

FIRST COMMITTEE MONITOR

NGO Reporting on the United Nations
General Assembly First Committee on
Disarmament and International Security
7 October–5 November 2014

NO. 2
13 October 2014



FIRST COMMITTEE MONITOR

2014 No. 2

Reaching Critical Will is a programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

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The views in this publication are not necessarily those of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom or the Reaching Critical Will programme.

Cover image: Gullfoss, Iceland, by Ray Acheson

Reaching Critical Will is the disarmament programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the oldest women's peace organization in the world. Reaching Critical Will works on issues related to disarmament and arms control of many different weapon systems; militarism and military spending; and gendered aspects of the impact of weapons and of disarmament processes.

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Reaching Critical Will

EDITORIAL: MIGHTY RIVERS AND "SEEMINGLY IMPENETRABLE STONES"

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Those who seek change and progress are frequently confronted with assertions that their proposals are not practical or feasible. For the most part, in the disarmament context as much as anywhere else, those opposing change are those that believe they have the most to lose. But they don't. Disarmament, like any other progressive social change, benefits everyone.

The basis upon which these assertions are made is usually unjustified, misinformed, and/or rooted in a material or political commitment to the status quo. These claims bear some scrutiny. What is "practical"? What is "feasible"? How do we measure these concepts and who determines that?

When the French ambassador says the "step-by-step" approach to nuclear disarmament is the "only realistic one, and so the only one that will allow us to progress," upon what does he base this? Where is it written that this is the only possible approach? Certainly not in the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which calls simply for "effective measures" for nuclear disarmament. Certainly not in the NPT's outcome documents, which make it clear that any interim measures they specify are neither exhaustive nor sequential.

When Ambassador Simon-Michel demands that states must implement the step-by-step roadmap "without deviating from the chosen path," we could ask, where is this path leading? As we meet in New York, 44 years after the entry into force of the NPT, multilateral negotiations for nuclear disarmament have not yet commenced. It is the nuclear-armed states that have deviated from the implementation of article VI. Do we really feel like we are on the right path?

When the US representative encourages "all parties to join with the United States to advance realistic and achievable objectives," which objectives is she speaking about? Who decides what is realistic and what is achievable? The core objective of the NPT, as set out in its preamble, is the elimination of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. Is this objective no longer deemed realistic or achievable? Is the goal now, as the Japanese ambassador said, only "fewer nuclear weapons," rather than a nuclear weapon free world?

Ms. Gottemoeller said that her government will "continue to make it clear that arms control regimes and their corresponding nuclear reductions have served the world well for more than 40 years." Do those that have suffered from nuclear testing think that is true? What about those who struggle to find jobs or

shelter or food while their governments squander vast resources on the maintenance and modernisation of these weapons? Has the "progress" declared by the nuclear-armed states been deemed practical or realistic by the majority of the world?

The US delegation asserts that there "is no way to skip to the end." But we have not yet even seen a beginning to concerted, multilateral action on nuclear disarmament, as required by the NPT.

"Certain parties would like to push us into taking another path, an ideological approach which aims to stigmatize and not to seek solutions," claims Ambassador Simon-Michel. Stigmatisation is not idealistic. It is a straightforward, logical human response to unacceptable practices. It is explicitly aimed at seeking and leading to solutions. Human society has progressed by identifying and condemning bad behaviour, which informs the building of norms and legal and political responses. It will be no different for nuclear weapons. They will be eliminated when the rest of the world has made it clear that they reject the purported "value" of nuclear weapons, undermining the attempts of the nuclear-armed states to justify the risks and consequences of nuclear violence. Stigmatisation, through a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons, will be part of this shift in calculations.

We are told that nuclear weapons are different, though. That in the "right hands" they afford security. As the Chilean ambassador said, we must expose this "persistent fallacy".

This is just what the initiative to examine the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons has accomplished.

Growing out of the NPT 2010 outcome document, this initiative has demonstrated with compelling and chilling evidence that the detonation of any nuclear weapon, let alone a nuclear exchange, would have catastrophic consequences to which no national or international relief service would be able to respond.

As Ireland's delegation argued, states have a duty of care to protect their citizens—and the world—from these consequences.

This responsibility falls to all states, not just those armed with nuclear weapons. And it is relevant for all disarmament matters, not just nuclear disarmament. It is not only up to those that possess or use the weap-

ons to seek and achieve change. It is up to all of us. And we all get a say in what is practical and feasible, because progressive change is a collective project.

In her opening remarks, Ms. Gottemoeller mused that perhaps we should think of disarmament in terms of how creeks and streams connect to form rivers. "Over time, those mighty rivers are irreversible; they cut through massive and seemingly impenetrable stone on the way to their final destination." In fact, this well describes the effect that states, civil society groups, and other actors can have when they work together

to oppose the entrenched reticence of the handful of powerful states that doggedly perpetuate a belief that their weapons make them powerful. Our collective efforts on a variety of issues—from stopping the bombings of towns and cities, to the prohibition of nuclear weapons, to controlling the arms trade, to preventing the development of unacceptable new weapon technologies—will undoubtedly cut through the "seemingly impenetrable stone" of those who seek security through militarism and who construct power through the threat and exercise of armed violence. •

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Mia Gandenberger | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Nuclear weapons continued to receive the greatest attention during general debate of the UNGA First Committee, with almost all speakers highlighting the need for nuclear disarmament.

At the beginning of the week, UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Angela Kane stressed that "our collective mission here is not in achieving progress towards disarmament. Our mission is instead progress in disarmament." However, confusion seems to remain over the overall objectives of nuclear disarmament. While most speakers subscribed to the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, for others, like Japan, nuclear disarmament apparently only means a world with "fewer" nuclear weapons. This detachment from the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons might be the reason why "the first word that comes to our mind while talking about nuclear disarmament is 'disappointment'," as Ambassador A.K. Abdul Momen of Bangladesh pointed out.

More than a third of the speakers specifically raised their concerns with the catastrophic humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. The series of conferences on the matter in Norway, Mexico, and soon Austria, were welcomed as opportunities to deepen the knowledge of the effects, risks, and consequences of these weapons.

Some speakers called for a legally-binding instrument banning nuclear weapons to be negotiated in reaction to this knowledge, including the African Group and CARICOM and many individual states. The Non-Aligned Movement continued calling for the negotiation a nuclear weapons convention. The New Agenda Coalition highlighted its NPT working paper that assesses several options for moving forward with nuclear disarmament.

However, the nuclear-armed states of the NPT speaking during the first week, China, France, Russia, and United States, chose to highlight their work on the glossary of the "Key Nuclear Terms," pushing around the card of who should start to disarm first, while reassuring UN member states of their commitment to nuclear disarmament.

In that context, Rose Gottemoeller, US Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, called the questioning of the US support for nuclear disarmament a mistake. Yet, while the NPT entered into force in 1970, today there remain more than 16,000 nuclear weapons, of which the US possesses 7,315, according to the Federation of American Scientists. Therefore, as Ambassador Dell Higgie of New Zealand rightly pointed out, "after considerably more than four decades since the Treaty entered into force, non-nuclear weapon states certainly have a right to ask—if not now, when?" •

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INTERVIEW WITH AMBASSADOR BENNO LAGGNER ABOUT DE-ALERTING NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Almost 2000 nuclear warheads are on high levels of alert, ready to be launched within minutes. Such alert levels are dangerous, in particular in times of increased tensions. They are not necessary for nuclear deterrence. Reducing alert levels would be an important contribution towards reducing the role of nuclear weapons. This year, Switzerland, together with Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand, and Nigeria, will again introduce the so-called “De-alerting resolution” (A/RES/67/46—“Decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems”). This resolution is calling for further practical steps to decrease the operational readiness of nuclear weapon systems.

RCW: Dear Ambassador Laggner, thank you for the opportunity for this interview. Shall we dive right in?

BL: Yes, please. Thank you for your interest in this topic!

RCW: Could you please outline why Switzerland thinks it is still important to stay engaged on the matter of de-alerting nuclear warheads?

BL: Roughly 2000 nuclear warheads are on high alert, which means they can be launched within minutes. As a result of the humanitarian consequences discussions, the international community has now a greater understanding how dangerous these postures are. Addressing these unnecessary and unacceptable risks has been the primary motivation for our de-alerting efforts.

Secondly, de-alerting is one of the many unfulfilled NPT disarmament obligations. It is high time to live up to what was agreed. The NPT urgently needs a success story. We are engaged in this topic because we believe the next NPT cycle should bring progress on this issue.

Third, de-alerting is a very pragmatic, reasonable nuclear disarmament step. It has been done in the past—even in difficult times. And it can be done in the future. Recent tensions are just another reason for doing it now and not for waiting until it's too late.

RCW: Over the past year more stories looking at misconduct of members of the nuclear forces have come to the attention of the international community, and there have been books and studies produced on the risk of nuclear accidents. How do you see this debate developing and can you see areas of convergence with the de-alerting debate?

BL: I do indeed see a very close connection: the stories you mentioned show that no matter how hard you try, both the technology and the “human factor” pose risks. Discussions in Oslo in 2013 and in Nayarit in 2014 showed that the probabilities of such incidents are underestimated and that the consequences would be unacceptable.

In other words, the recent focus of the nuclear weapon debate supports our de-alerting efforts. On the other hand, the high alert levels are a case in point for the humanitarian discourse.

At the same time, high alert levels are just one element in the puzzle. Other aspects related to nuclear doctrines pose a threat and need to be discussed.

RCW: What are your expectations or hopes for this year's First Committee for this issue?

BL: The trend is clear: each time we tabled the de-alerting resolution, the voting result improved. We are confident that our outreach will reduce the remaining 19 abstentions. Many “abstentionists” seem ready to re-examine their position. We also want to get more co-sponsors.

More important than the voting result is to set the stage for the NPT Review Conference. We have powerful arguments. The arguments of those voting “no” are not very convincing. Some states that have been in the past sceptical regarding de-alerting are now even tabling working papers on de-alerting.

We also have growing support from civil society. The Nayarit risk panel with Bruce Blair's presentation was an eye-opener for many. At the Vienna conference, more evidence will be presented. Global Zero's de-alerting commission—with General Cartwright and others—will address de-alerting and hopefully pave the way for progress on this important issue. •

BIOLOGICAL AND CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Sampson Oppedisano | NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security

During the opening week of First Committee's general debate, many member states discussed issues related to chemical and biological weapons.

States continued to affirm their support of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which prohibits states from using, producing, or stockpiling such weapons. States also called on those not party to the Convention to sign and ratify it as soon as possible.

The report of the fact finding mission into the use of chemical weapons in Syria led some states to conclude that the government of Syria had used chemical weapons during the conflict. The Syrian delegation suggested this report "has some gaps". In October 2013 the government agreed to accede to the CWC and engage with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on a stockpile destruction programme.

While Russia commended Syria for implementing the destruction agreement, France, Switzerland, and Australia expressed concern over the latest findings of the fact finding mission, calling into question Syria's commitment to fulfilling CWC obligations and describing its previous actions as a violation of international humanitarian law. Turkey and Canada expressed disappointment with Syria's alleged use of chemical weapons, with Canada urging that the government be held accountable.

With regard to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), some states called for negotiation of a protocol on the verification of the implementation of the convention. In that context, Norway stressed that priority should also be given to national implementation and universalization of the BTWC. Furthermore, Denmark reported extensively on its activities on biosecurity. •

FULLY AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS

Mia Gandenberger | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Not many speakers focused on the matter of fully autonomous weapon systems during the first week of this year's UNGA First Committee. However, the African Group and Non-Aligned Movement, as well as Ecuador, France, India, and Switzerland, welcomed the Informal Meeting of Experts of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) that took place 13–16 May 2014 on this subject.

The CCW meeting had been mandated to "discuss the questions related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems." Different expert* panels on the technical, ethical, legal, and military aspects and implications of fully autonomous weapons were used as basis for the discussions. During the debate it became clear that views are divided as to whether such weapons would be illegal under existing law or if their use would be permitted in certain circumstances. However, it also became clear that the imperative of maintaining meaningful human control over targeting and attack decisions was the primary point of common ground at this first multilateral meeting on autonomous weapons systems.

At First Committee, many speakers thought the development of fully autonomous weapons continued to raise fundamental questions, such as ethical, legal, moral, and technical issues in connection to international humanitarian law (IHL) and international hu-

man rights law (IHRL). Ecuador's delegation called for further study on the implications of these weapons for IHL and IHRL and suggested that states could look to prohibit this type of weapon, as well armed drones.

All speakers addressing this issue saw the need for further discussion. In that context, Ambassador Jean-Hugues Simon-Michel of France, Chair of the May expert meeting, said he thinks the discussions made good progress and that he sees the possibility for convergences on the matter. He expressed his intention to advocate for the continuation of the work on autonomous weapons in November during the meeting of the High Contracting Parties of the CCW. States at that meeting will decide whether to renew the mandate for expert discussion on fully autonomous weapons and if so, the more specific modalities of the mandate.

**Despite great expertise among female stakeholders, no women were invited to speak at any of the panels.*

Side events on fully autonomous weapons:

Thursday, 16 October, 13:15-14:30
Conference Room A

Tuesday, 21 October, 13:15-14:30
Conference Room A

DEPLETED URANIUM WEAPONS: NOT BECOMING ANY MORE ACCEPTABLE

Doug Weir | International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons

While states in First Committee debate the merits of a fifth NAM-sponsored resolution on arms and ammunition containing depleted uranium, the US is deploying A10 gunships to the Middle East. By weight, A10s have been responsible for more depleted uranium (DU) contamination than any other platform. Iraq called for a global treaty ban on DU weapons this summer, in part because a lack of clearance obligations has ensured that contamination in the country from 1991 and 2003 remains unresolved. In light of this, the renewed use of DU on Iraqi territory would be wholly unacceptable.

Elsewhere, the Ukrainian defence ministry has launched an investigation into whether DU tank ammunition was used in recent fighting at Luhansk airport. Images of blackened tanks and footage of apparently radioactive wreckage have been circulating online. Regardless of the outcome of the investigations, it is clear from the tone of the debate that the use of DU remains highly controversial.

The passage of 2012's biennial resolution with the support of 155 states appears to support this observation, suggesting as it does that international opinion is moving steadily against the weapons. The International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons argues that this is rightly so. The more we learn about how DU can interact with the human body, about how complex its post-conflict management is, and about how the reality of its use in conflict differs wildly from its promoted use solely against armoured targets, the more urgent the call for the DU issue to be tackled becomes.

In spite of the growing support for the resolutions, a number of states still abstain. The EU is disproportionately represented in this group. The European Parliament has long been vocal on the issue and this year called on member states to "support UNGA resolutions on depleted uranium weapons and to develop an EU Common Position that better reflects Parliament's repeated calls for a precautionary global moratorium and the developing global consensus on the potential civilian health risks, complex post-conflict management burden and financial costs associated with their use."

While the presence of two DU producers within the EU bloc may make a common position unobtainable, the majority of those still abstaining do not have DU weapons, are not seeking DU weapons, do not allow DU weapons on their domestic ranges, and regularly commit troops to joint operations where they may be exposed to DU. On paper at least, they have little to lose by voting in favour.

The indiscriminate contamination from DU weapons presents a health risk to civilians long after conflict ends. Its management places a significant post-conflict burden on affected states. Their use runs counter to internationally accepted norms on radiation protection and wins neither hearts nor minds. ICBUW therefore urges states to speak out on the topic, engage with civil society in the debate over their acceptability and work towards substantive progress on resolving the issue. •

7



ARMS TRADE TREATY

Allison Pytlak | Control Arms

Just two weeks ago the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) achieved a significant new milestone when the necessary number of ratifications was reached to trigger its entry into force. The momentum spurred by this achievement was evident during the general debate of First Committee last week, as over forty delegations welcomed this accomplishment, including some non-signatories.

Many states referred to the role the Treaty will play in promoting international peace and security and declared it a success in the area of multilateral diplomacy. Ambassador Courtenay Rattray of Jamaica, Chair of this year's First Committee, particularly welcomed the inclusion of a provision on gender-based violence, as did Norway and CARICOM. Georgia appears to have summed up the sentiments of many states when Ambassador Kaha Ivnadze called it a "victory for the world's people" with real potential to eradicate the illicit arms trade and genuinely contribute to humanitarian objectives.

Mexico's delegation outlined the preparatory process now underway for the first Conference of States Parties (CSP) in 2015, and several states expressed support for Mexico's role in hosting the CSP as well as the first informal consultations. One of the issues to be decided at the CSP is the location of the future ATT Secretariat. During his statement for the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Ambassador Eden Charles outlined the offer that Trinidad and Tobago has put forward to host the Secretariat. Austria and Switzerland have also offered to host the Secretariat.

Some delegations spoke about initiatives intended to support implementation. New Zealand updated the Committee on the model legislation that it has been

developing for use by other states, particularly small island states, in partnership with Small Arms Survey. The model legislation is now available in hard copy and online. The European Union intends to provide "tangible support" in support of effective implementation and ratification. The African Group and Senegal underscored the importance of balanced implementation that involves exporters, importers, transit, and transshipment states equally. Spain and New Zealand referred to their provisional application of Articles 6 and 7 of the Treaty. Cambodia, in cooperation with the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, will organize a workshop in Siem Reap from 18–19 November 2014 that aims to facilitate expert assistance to states in the Asia-Pacific region that have signed or signaled an intent to sign the ATT. Uruguay is updating its national legislation.

There were also expressions of concern about the Treaty from some states, including India and Syria, which critiqued its potential lack of impact on non-state actors.

China announced that it is undertaking a review of issues related to signing the Treaty. Several states including the Netherlands, the Philippines, Brazil, and Thailand indicated that they hope to complete their respective ratification processes shortly.

Throughout the week Control Arms displayed a photo "50 celebrating 50," which welcomes the achievement of over 50 ratifications of the ATT with quotes and photos of 50 people from across government, the UN and civil society who have played a key role in making the Treaty a reality. Also displayed online in English, French, and Spanish, the exhibit will return during the week of 20 October. •

SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Joanne Mulligan | International Action Network on Small Arms

The majority of delegations reviewed efforts by the international community on the prevention of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW) during the first week of the general debate. Ethiopia noted that the implementation of both international and regional commitments and treaty-based obligations in respect to combating the illicit trafficking of conventional arms is crucial.

Many states expressed their concern about the devastating effects that the illicit trade in arms and proliferation of SALW has on international peace and

security, as well as to socioeconomic and human development. The Chair of the First Committee, Ambassador Courtenay Rattray of Jamaica, stated that the instability caused by trans-national criminal organizations, terrorist groups, state and non-state informal actors, and violent extremists is fueled by their access to weapons, primarily SALW, which are used in conflicts in which civilians suffer the greatest harm.

Delegations focused mainly on the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light

Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNPoA) and the outcome of the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS5) on the UNPoA. Most delegations commended the UNPoA as a key instrument in curbing the illicit trade in conventional arms. Saudi Arabia noted that the instrument is a basis for further efforts on the issue of SALW. A full, balanced, and effective implementation of the UNPoA was stressed by representatives of the Arab Group, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Algeria, Nigeria, South Africa, and Turkey. Representatives of the African Group, Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Algeria, Cuba, Lesotho, Malaysia, Senegal, and South Africa emphasized the importance of effective international cooperation and assistance in implementing this instrument. The significance of the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) was reaffirmed by CARICOM, NAM, Algeria, and Botswana.

The delegations of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Algeria, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, India, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, Senegal, Spain, and Uruguay welcomed the adoption by consensus of

the outcome document of BMS5. Netherlands, Uruguay and Guatemala, however, expressed concerns regarding the lack of progress made during this meeting. Netherlands insisted that work needs to be done with regards to tracing and tracking, as well as to develop a strong connection with the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Uruguay and Guatemala regretted the exclusion of ammunition from the BMS5 outcome, with Uruguay stating that it would continue to advocate for the inclusion of ammunition and border control.

Certain delegations expressed concern with the impact of the UNPoA in combating the illicit trade in arms. Cuba, on its part, highlighted the need for more specific progress in the implementation of the UNPoA. Furthermore, Venezuela underscored the lack of political will by some states and thus emphasized the importance of both unilateral and multilateral efforts in implementing the instrument. Lesotho stressed that international cooperation has not been fully effective due to impediments such as lack of predictable funding. •

CALENDAR OF SIDE EVENTS FOR THE WEEK OF 13–17 OCTOBER 2014

When	What	Where	Who
Monday, 13 October 13:15–14:30	Disarmament and non-proliferation education	Conference Building Conference Room A	Permanent Mission of Austria to the UN
Tuesday, 14 October 13:15–14:30	Book launch of <i>"Unmaking the Bomb: A Fissile Approach to Nuclear Disarmament and Nonproliferation"</i>	Conference Room 8	Permanent Mission of Netherlands to the UN, Princeton University
Tuesday, 14 October 13:15–14:30	Innovating verification: new tools and new actors to reduce nuclear risks	General Assembly Building ECOSOC Chamber	US Delegation to First Committee
Wednesday, 15 October 13:15–14:30	Briefing on the forthcoming Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons	Conference Building Conference Room A	Permanent Mission of Austria to the UN
Thursday, 16 October 9:00–10:00	Briefing on the preparatory process for the First Conference of States Parties of the Arms Trade Treaty	Conference Building Conference Room A	Permanent Mission of Mexico to the UN
Thursday, 16 October 13:15–14:30	Weapons, technology, and human control	Conference Building Conference Room A	UNIDIR and Article 36
Friday, 17 October 13:15–14:30	Gender and disarmament	Conference Building Conference Room E	Permanent Mission of Denmark to the UN, Reaching Critical Will
Friday, 17 October 13:15–14:30	Ending the use of cluster munitions: the urgency of the global ban	Conference Building Conference Room A	Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the UN, Cluster Munition Coalition, PAX, Human Rights Watch

CLUSTER MUNITIONS AND LANDMINES

Amelie Chayer | International Campaign to Ban Landmines–Cluster Munition Coalition

Virtually all delegations that spoke about cluster munitions or antipersonnel mines during this first week expressed their support for the conventions banning the respective weapons, or for efforts made towards addressing the devastating consequences of their use.

Both Australia and the Netherlands called for further strengthening of and adherence to the norm banning cluster munitions. Canada noted that it has completed the destruction of its stockpile of cluster munitions and that it is firmly committed to the goals of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). Both Chile and Guatemala reiterated the goal of a cluster munition-free zone in Latin America, while Guatemala expressed concern with recent instances of use of the weapon elsewhere. The Netherlands and Senegal called on all states to join the CCM in advance of next year's First Review Conference to be held in Dubrovnik, Croatia, and Ecuador noted that universalization of the convention is a priority. South Africa reiterated its concern about the humanitarian impact of the weapon and said ratification is under consideration by its parliament.

Australia urged adherence to the norms banning antipersonnel mines and welcomed the recent US announcement that it will bring its policies into closer alignment with the Mine Ban Treaty (MBT). Chile, as future host of the 2016 Meeting of States Parties, reiterated its support for the Treaty. Japan, Mexico, and the Netherlands expressed great satisfaction that the outcome documents from the Maputo Review Conference of the MBT include a 2025 aspirational

target date for completing the implementation of key Treaty obligations. On a similar note, Canada welcomed the ambitious forward agenda agreed in Maputo, and said that ending the era of antipersonnel mines is "within our reach." South Africa expressed its hope that the next five years will see an acceleration of victim assistance, treaty universalization, and compliance.

ASEAN member states welcomed efforts towards operationalizing the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center, which will serve as a center of excellence in addressing the humanitarian impact of explosive remnants of war. Speaking on the same topic, Cambodia highly commended "the firm solidarity among all States Parties" to the MBT and other stakeholders working towards a mine-free world. Canada said it remains committed to help addressing the impact of landmines and cluster munitions through financial support for mine action. China mentioned its cooperation efforts related to the training of deminers and the provision of assistance to victims. Iraq explained that both weapons often impact populations that have already suffered greatly from conflicts, and that they have an adverse effect on the environment and development. Japan assured its continued support, through regional and South-South cooperation, to states facing serious clearance challenges. Thailand offered to share its wealth of expertise in the area of victim assistance. •

Side event on cluster munitions:

Friday, 17 October, 13:15-14:30
Conference Room A

OUTER SPACE

Garbiella Irsten | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

The increased use of space and the resulting debris have raised the issue of outer space safety and security on the multilateral disarmament agenda and triggered new initiatives.

Two of the latest initiatives, the European Union's (EU)'s International Code of Conduct on outer space activities and the 2013 outcome document of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) report on transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs), were welcomed and supported by the EU, US, India, Republic of Korea, and Australia. The EU explained that it will be consulting UN member states on the Code of Conduct during this session of the First Committee, as it is a "valuable step on

the way to increasing understanding and creating a sustainable Outer Space." France continued to emphasise that the Code could be a good solution to the increased threat of debris and the Netherlands stated that since a legally-binding treaty takes time the EU's Code should be a starting point.

Australia described the code as an "appropriate means to realise the substantial work undertaken by the international community on space security in recent years." The US said it believes that the Code "provides a valuable roadmap for practical, near-term solutions." China, previously seemingly sceptical of the Code, recalled its constructive participation during the multilateral consultations that started in 2013.

Kazakhstan raised the importance of the Code being a consensus document.

India, Russia, and Kazakhstan welcomed new TCBMs but highlighted that they cannot substitute for legally-binding instruments. Russia added that its resolution on no first placement of weapons in outer space is a good intermediate step towards the negotiations on a treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space (PPWT).

China highlighted the new updated July draft of the PPWT, jointly submitted by China and Russia to the Conference on Disarmament (CD), and wished for an early start of negotiations on it. Brazil expressed support for the PPWT draft as a good start of negotiations. Furthermore, NAM, India, Cuba, Senegal, and Kazakhstan expressed support for the CD to start

negotiating an international legal instrument on outer space to prevent the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space.

NAM and Tanzania also highlighted the particular threat of antiballistic missile systems and the right to peaceful uses of space technologies. The US raised concern regarding the “testing or use of debris-generating ASAT systems,” which it said “threatens the security, safety, economic wellbeing, and space science activities of all nations.”

The increased attention that states are paying to outer space security is a positive development, however, none of these efforts have yet managed to achieve the results needed and desired. States should put more efforts into preventative measures to ensure the peaceful use of space for generations to come. •

GENDER AND DISARMAMENT

Sofia Tuvestad | WILPF Sweden

During the first week of general debate at this year’s First Committee, gender aspects of disarmament were addressed in only a few statements. Needless to say, there should have been more states on this list and the number should grow significantly during the coming weeks.

The states of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) welcomed the UN Secretary General’s report on implementation of resolution 68/33 on women and disarmament. The statement, delivered by Ambassador Eden Charles of Trinidad and Tobago, also announced that this resolution has been updated for this year’s First Committee to reflect recent developments in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control, including the gender provisions of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

Referring to a widespread recognition of how an “unacceptably high share of human suffering in this world” comes from sexual and gender-based violence, not least in terms of the suffering caused by illicit and unregulated arms trade, Denmark’s delegation said “we will gain by fully realising the importance of women’s political, social and economic empowerment and of gender equality.” Ambassador Susanne Rumohr Haekkerup also emphasised in Denmark’s statement the important role that women play in civil society, as well as in the role of formal and informal community leaders, in efforts to prevent armed violence and armed conflict and promote disarmament.

In addition to this, Denmark stressed that women’s rights and empowerment as well as gender awareness

“form an integral part of Danish assistance programmes related to disarmament and arms control” and norms on gender and disarmament, as already established by the international community, should be better reflected in future UNGA resolutions on women, disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control. Furthermore, gender awareness should be mainstreamed in First Committee: “None of us are from Mars—or from any other planet,” Ambassador Haekkerup concluded.

In her statement Mónica Bolaños Pérez of Guatemala recognised the links between arms trafficking and armed gender-based violence. Speaking about the ATT, Ambassador May-Elin Stener of Norway welcomed in particular the inclusion of the provision on gender-based violence and emphasised the importance of implementing this criteria into practice on the ground. Ambassador Christán Barros of Chile said the role of women in disarmament programmes “has proved to be essential”.

This is indeed true, and coming statements during thematic debates should recognise this fact as well as introduce ideas of how women’s influence can be further promoted. Australian Member of Parliament Dr. Sharman Stone said Australia will set out in greater detail during thematic discussions its views and ideas on the importance of the equal, full, and effective participation of women in disarmament processes. •

Side event on gender and disarmament:

Friday, 17 October, 13:15-14:30

Conference Room E

DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Nalinn Larsson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

During the first week of the First Committee, few delegates mentioned development issues in relation to disarmament. However, the ones that did made the connection between weapons of mass destruction and their negative impact on socioeconomic development of countries, as well as high military expenditure that instead could be directed towards development.

UN High Representative for Disarmament Angela Kane emphasized that progress in disarmament, by eliminating or regulating weapons, can serve to advance humanitarian goals and development. The European Union (EU), the African Group, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Mexico, Philippines, Cambodia, Tanzania, Maldives, Zambia, and Iraq spoke of the negative impact of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction on socioeconomic development and the environment. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) also brought attention to the shipment of nuclear waste through the Caribbean Sea, which it argues poses a threat to the sustainable development and security of the region.

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the New Agenda Coalition (NAC), Cuba, Maldives, and Bangladesh

called on states with high military expenditure to reduce this spending and instead redirect their resources towards economic and social development, especially the fight against poverty. Bangladesh emphasized that as the nuclear-armed states “spend more than US \$105 billion each year for researching and testing new nuclear arsenals, only an average US \$50 billion per annum would be sufficient to halve poverty for nearly 5 billion people of this world and meet all eight Millennium Development Goals by 2015.”

CARICOM, the EU, Iraq, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Thailand, Cambodia, and Guatemala stressed the negative impact of the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons (SALW) on the stability of their societies and on socioeconomic development. Guatemala emphasized that SALW have caused hundreds of deaths in the country, as well as prolonged internal conflicts and armed violence, and that developing countries are the worst affected by the illicit trade of these weapons. The delegates expressed their hope that the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which will soon enter into force, will be an effective way to address the illicit trade of SALW and consequently have positive effects on the socioeconomic development and stability in these countries. •

DISARMAMENT MACHINERY

Gabriella Irsten | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

The first week of the First Committee general debate started off with UN High-Representative for Disarmament Affairs Angela Kane expressing concern about the stalemate in the UN disarmament machinery. She argued that the so called “step-by-step approach” needs to be changed in to a more “result-based” approach placing “a greater emphasis on operationalizing the goals of disarmament, by identifying observable measures such as reductions in stockpiles, delivery systems, weapons materials, volumes of arms produced or exported, and reductions in military expenditures.”

France and China defended the “step-by-step” approach, stating that it is the only realistic way to make progress, but the majority of delegations followed Angela Kane in expressing disappointment over the deadlock in the disarmament machinery. In particular they highlighted problems in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the Disarmament Commission, and the First Committee itself.

However, some delegations underlined the success of “non-nuclear” disarmament processes such as the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). New Zealand, for example, called the ATT a success story “mandated and negotiated here at the UN, watched over by the First Committee and adopted by the UNGA.” Ireland argued that similar efforts must be pursued and made on nuclear weapons. France further highlighted progress made this year on the debates on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the CD and the GGE.

Russia asserted that the deadlock in the traditional disarmament machinery is “not associated with some inborn defect” but is due to the difference of priorities. Others pointed to some methods of work as problematic for making progress. Malaysia and Mexico criticised the consensus rule in the CD and Mexico said that the “[b]iased interpretation for the rules of consensus has allowed half a dozen members of CD exercising a right of de facto veto.” Malaysia underscored that “perhaps it is time that we pay more



attention to the calls of civil society, and consider fresh perspectives and innovative approaches.” Chile also highlighted civil society’s role, saying that “civil society is not only a observer but also a participant.”

The demand to enlarge the CD membership, agree on a balanced programme of work, or hold the forth-special session of the UNGA devoted to disarmament (SSOD) were also raised by numerous delegations as potential solutions to breaking the stalemate.

The first week showed once again that there is a collective disappointment regarding the UN disarmament

machinery and many called for reforms and revitalization. Similar calls were made during the 69th General Assembly high-level debate, where states called for Security Council reform and revitalization of the General Assembly. Just like with the limited membership of the CD and consensus rules being used as a veto, the Security Council membership and procedures were criticized as not adequately reflecting today’s realities. Clearly, not only the disarmament work of the UN is facing challenges. With a changing world and new security threats it is obvious that we need to adapt the UN to today’s challenges. •

SIDE EVENT REPORT: THE NEW ZEALAND LECTURES ON DISARMAMENT

Nalinn Larsson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

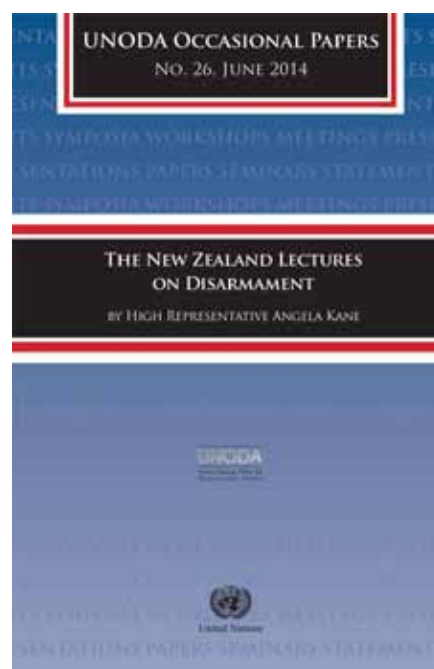
On Tuesday, 7 October 2014, the Permanent Mission of New Zealand to the UN hosted a side event discussing “The New Zealand Lectures on Disarmament”. These lectures were delivered by Angela Kane, the UN High Representative for Disarmament, earlier this year. During the discussion, panelists talked about the importance of nuclear disarmament, why it has been difficult to achieve, and what can be done to reach that goal.

Ms. Kane stressed that the world is over-armed, illustrated by the fact that last year’s global military spending reached US\$1.7 trillion, further stretching already limited resources. The High Representative offered two reasons for why disarmament has been so difficult to achieve, citing lack of political will and the disarmament “taboo,” through which some states view disarmament as an idealistic and utopian goal. She argued that this needs to change if concrete disarmament is to be achieved. Ms. Kane stressed that the step-by-step approach is not effective and that efforts must instead be put on every political level, as well as on transparency and accountability. Efforts towards disarmament must include civil society, diplomats, and states, but should also include more diverse groups.

Ambassador Courtenay Rattray of Jamaica highlighted three areas for positive action towards disarmament: Firstly, to re-commit to multilateralism in the field of disarmament in order to strengthen the disarmament standards and norms. Secondly, to focus on reconstituting disarmament, as only the General Assembly has achieved positive outcomes in recent years. And thirdly, there is a need for greater support for effective implementation of disarmament agreements, both nationally and regionally.

Ambassador Jorge Lomonaco Tonda of Mexico stressed the importance of fulfilling the obligations and commitments of the disarmament treaties and pursuing the process of verification. He pointed out that the rule of consensus was meant to be used as a last resource, not to be used every day as it has been by a handful of countries. The Ambassador continued by stressing that the NPT was meant to be a temporary solution towards nuclear disarmament, not something that only non-nuclear-armed states comply to, while nuclear-armed states do not.

In closing the discussion, Ambassador Desra Percaya of Indonesia stressed the importance of raising awareness about the need for nuclear disarmament and of moving beyond discussion to real action. •



Download from un.org/disarmament

SIDE EVENT REPORT: 2,000 NUCLEAR WEAPONS TO DE-ALERT: REDUCING OPERATIONAL READINESS ON THE WAY TO GLOBAL ZERO

Sampson Oppedisano | NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security

De-alerting, or reducing the number of nuclear weapons on “high alert status,” is seen by many states and civil society groups as an important effort to reduce the likelihood of potential accidents with nuclear weapons. In 2009, the General Assembly voted in favor of resolution A/RES/63/41, which sought to decrease the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems. However, minimal progress has been made. The mission of Switzerland, together with other governmental and civil society partners, organized a side event on this topic last week.

Currently some 2,000 nuclear weapons stand at “high alert,” meaning that within minutes they can be launched. However, the possibility of miscalculations, unintentional launches, and even potential cyber-terrorist attacks all currently pose great risk to weapons that stand ready to launch, as Ambassador Benno Laggner of Switzerland pointed out. De-alerting would insulate the chain of command from potential accidents. This concrete measure to minimize risk continues to be an interest expressed by the De-Alerting Group. Its members are Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, and Switzerland.

The recent military developments in Ukraine have yielded a “dangerous amount” of reported “military

miscalculations,” according to former British Secretary of Defense, Lord Des Browne. He stressed that the military is not immune to human error. Coupling these factors with the increased tensions and deteriorating trust between the United States and Russia, the two largest possessors of “high alert” weapons, only amplifies the chance for accidents.

Global Zero’s co-founder Bruce Blair drew attention to the emerging threat of cyber attacks in relation to the alert status of nuclear weapons. Citing a 1990s classified incident where exploitable “backdoors” were found in US naval missile launch boards, the possibility of other states or non-state actors gaining control of access to nuclear weapons via cyber attacks or through insider technical assistance only increases the odds of an incident occurring.

A very lively discussion ensued between staff members of the US state department and the panelists on the feasibility of de-alerting, its security implications, and possible obstacles. The debate was then summarized by Ambassador Dell Higgie of New Zealand. She highlighted the bigger context in which this very concrete measure could play a role and stressed that nuclear disarmament remains the overall goal. •



Photo by Tim Wright

SIDE EVENT REPORT: "EFFECTIVE MEASURES RELATING TO NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT: SOME INTERNATIONAL LEGAL ISSUES"—A DISCUSSION PAPER

Mia Gandenberger | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

On Friday, 10 October 2014, the New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations hosted a discussion of Professor Treasa Dunworth's paper on implementing article VI of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). This paper maps out some of the legal implications of the four different options explored in the New Agenda Coalition (NAC)'s working paper on this topic submitted to the Third Preparatory Committee of NPT in 2014.

The NAC's working paper begins by outlining the failure to implement the various outcome agreements of NPT Review Conferences, especially those relating to nuclear disarmament. It then discusses options of "'effective measures" that are envisaged and required by article VI of the Treaty," namely, a nuclear weapons convention, a ban treaty, a framework agreement, and a hybrid. In closing the NAC calls for all options to be discussed, examined, and tested; however, it does not express preference for on particular option.

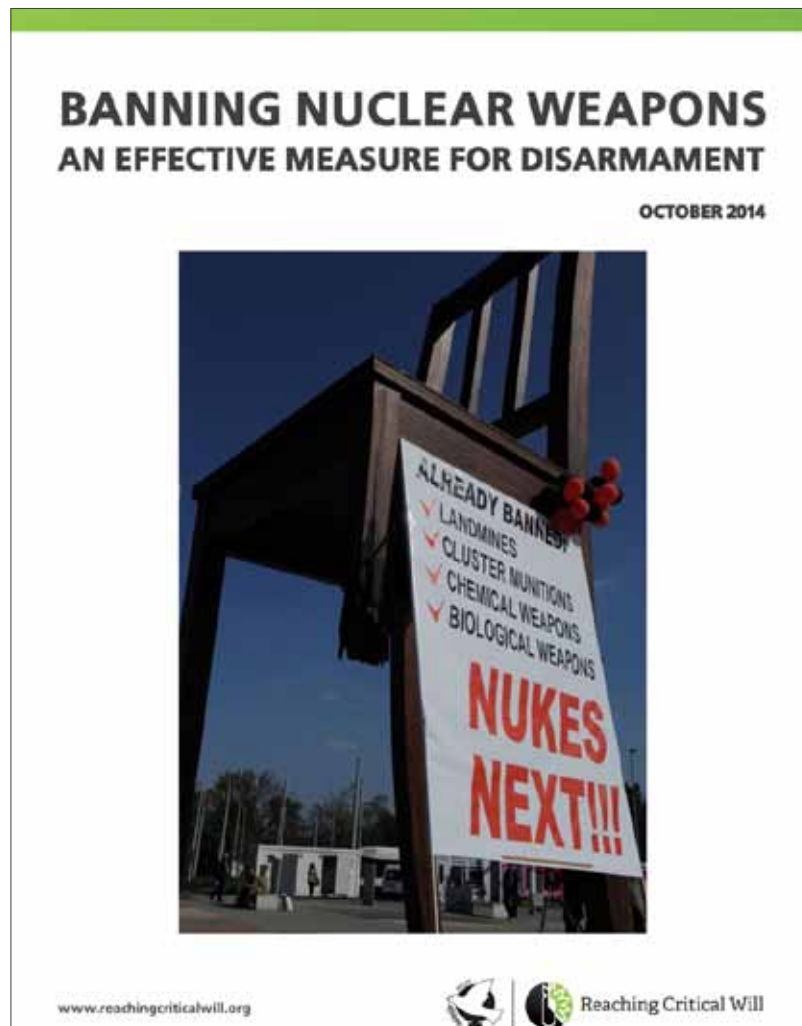
In her paper, Professor Dunworth explores the four different options, or pathways, from an international legal perspective and concludes that there is no legal impediment to exploring any of the options "even without" the nuclear-armed states. All the options would mean strengthening the norms against the use and (eventually) possession of nuclear weapons, which would contribute to "the growing impetus towards nuclear disarmament."

Friday's panel, chaired by Ambassador Dell Higgin of New Zealand, consisted of Ambassador Jorge Lomonaco of Mexico, Mr. Breifne O'Reilly, Director of the Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland, and Professor Dunworth. Ambassador Lomonaco shared his views of the paper, commenting on some of the legal implications. Mr. O'Reilly offered some background to the NAC paper and positioned both the NAC and Professor Dunworth's paper in the greater context of disarmament discussions. After this introduction, Professor Dunworth shared

her reflections on the papers and underscored the need for legal aspects to be taken into account in the discussions.

The ensuing question and answer session demonstrated the great interest of member states and civil society to make concrete progress on nuclear disarmament, in particular in finding actual "effective measures" to do so.

For an alternative assessment of the NAC paper please refer to Reaching Critical Will's most recent publication, *Banning nuclear weapons: an effective measure for disarmament*. This paper explores the options outlined in the NAC paper and provides an assessment of the benefits and challenges of each. •



FIRST COMMITTEE MONITOR

The *First Committee Monitor* is a collaborative NGO effort undertaken to make the work of the First Committee more transparent and accessible. The *Monitor* is coordinated and edited by **Reaching Critical Will** of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).

Contributing organisations and coalitions to this edition:

Control Arms
International Action Network on Small Arms
International Campaign to Ban Landmines-Cluster Munition Coalition
International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons
NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security
Reaching Critical Will of WILPF
WILPF Sweden

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