

Archbishop Chullikatt makes plea at U.N. for complete disarmament

UNITED NATIONS – Any discussion of disarmament and arms control must take several ideas into consideration and must understand the link between weapons reduction and people's development, said the Vatican's new representative to the United Nations.

"Policies promoting disarmament and arms control reflect an idea of order which the people of the world desire," said Archbishop Francis Chullikatt. "For this reason such policies are crucial for everyone's destiny and they cannot be limited to one strategy alone. A renewed effort is required at national, regional and international levels."

The archbishop spoke before a committee of the U.N. General Assembly during general debate on disarmament and international security Oct. 11.

In his address, he decried the increase in world military expenditure during the last decade. He also echoed the decades-old plea of the Holy See in favor of reducing military spending in order to redirect resources to the poor and create a world fund for development programs.

The archbishop acknowledged recent positive developments in treaty discussions on weapon reductions. He said reductions in nuclear arsenals are "important steps," but said they would be "insufficient if they are not pursued within the context of a general and effective disarmament conducted in good faith and at the multilateral and international level."

He also warned that the sale of arms was not equivalent to "other goods in the marketplace," noting that the possession, production and trade of military weapons must be regulated since they carry with them "deep ethical and social implications."

The archbishop also paid special notice to the institutions and agencies that specialize in disarmament and arms control. He pointed out that in recent years, the Conference on Disarmament has gone through a crisis "which made it less

productive and practically unable to agree on an agenda of substance.”

As a result, he said, nongovernmental organizations have become involved in seeking solutions.

He said the Vatican has been pleased to see more institutions tackle this issue, noting that the “international community is called to find original and practical solutions to desired objectives, among which is complete disarmament.”