in the eyes of the public. This fact impressed many of the participants in the conference, who believed that some African countries that have
recently emerged from civil wars could follow a similar approach. However, in general, conference participants preferred a more tempered approach, noting that there are cultural, social, and economic differences between African and Central American countries. For example, Africa is at a different level of state-building; there are frequent coups and even civilian regimes are disorganized. In addition, Central American society and culture is fairly homogenous, whereas Africa must first overcome obstacles in this area before demilitarization can be made viable. Nevertheless, participants believed that the Central American experience can, under certain conditions, be relevant to Africa. They also concluded that if one African country decided to follow this path, it could in turn serve as example for others.

However, conference participants also remarked that the existence of an army does not in itself constitute a problem. They cautioned that any solution must be carried out carefully and deliberately so as not to result in social dislocation. Others stressed that the goal of demilitarization is not to harm military personnel, but to free resources for the good of humankind. These participants placed emphasis not on abolition or maintenance of the military per se, but on allocation of resources. This process could take the form of rationalizing military expenditure and justifying it in relation to other social needs.

Participants also pointed out that, for a number of reasons, militarization should not be equated with the military. Some instances of militarization have relied on military alliances with civilians. Although civilians may not have been responsible for instigating the military intrusion into politics, they have played an important part in sustaining it through administrative processes. Furthermore, it was argued that militarization is usually understood as a reference to armies, but some civil wars, such as that in the Democratic Republic of Congo, involved two private militias, each supported by rival sections of an army divided along class and ethnic lines. Reinforcing this attempt to encourage a broader definition, it was observed that militarization occurs when a society is taken over by a military code of conduct, including high level of weapons proliferation, even among civilians.

Participants generally agreed that the unique dynamics of a particular country play an important role in determining the degree of demilitarization that is feasible. Therefore, countries in Africa and around the world have experienced vastly different levels of demilitarization. Some countries, such as South Africa, Mali, Uganda and Malawi have carried out democratic transformations, cut military spending and redefined security. Others such as Nigeria are on the brink of transition, ready to begin the debate. Still other states such as Sierra Leone and Somalia have the opportunity to start from scratch following the fracturing of the state and the armed forces.

Factors affecting the level of demilitarization include:

- **Conflict.** Whether or not a country is emerging from a crisis can play a key role in developing demilitarization strategies. Lessons learned in the conflict should also be considered.
- **Size.** The size of the given country's territory, economy and population is also a factor. Many participants agreed that full demilitarization is more feasible in small countries.
Military. The military's historical role in society and the prospects for successful reintegration of combatants should be examined.

Consensus. The level of consensus and commitment to demilitarization within both government and society plays a critical role in demilitarization. Strong and committed leadership can help build that consensus.

External factors. Demilitarization must take into account factors outside the national and regional environments that may facilitate or endanger these efforts. External forces include the interests of major powers and arms manufacturers.

Implementing Demilitarization Strategies

The conference participants also concentrated on translating the general principles of demilitarization into concrete practical proposals for sustainable change in Africa. There was general agreement that the project should consist of a sequence of steps toward some degree of demilitarization.

1.- Build Consensus

First and foremost, it is necessary to build a level of political consensus on demilitarization. Extensive dialogue must take place at the national, sub-regional and regional levels. Existing institutions such as the Organization for African Unity (OAU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) could provide appropriate fora for developing a sense of regional and sub-regional solidarity.

Dialogue within and between states first helps create consensus on the form of security threats, and then helps parties agree on the appropriate institutions and mechanisms to confront the issues. At the national level, it is critical to push the agenda forward to incorporate the grass-roots participation. Possible strategies include:

- conceptualizing "demilitarization" as a process and developing terminology that is more inclusive, so as not to create antagonism between civil society and the military;
- assuring civil society that they can be secure without a military, even in areas with border conflicts;
- establishing a balance between legitimate military spending and human development;
- addressing these issues in civil society organizations; and
- promoting capacity-building through networking and collaboration with professional groups.

2.- Redefine the military's role

Redefining the military's role is one of the more controversial elements of demilitarization processes. In light of this, demilitarization strategies should emphasize military participation in the process. Participants suggested that military personnel and the military establishment should
not be defied, but incorporated into the decision-making process in order to ensure security. Clearly, if the army itself does not feel included and at ease with the process of change, it will likely disrupt it.

It also needs to be made clear that military personnel will not be left out or cast aside. For this reason, demilitarization strategies should ensure reintegration of military personnel into civil society. Reintegration efforts should include skills training, counseling and job creation. If former combatants are left without the necessary means for their own survival, they will likely turn to lawlessness and rebellion.

Redefining the military's role includes establishing a new military doctrine and redefining the duties of the armed forces, ideally restricting it to its traditional role of external combat. However, many participants also supported developing positive roles for the military that contribute to development, for example making constructive contributions to disaster relief, humanitarian emergency management and infrastructure construction. If the military must be involved in internal security operations, proper criteria must be drawn up for evaluating the involvement of armed forces in non-combat operations.

3.- Improve civil-military relations

Political elites and civil society should be educated on security issues to ensure that political leaders can accurately assess national defense needs, as well as proposals submitted by the military establishment. Networking and dialogue between military representatives and civil society should be encouraged. Mechanisms --such as an independent ombudsperson or an Inspector General of the Armed Forces-- should be developed to ensure adequate civilian supervision over the military. Also, political institutions and leaders should promote accountability and transparency measures. These should include the empowerment of political institutions and civil society and accountability of the executive to parliament. Parliament must be endowed with the capacity to evaluate and oversee the constitutional functions of the armed forces. In particular:

- the civilian elite must have the capacity to evaluate military requirements;
- the national security elite must have a clear perception of threats to national security;
- an institutional format must be established to offset the cohesive power of the military with the mobilized power of civil society;
- the military's desire for prestige must be constructively addressed in order to incorporate it into the democratic mainstream; and
- the ethnic, tribal and regional composition of the military must be addressed in the context of these efforts. Specific policies must target not only the military but the wider social context as well. The makeup of the armed forces must reflect the overall composition of society.

Another important measure is to address the psychology of militarism in societies emerging from prolonged periods of military dominance. In some instances, the challenge lies more in demilitarizing civilians than the military themselves. Moreover, both the military's colonial legacy (which influences its role in politics and society) and the relationships between military
and civilian leaders should be taken into account.

Furthermore, the issue of ethno-nationalism (armies as conclaves of ethnic or religious groups associated with the ruling elite) should be addressed by ensuring a balance between merit and equal opportunity in the recruitment and promotion of soldiers.

Finally, the media should be encouraged to follow security and defense issues closely. NGOs should also continue to request information from governments.

4.- Strengthen the civilian police

As part of the process of redefining the role of the military, states must also consider the role of the police. However, participants raised questions about how to ensure that the police, rather than the armed forces, would be the most appropriate entity to carry out public security functions. With regard to the differences between military institutions and police forces, participants identified the following:

- **Doctrine.** Police are governed by the rule of law. They do not see problems within the society as enemies to be confronted or eliminated, but as issues to be solved through peaceful means.
- **Education.** Preparation and training for police and military are generally quite different in content and approach.
- **Civilian control and accountability.** Police are subordinated to the civilian authority and the justice system.
- **Offensive capacity.** Police generally have minimal offensive capacity. There is also usually a large discrepancy between the cost and firepower of weapons carried by police and those used by the military.
- **Community.** By its very nature, the army separates a group of people from day-to-day life. On the other hand, a member of the police force generally lives in the same neighborhood and shares the community's future and problems. In addition, the power of the police force and its ability to ensure public order depend largely on the consent of ordinary citizens.

5.- Reassess security threats and issues

Stability and demilitarization cannot be imposed, but must be generated from within. Integral to the process of revising the role of the military is the reassessment of security, both at the level of the state and of the individual. Military security does not constitute security as a whole. Therefore, states must utilize resources so as to meet human development priorities such as health, literacy, housing and other social services. It was argued that the best security strategies for a country lie in creating appropriate living conditions for its people.

6.- Collective security and defense arrangements

In addition to the building blocks of demilitarization at the national level, the process must go on to address similar principles at the sub-regional, regional and global levels. ECCAS and
ECOWAS provide excellent models of sub-regional approaches to security and non-aggression mechanisms. The ECOWAS Non-Aggression Pact and Protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defense provides a viable collective security arrangement through which the security of any one country in West Africa is the collective responsibility of all signatories. In Central Africa, ECCAS has developed its own sub-regional collective security arrangement, although it still must be implemented. Other encouraging examples include the SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security, as well as various peace initiatives within the context of the Great Lakes Region and IGAD.

Many participants voiced support for establishing collective defense arrangements in sub-regions where states have mutually agreed to reduce the strength of their militaries. This process may begin as part of a state's reassessment of its own military needs. In this regard, the establishment of a permanent sub-branch of ECOMOG, maintained by a regional coalition, was suggested as an alternative to the rebuilding of armies. By establishing a standing peacekeeping command to which members can contribute soldiers, small states such as Sierra Leone and Gambia can be assured that their territorial integrity does not depend on a standing army.

Noting that this rethinking of regionalism implies a complex systematic change, some starting points for further action were suggested, including:

- reviewing the ECOWAS defense protocols and similar provisions from other parts of the world;
- developing a peacekeeping model with accountable command, control and information systems;
- developing the necessary linkages between security, democracy and development in the regional integration process;
- conceptualizing a framework of conflict management for 21st Century Africa which de-emphasizes militarization;
- developing protocols on illegal arms trafficking and emphasizing participation in the UN Register of Conventional Arms to promote transparency;
- declaring privately-sponsored armies unlawful in national constitutions;
- agreeing to the non-use of national territory to destabilize other countries;
- institutionalizing sub-regional political and military intervention in states where a democratically elected civilian government has been overthrown by the military through a coup d'état; and
- accepting and respecting UN and OAU protocols on borders and refraining from any form of military action to resolve territorial disputes.

States can also support demilitarization by initiating confidence- and security-building measures (CSBM) with their neighbors in order to reduce the perceptions of threats. It was noted that the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) offers some positive examples of CSBMs that could be undertaken in Africa. These include informing neighboring states of troop movements, not bringing troops within certain distances of border zones, and carrying out joint exercises and military exchanges.
At the sub-regional level, it was observed that while many are suspicious of hegemonic regional powers, their presence might actually assist in the demilitarization process. In West Africa, if Nigeria should decide to withdraw from ECOMOG the organization would be effectively terminated. However, if Nigeria were allowed to play its role in a true partnership of mutual respect, positive changes could be made. South Africa can play a similar role in Southern Africa.

A concrete proposal was made to enact a mutual force reduction agreement, using the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty as a model. The CFE provides a framework for categorizing weapons that pose the greatest threat to regional security, then counting them and setting caps on their total numbers. This structure could clearly be applied to Africa. Because of the regional nature and flexibility of the force-reduction model, existing regional structures such as ECOWAS could be used to negotiate such treaties. In addition to the CFE categories, it was suggested that a West African Force Reduction Treaty could also:

- limit weapons most commonly used in regional and intra-state conflicts;
- limit all troop levels (active duty, reserve, and paramilitary gendarmes);
- cap troop deployments on borders;
- place ceilings on the percentage of GDP allocated to the military;
- establish regional arms registers for treaty-limited equipment;
- build commitments to standardize military expenditure audits; and
- generate commitments to participate in international arms control and transparency agreements, such as the UN Register of Conventional Arms.

Regional bodies such as SADC and the OAU should be encouraged to take this model and adapt it to the needs of the various African regions.

7.- The role of external actors

Participants also discussed the importance of states outside of the given region and even outside of Africa itself. Because they have considerable influence on the African continent, foreign powers have special roles and responsibilities in supporting preventive measures. These powers should voice firm views and take decisive diplomatic action if a state's armed forces violate their political mandate. Similarly, it was suggested that the international community must take a strong stand against military coups, and take specific measures such as:

- respond quickly to any coup d'état;
- not recognize governments that have gained power by non-constitutional means;
- not grant political asylum to perpetrators of coups;
- provide forums for rapprochement among leaders in communities that were driven by conflicts; and
- carefully target sanctions against leaders of illegal regimes (e.g. embargoes on international flights) rather than targeting the wider population (e.g. embargoes on fuel supplies). All interventions should be pursued within the guidance of UN frameworks.
In relation to the arms trade, the international community should:

- make more strenuous efforts to suppress illegal arms sales; and
- support NGOs and the press in their efforts to monitor breaches of arms trade laws by maintaining the freedom of expression and access necessary for this work to be effective.

In order to encourage stability, security and good governance, thereby creating fruitful conditions for demilitarization, the international community should:

- devote resources to development and debt reduction, addressing the root causes of conflict;
- encourage replacement of military institutions with civilian ones;
- develop guidelines of good practice in governments to guide regimes and help judge progress toward demilitarization;
- support regional security systems; and
- continue supporting democratization.

Furthermore, international financial institutions should be brought into the demilitarization debate where appropriate. For example, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank assistance could be made contingent on an independent civilian audit of the recipient state's military budget. To ensure that international financial assistance has a chance to reach those who truly need it, there must be assurances that military spending is transparent and accountable to a civilian authority.

One of the main challenges the conference identified is the power wielded by weapons producers, sellers and buyers. Conference participants concluded that African countries should take a more outspoken approach to stopping weapons proliferation by directing criticism to active producer and supplier countries. The role of transnational organizations, mineral exploiters and corporate mercenaries was also acknowledged, as they exert great influence in the continent's militarization.

**Conclusion**

Conference participants agreed that the unique characteristics of each country's situation must be taken into account when formulating demilitarization strategies. To this end, they advocated adopting a two-track approach: recognizing the distinct qualities of each individual country and its culture while also proposing general principles for all demilitarization processes.

There were marked differences of opinion on appropriate definitions for terms such as demilitarization and security. This issue of definitions was indicative of the participants' varied approaches to the subject, ranging from support for full abolition of the armed forces to advocating more moderate reforms. Perhaps most notably, the conference’s open and honest discussion illustrated the importance of dialogue among different sectors of society to developing elements of a common understanding.
Ultimately, those attending the conference agreed that the degree of demilitarization will depend on a number of factors, including the size of the country, the level of conflict, the military's role in society and the extent of political consensus. In addition, participants agreed that no country can be treated in isolation; demilitarization strategies must consider the sub-regional, regional and international contexts.

As Africa prepares for the 21st century, its leaders must propel the continent ahead with bold and innovative new thinking. They must solve today's conflicts and prevent tomorrow's wars. And they must embrace demilitarization as one of the guiding concepts for this transformation.

In addition, African governments and civil society must also address the root causes of conflict. Together, with support from around the world, they must work to alleviate poverty, address economic equality, promote democracy and protect human rights. To meet these challenges, they must also act to strengthen states, redirect resources, stem the flow of arms and enhance Africa's economic viability. Participants agreed that reducing military spending and reallocating resources to human development are essential building blocks in the effort to bring peace and stability to Africa.