

disarmament forum

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The relationship between disarmament and development has been discussed since the earliest days of the United Nations, starting with the explicit linkage in Article 26 of the UN Charter, which noted that armaments drain resources that could otherwise be used for human and economic concerns. UNIDIR has also had a long-standing interest in this subject—the first issue of the *UNIDIR Newsletter* (the predecessor of *Disarmament Forum*), published in 1988, was dedicated to this topic.

Interest in the disarmament-development relationship peaked during the Cold War; by the mid-1990s disappointment and disillusionment concerning the 'missing' peace dividend pushed disarmament-development thinking to the margins. In the past few years, new perspectives, including an emphasis on human development and security, have helped to bring discussions about the interaction between disarmament and development back to the centre.

This issue of *Disarmament Forum* explores the relationship between disarmament and development using the example of landmines. Demining and stockpile destruction, the 'disarmament' elements of mine action, are essential for the successful development of a mine-affected country. However, demining has traditionally been seen as a precursor to development—once the disarmament phase is complete, the development phase can begin. At current rates, some countries face years of demining activities—their development objectives cannot wait. Disarmament must be integrated into long-term development plans from their conception. This understanding is slowly taking hold, and has resulted in mine action being at the forefront of thinking on the practical implications of the relationship between disarmament and development.

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