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

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Reaching Critical Will

EDITORIAL: THE CRUMBLING EDIFICE OF HYPERMILITARISED POWER

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

It's hard to say what adjective best describes the tenor of First Committee this year, but it might be rancour. The rights of reply were more voluminous, loud, and increasingly likely to descend into the absurd than ever before. The rhetoric against disarmament—the objective of this Committee and one of the primary principles of the United Nations—was more acute than ever, especially in the nuclear field. The animosity between certain states felt like it had reached a tipping point. Yet the bitter vitriol thrown about by some was tempered by the understanding of the majority that progress has been made in disarmament, precisely by forging ahead without the most quarrelsome states.

Some of the bitterness of certain delegations at First Committee may be thought to have been derived from this progress—in particular, the negotiation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). But as the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons said in its statement to the Committee on 10 October, “It is not the ban that divides us; nuclear weapons divide us.”

Not just nuclear weapons. Chemical weapons—regardless of who has used them—are divisive. Explosive weapons are divisive. Small arms. Landmines. Cluster bombs. The weapons themselves, regardless of who uses them, or where, or why, are divisive. Weapons kill people. Their use, production, and sale generate insecurity and inequality. They undermine sustainable development and sustainable peace.

It is disarmament that can bring us together. By reducing available means of violence. By eliminating a source of inequality between and within states. By freeing up resources for other endeavours.

The rhetoric against disarmament—that the time is not ripe, that the security situation is not safe, that the conditions are too unstable—is rhetoric against progress, against security, against unity, against survival.

Yet “divisiveness” is the main argument used by those standing against disarmament. Their argument is based on the premise that eliminating certain weapons is polarising and unsafe. But how can anything that reduces means of massive violence divide us? How can it make us more unsafe?

The Orwellian logic of the nuclear-armed states, and of those that continue to profit from selling conventional arms to states that use them to commit abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law,

is that violence is stability. In the world they have sought to create, the means to destroy each other is what will keep us together. In this world, those who work for peace, development, and security through the reduction and control of weapons are making the world more unstable and rife with tension.

This absurd logic has held its grip on the international imagination for far too long. But the edifice is crumbling. The development of the TPNW took down big pieces of the arguments in favour of nuclear weapons. The Sustainable Development Goals and the Women, Peace and Security agenda, even without saying much about weapons, pose an acute challenge to current levels of military spending and approaches to “peace and security” and “sustainable development”.

We can keep chipping away at the false logic of peace through violence. We should do so together, in the ways that have already led to much success. We should not let the embittered few, cantankerous from watching their control slip away, prevent us from forging ahead to build a better world for all.

The levels of hypermilitarised, hypermasculinised violence we see in the world must not deter us from pursuing an alternative path. On the contrary, it's our only option. Those who hold onto power through fear and intimidation will try to cling to the tools they perceive as granting them privilege in a complex world; the rest of us must find away through the cynicism that fosters to try something different. •

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NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Perhaps the key take away from this year's discussion on nuclear weapons at First Committee is that nuclear-armed states are as committed as ever to retaining their weapons of mass destruction despite their legal and political obligations to eliminate them. There was a serious doubling down on the rhetoric by most states possessing nuclear weapons, with France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and United States in particular espousing their "need" for these weapons for the indefinite future. The rewriting of previous commitments in draft resolution L.35, including those made in the context of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), also indicated a sharpening of their positions against disarmament.

On the other hand, the success of the negotiations of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) has clearly encouraged many delegations. This Treaty marks the first progress on nuclear disarmament in more than two decades, and has clearly demonstrated how governments, international organisations, and civil society can work collaboratively and creatively to make real change. Throughout the last five weeks, the majority of states participating in First Committee reiterated their support for this Treaty, and for all efforts to elaborate further effective measures for nuclear disarmament.

During the final week, delegates took action on three remaining nuclear weapon-related resolutions. In addition, some states delivered explanations of vote (EOVs) on resolutions that were adopted last week.

Israel and Syria delivered EOVs on **L.2, "Risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East,"** which was adopted and reported on last week. Israel reiterated its objection to this resolution, arguing that it is an attempt to focus only on one country and thus divert attention away from other proliferation risks in the region—including Syria's use of chemical weapons. Syria, on the other hand, supported the resolution, arguing that Israel is the real threat in the region, highlighting its possession of nuclear weapons and use of white phosphorus.

Japan delivered an EOV on **L.5, "Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons,"** which was adopted and reported on last week. Japan voted in favour of the resolution, but argued that recognition of the humanitarian impacts should serve as bridge builder not a dividing factor.

Argentina, China, Finland, Japan, and Iran delivered EOVs on **L.6, "Taking forward multilateral nuclear**

disarmament negotiations," which was adopted and reported on last week.

Argentina said it abstained because it has not yet concluded its internal review of the TPNW, to make sure it doesn't "conflict" with the NPT. Since it has not yet signed the Treaty, it does not want to endorse a resolution calling for its signing and ratification.

Finland said it shares the concerns of the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons and the TPNW, but a unified approach including the nuclear-armed states is needed.

Iran voted in favour of the resolution and of the adoption of the TPNW, but reiterated its belief that a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention is necessary to eliminate nuclear weapons.

China voted against L.6, arguing that the TPNW is flawed, in direct contradiction to the NPT, and does not reflect new international customary law.

Japan voted against L.6 because the approach of the TPNW is different than its own approach to nuclear disarmament.

Japan gave an EOV on **L.10/Rev.1, "Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons,"** which was adopted and reported on last week. It voted in favour to deepen discussions on a common approach, but argued hopes to break the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament.

China and Japan issued EOVs on **L.17, "Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world,"** which was adopted and reported on last week. China abstained on the resolution and voted against PP11, which welcomes the adoption of the TPNW. Japan abstained on the resolution, arguing that recognition of the humanitarian impacts should serve as bridge builder not a dividing factor.

L.18, "Nuclear disarmament," was adopted with a vote of 110-41-18. Separate votes were held on PP32 and OP16, which were adopted with votes of 114-37-11 and 159-1-6, respectively.

In a general statement, Cuba said this resolution is the most comprehensive in dealing with nuclear disarmament, and also recognises the TPNW.

The Arab Group voted in favour of the resolution because it supports all efforts to nuclear disarmament, but, as Myanmar is the lead sponsor of this resolution, the Arab Group highlighted that it condemns the policies of ethnic cleansing taking place there.

India said it shares the main objective of this resolution but abstained because of references to the TPNW and the NPT.

Pakistan said it shares the main objective of this resolution but abstained because of references to the TPNW and fissile materials cut-off treaty (FMCT), the last of which it reads as “non-proliferation centric”.

Japan said it abstained on L.18 because to implement concrete disarmament measures, states need to build a connection between those with and without nuclear weapons.

Japan delivered an EOV on **L.19, “Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments,”** which was adopted and reported on last week. It reiterated its position against the TPNW, and argued that OP22’s correlation between effective measures for nuclear disarmament and the TPNW is not clear.

Bangladesh, France, Indonesia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Liechtenstein, Netherlands, Peru, Philippines, Russia, and Thailand delivered EOVs on **L.35, “United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons,”** which was adopted and reported on last week.

Netherlands voted in favour of this resolution, but noted that article VI of the NPT is about eliminating nuclear arsenals and highlighted the importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and FMCT.

Philippines also voted in favour but did not cosponsor this year, emphasising that under the NPT states have the obligation to eliminate their nuclear weapons, and stressing that the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons are the gravest threat to humankind. It noted that this is what motivated the negotiation of the TPNW, which is the first instrument to delegitimise nuclear weapons.

Peru argued L.35 does not reflect progress made towards eliminating nuclear weapons, including the TPNW. It is also concerned that some changes weaken the commitment to nuclear disarmament.

Thailand voted in favour of L.35 but abstained on OP20 and OP21, which are not strong enough.

France welcomed the contribution of this resolution to fostering dialogue between nuclear-armed and non-nuclear-armed states, arguing that L.35 takes a “realistic” approach. It is concerned with the references to the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons, however, arguing this does not underpin efforts to disarmament because “nothing has changed” in this regard. For France, nuclear weapons are a “deterrent” and thus it objects to “an emotional, divisive” approach to disarmament.

Indonesia abstained on L.35, as it is concerned with changes that have omitted references to article VI of the NPT and agreed review conference outcomes, and that has watered down other language. It thinks this resolution sends a confusing signal about the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Malaysia, while appreciating Japan’s efforts to “bridge the divide” between nuclear-armed and non-nuclear-armed states, expressed concern with the “illusion” of the elimination of nuclear arsenals. It abstained on OP2, OP8, and OP21 because of the change in language in these paragraphs weakening previous undertakings.

Lao PDR voted in favour of L.35 but is concerned with the lack of reference to the TPNW, which it hopes will be corrected in the future.

Bangladesh voted in favour of the resolution but is concerned that OP2 deviates from previous agreements and with the lack of reference to the TPNW.

Russia voted against L.35, saying that while it sympathises with the civilian casualties of the US nuclear bombing it does not accept the resolution’s “rewriting” of WWII. However, it expressed support for some changes in the resolution, such as the links made between disarmament and the need to create safe international conditions. Russia said it does not understand “antinuclear activists,” asking what they see wrong with a resolution calling for the establishment of the necessary conditions for a nuclear free world.

Liechtenstein abstained on L.35 because it is concerned at the attempt to weaken political commitments with regards to the CTBT and NPT. It noted that OP2 is incompatible with previous NPT review conferences and does not accept this language as a new basis for discussion in the future. In addition, it worries that OP21 could be misinterpreted as a signal that the international community is no longer prioritizing the universalisation of the CTBT.

Russia delivered an EOV on **L.36, “International Day against Nuclear Tests,”** which was adopted and

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reported on last week. It joined consensus on the resolution but used its EOv to rail against the United States for not yet ratifying the CTBT.

Spain delivered an EOv on **L.37, "African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty,"** which was adopted and reported on last week. It reiterated its standard position that while it supports the zone, it has already taken all relevant measures to accord with the Treaty but does not support the language in OP5 that calls on states to undertake these measures.

Iran, Israel, and Syria delivered EOvs on **L.42, "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty,"** which was adopted and reported on last week.

Iran argued that modernisation undermines the CTBT and regrets that this resolution doesn't call on nuclear-armed states to refrain from such activities. Iran abstained on PP4 and disassociates from references to the UN Security Council resolution.

Israel voted in favour of the resolution but does not support PP7 and OP1 and noted that the regional situation is a big consideration for Israel when it comes to joining the CTBT.

Syria abstained on L.42, complaining that the Treaty does not include a commitment by nuclear-armed states to eliminate their arsenals or not to modernise them using other means of testing.

L.45/Rev.1, "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament," was adopted with a vote of 129-30-12. PP12, which notes the adoption of the TPNW, was adopted with a vote of 123-26-17.

In a general statement, Cuba highlighted the importance of this NAM initiative as an opportunity to take stock of progress and identify further measures to mobilise international efforts for nuclear disarmament. Also in a general statement, Pakistan said it supports the objectives of this resolution, but recalled that it does not support the TPNW.

In a joint EOv, Bulgaria, Greece, Iceland, Norway, and Portugal said they abstained on L.45/Rev.1 because the reference to NPT is only focused on one pillar. They said it is unclear if the proposed high-level conference would contradict the NPT. They also argued that the TPNW will not contribute to the elimination of nuclear weapons.

In a joint EOv, France, the United Kingdom, and United States argued that a high-level conference will not address the threats of nuclear proliferation and

noncompliance by some states, nor will it "create the conditions conducive to further disarmament." They argued the resolution's reference to the NPT is insufficient and objected to the convening of another conference "without consideration of NPT obligations".

Switzerland hopes the high-level meeting opens the way for broad and inclusive attendance that will help bring forward a common agenda without polarization.

On behalf of a large group of states, Netherlands said they support the long-term goal of the resolution and participated constructively in the 2013 high-level meeting, but regret that the proposals their states made there were not captured by this resolution. They are concerned about a lack of a clear reference to the NPT and do not believe the 2018 high-level conference sets the right tone.

Mexico delivered an EOv on **L.47, "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons,"** which was adopted and reported on last week. Mexico argued that while it voted in favour of this resolution, the TPNW is now an historic fact that can't be ignored and that is an option for all states, including nuclear-armed states.

Cuba, Iran, Israel, and Syria delivered EOvs on L.50, "Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices," which was adopted and reported on last week.

Cuba supported the resolution but is concerned by the expert group's exclusive nature and its operation outside of the Conference on Disarmament.

Iran argued that any FMCT must cover past, present, and future production of fissile materials, and provide for the verifiable declaration and elimination of much material. It abstained on this resolution because it is based on an outdated mandate.

Israel argued that the ability of the treaty proposed by this resolution to effectively address non-proliferation has yet to be established. It believes the FMCT is an attempt to establish a WMD free zone in the Middle East and thus abstained.

Syria abstained because the resolution does not mention stockpiles.

L.57, "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons," was adopted with a vote of 124-31-17. PP12, which welcomes the adoption of the TPNW, was adopted with a vote of 117-35-13.



OP2, which calls on all states to engage in multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, including under the TPNW, was adopted with a vote of 117-35-14.

In a general statement, Cuba highlighted the importance of this resolution's reaffirmation that the continued existence of nuclear weapons is a threat to humanity, that the only solution is their elimination, and that this obligation already exists.

In a joint EO, Sweden and Switzerland said they abstained on OP2 because the language "could be interpreted to mean that multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations in the general sense could be undertaken under the Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons." They explained, "It is our understanding that only negotiations on aspects directly relevant to its implementation should be undertaken under the prohibition treaty. The UN General Assembly has established processes and bodies for multilateral disarmament negotiations, including on nuclear disarmament, and that these decisions remain valid."

Canada said that while it is committed to nuclear disarmament the ICJ opinion is not international law and a resolution should not be used to try to enforce this opinion. While it shares the sentiment of the TPNW, it supports a "collaborative" approach, such as the FMCT.

India said it is disappointed with changes made to the resolution this year, such as the deletion of a reference to the early conclusion to a nuclear weapons convention. It also argued that the substantive objective of the resolution in OP2 is no longer clear.

Japan abstained on L.57 because of its reference to the TPNW and because of the "complexity" of the disarmament issue and need for "realistic" approaches.

L.58, "Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty)," was adopted without a vote. •

OTHER WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

Allison Pytlak | Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

The following article covers biological, chemical, and potential new weapons of mass destruction.

New weapons of mass destruction (WMD)

Resolution **L.9, "Prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons: report of the Conference on Disarmament,"** was adopted without a vote. This is a largely procedural resolution that is usually adopted by consensus.

Belarus provided a general statement to emphasise the potential dangers of new WMD being developed and deployed, given the rapid pace of scientific research and development, and including if used by non-state actors.

The US delegation issued a brief explanation of vote to say that it supports the resolution but believes that the international community should focus on the known WMDs. No new types are known to have appeared so this remains, in its view, a largely hypothetical resolution.

Biological weapons

L.49, "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriologi-

cal (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction," was adopted without a vote. Explanations were provided by Germany, Iran, and the United States and all pertained to the 2016 Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) and upcoming 2017 meeting of states parties.

Germany supported the resolution, but stressed that it and others had hoped for a more ambitious outcome from the Review Conference to send a stronger message. It hopes the upcoming meeting, in December, will have a different result. Similarly the US delegation stated it had accepted far less than it wanted at the Review Conference, in the name of consensus, and is concerned about the way the BTWC is going, including financially. Iran said it was not particularly satisfied with the wording of operative paragraphs (OP) 6, 7, and 10 but chose to not ask for a paragraph vote to avoid sending the wrong message to the upcoming meeting. It reiterated its view that the best way to improve the BTWC is to resume negotiations on additional elements—which had been a main point of contention at the 2016 meeting.

In an interesting contrast to chemical weapons, states spoke repeatedly during the First Committee about how they had accepted a watered down outcome document at the last BTWC review conference in the name of consensus; whereas the resolution on chemi-

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cal weapons has moved from one of consensus to one that is voted on in order to ensure it does not become irrelevant or too generic, which is something that caused complaint.

Chemical weapons

Resolution L.26/Rev.1, “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction,” was the final resolution adopted this year. It was postponed in order to allow states an opportunity to read the most recent report of the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) of the UN and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which was presented to the Security Council on 26 October and required additional time for translation. The JIM is investigating chemical weapons use in Syria.

L.26/Rev.1 references instances of use in Syria and elsewhere, but not exclusively, and is intended to provide more general support to and recognition of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Traditionally it has been adopted without a vote but that has changed from 2014 onward, with the inclusion of references to use in Syria as that evidence began to emerge. Certain states, as explained below, accused the sponsor, Poland, and resolution supporters of politicising what is meant to be a “neutral” resolution. Coming on the heels of the Russian Federation vetoing the extension of the JIM and its mandate—set to expire in mid-November—in the Security Council, it was obvious that Council dynamics were playing out in First Committee.

States voted on three paragraphs: preambular paragraph (PP) 4, OP2, and OP15. PP4 emphasises unequivocal support for the investigations in Syria; OP2 describes use of chemical weapons in Syria by both non-state groups and the government; and OP15 expresses grave concern that the OPCW Technical Secretariat cannot resolve gaps and inconsistencies, and therefore verify, Syria’s declaration to the Convention.

All of the paragraphs were retained by a large majority of “yes” votes.

A vote was taken on a proposal from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) to delete OP 3, which includes a reference to the chemical weapons incident in Malaysia that killed Kim Jong-nam, half brother to Kim Jong-un. The voting result saw only five states support it (Congo, Cote d’Ivoire, DPRK, Syria, and Vanuatu) and 116 voted against doing so, in a reverse-style vote in which “yes” meant supporting deletion, rather than supporting the paragraph.

The voting result for the resolution as a whole was 150-6-12.

Poland, lead sponsor on the resolution, took the floor repeatedly to defend its approach as many states, outlined below, criticised that this resolution no longer commands consensus and is now adopted by vote, indicating politicisation owing to its referencing use in specific contexts. Poland explained that in order for the resolution to have credibility and reflect the current status of the Convention, it’s necessary to include references to where it is being violated—which has not been an issue until recent years.

Many states provided explanations of vote, and statements related to this resolution were also embedded throughout the right-of-reply session. The Russian Federation also gave explanations of vote both before, and after, voting.

The United States, on behalf of a large group of countries, said that the resolution accurately reflects the goals of the CWC. The group of states believes that there is no greater challenge to the Convention than a state party using chemical weapons and that Syria must be held accountable for its actions. In addition, the events in both Syria and Malaysia indicate a need to preserve the viability of the CWC as any effort to ignore these issues undermines the work of the international community. These states support the extension of the JIM to continue its investigations, and the work of the OPCW. Montenegro spoke later to align itself with this statement. The US representative also remarked—perhaps informally—that it is continually astonished at the lengths that the Russian Federation will go to to defend Syria.

The Russian Federation delivered lengthy remarks. It felt that even since 2016, the resolution had worsened in terms of becoming a document that undermines the CWC and causing unnecessary confrontation. It was upset that the elimination of its chemical weapons arsenal had not be sufficiently recognised in the resolution, made worse by attention paid to the destruction of category 2 weapons by Libya, as the two events are on equal footing. The resolution enshrines a “false interpretation of events,” the Russian delegation said, and does not adequately reflect the situation of terrorism that the Syrian government faces, nor that the JIM has not investigated any of the “real” chemical attacks that took place. The Russian Federation criticized Poland as being closed to input to the draft resolution, and having stopped work on it two weeks before voting.

In its second explanation, the Russian Federation continued along similar themes, accusing the US and its



allies of seeking to remove the Syrian government so that the country will be more compliant to its interests in the region. Russia also argued that the Security Council is the appropriate body to consider these issues, and that the facts of the investigation are being distorted, noting that the research groups are lead by the UK (which was rebutted by the United Kingdom during its right-of-reply).

Cuba said it does not support the resolution and had appealed to the authors to return to a format that could be agreed by consensus. It felt the Syrian issue should be resolved outside of First Committee, and that Security Council documents should not be taken up in the Committee. Cuba also felt that the text disregards the cooperation of Syrian authorities with the processes of the Syrian national declaration during the JIM and the OPCW.

Saudi Arabia said it is concerned about the report of use of chemical weapons in Syria and re-affirmed the importance of taking a strict position against those who would use them.

Syria delivered a lengthy explanation of vote, in which it said it has fulfilled all of its obligations under the CWC and does not possess any chemical weapons. It noted that the US has invoked "all means" to delay eliminating its chemical arsenal, and accused others of providing toxic chemicals to non-state actors through neighbouring countries, such as Turkey. Syria affirmed that it has been willing to allow its airbases to be inspected and is cooperating with the OPCW. Syria feels that research of the JIM is flawed, arguing that it failed to take samples from key locations and relied on the accounts of terrorists, used open sources, and lacked professionalism.

Malaysia said the reference to the incident in the Malaysian airport is factually accurate and in line with its official statement. It said that Poland was open to engaging with states on the text of this resolution.

Iran explained it does not support the resolution because it has been highly politicised and serves only the "short sighted interests of some countries". It criticised the substance of the JIM report and related methodologies for not having interviewed a wide enough range of people and failing to complete an on-site inspection.

Egypt reiterated its support for the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction (WMD), noting that the establishing of a nuclear weapon free zone in the Middle East is a pre-condition for this. It noted that there is only one country that has not joined the three WMD conventions.

France thanked Poland for its efforts noting that this resolution becomes more difficult year after year with evidence of new use. These must be given full account in the resolution, and it will "not tolerate the deconstruction" of the CWC. France said that a priority should be dismantling the Syrian chemical weapons programme.

Ecuador abstained on PP4, OP2, and OP15 because it feels that the inclusion of these paragraphs politicises the resolution. It has respect for the experts of the Syrian fact-finding missions and the JIM, but First Committee does not have the mandate to respond or react to their findings.

Bangladesh voted in favour of PP4 and OP2 because they are factual, but abstained on OP15. It is concerned with the alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria and Malaysia and is mindful of the constraints in which the JIM has to work.

Lebanon abstained on the resolution as a whole despite supporting the OPCW and its firm belief in the need for international cooperation toward a world free of chemical weapons.

China said its proposals on OP2 and OP15 were not taken into account. It would like for the international community to take into greater account the abandoned chemical weapons that remain in China, left by Japan, and for this resolution to address that situation. China voted against the resolution.

Japan did not comment on China's statement and instead stated its support for the work of the OPCW and fairness of the JIM report.

India voted in favour of the resolution, stating that the use of chemical weapons cannot be justified and the perpetrators of such acts must be held accountable.

Venezuela abstained on the resolution, also citing concern about the inability of the resolution to command consensus and introducing divisive factors. It did condemn chemical weapons attack in Syria, and called for transparency in the related investigations.

DPRK voted against the resolution, denouncing the death of its citizen [in Malaysia] as a "political terror". It accused the United States of referencing the Malaysia incident in the resolution as a plot and hostile act.

Israel supported the resolution. It said that the most recent JIM report shows ISIS and the Syrian regime responsible for chemical attacks, constituting an on-going disregard for international norms, and that

the chemical weapons capabilities of Syria must be dismantled.

Nigeria abstained on OP2 and OP15 because it is concerned about the accusations made about the Syrian regime having used chemical weapons.

Viet Nam abstained on OP15. It felt the resolution should have recognised Syrian efforts toward eliminating its chemical weapons.

Algeria also would have hoped that the content of the resolution be more general in nature. It regrets that there is no reference to the Syrian elimination process and has found flaws in the process used by the JIM,

such as not visiting the site of the attacks, relying on the accounts of those who are injured and cannot verify their having been there at the time of the attack, and that there are double standards embedded in the Council's mandate to conduct this investigation.

Reaching Critical Will does not usually report on comments made during the right-of-reply. However, at the close of this session, there were statements made that seemed to flow from the explanations of vote, made by Syria, the UK, Poland, the US, and Turkey. This is worth noting because it demonstrates that this issue is an increasingly contentious one, and cannot—nor should not—be separated out from the political realities of chemical weapons use, in Syria or elsewhere. •

OUTER SPACE

Jessica West | Project Ploughshares

A cautious optimism marked the opening of debates on outer space at the First Committee this year, on the premise that new proposals are being advanced to overcome the long-standing stagnation of efforts to enhance global security and prevent the weaponisation of outer space. These include a new proposal by the Russian Federation and China to establish a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS), which has been stalled on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) for almost three decades. It also includes support from the sponsors of the now annual resolution on implementation of the 2013 GGE recommendations on Transparency and Confidence Building Measures (TCBMs) in outer space.

Unfortunately, that optimism has waned. Although many statements throughout this year's meetings pointed to the endangered nature of prevention efforts amid existing development of anti-satellite weapons (ASAT), the dual-use nature of anti-ballistic missile systems, and their potential deployment in outer space, divisions on a path forward remain unforgiving. These divisions revolve around two key issues: a focus on weapons in space versus the use of terrestrial-based ASATs; and negotiation of new, legally-binding measures in the CD versus the adoption of voluntary actions. Both are central to voting patterns on resolutions, which remain largely unchanged from last year.

L.53, "No first placement of weapons in outer space," was adopted with a vote of 122-4-48. In its explanation of vote (EOV), the United States noted the resolution's failure to define a weapon, and failure to address threats posed by terrestrial anti-satellite weapons. While European states abstained, Estonia echoed

these concerns on their behalf, indicating a preference to focus on behaviour in space, with reference to the failed attempt to establish a Code of Conduct. Voting 'yes,' India noted that such political commitments, while not substituting for legal measures, are a way to prevent weapons in outer space. But a joint EOV offered by Canada, Japan, and Australia called for measures that produce practical rather than political effects.

Voting results were similar for **L.54, "Further practical measures for prevention of an arms race in outer space,"** recorded as 121-5-45. Unlike resolutions of previous years calling on the CD to consider the draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects (PPWT) tabled by Russia and China in 2008 and 2014 under its PAROS mandate, L.54 calls for a GGE to be established to make recommendations on a new legal instrument for PAROS. However, a joint EOV by the US and the United Kingdom notes that this process is intended to remain tied to the existing draft PPWT, which proved divisive, with explanations of 'no' votes and abstentions referencing the lack of definition of a space weapon and subsequent inability for verification, and lack of concern with ASATs. The Russian Federation's EOV claimed once again that reference to the use of force de facto covers ASATs; it accused one state of blocking discussions, and called on European states in particular not to be constrained by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

Between these two stances, it is not clear how much is principle and how much is pretense. Ostensibly a GGE would provide an opportunity to discuss the missing

elements noted by detractors. For its part, it is not clear why the lead sponsors, the Russian Federation and China, tied this process to the PPWT, which raises well-known concerns, and continue to insist on working through the unworkable CD. The resolution was adopted, but given this context is not clear that a new GGE will be able to advance the process, particularly when practical measures from the far less ambitious GGE on TCBMs continue to prove elusive.

But there is positive news. The decades-standing resolution L.3, “**Prevention of an arms race in outer space**,” continues to have strong international support, with the US and Israel registering the only two

abstentions this year. In addition, resolution L.46, “**Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space**,” was adopted once again by consensus, with the United States, as well as Canada, Japan, and Australia indicating that implementation measures will be added to the agenda of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) in 2018. However the division over resolution L.53 indicates basic disagreement over what counts as a TCBM. If consensus on L.46 is based on agreement to disagree, then a shift in venue may not be sufficient. But if space is to remain secure and accessible for future generations, there is an obligation to at least try. •

CYBER

Allison Pytlak | Reaching Critical Will of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

Despite its increasing salience, cyber was not a hot topic issue at the First Committee in 2017. Resolution L.44, “Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security,” was adopted easily by a vote of 173-0-1. Ukraine was the one abstention, likely owing more to general opposition to Russian-led initiatives than to any substantive objection. The entirely procedural resolution will make cyber an agenda item at the 73rd General Assembly, in 2018.

Between now and then, states should create inclusive opportunities to discuss how to best pursue cyber, from an international security perspective, and within the UN. What came across clearly this year is that the majority of countries agree that this is an issue that must remain in the UN, and future entities addressing it need to be more open and accessible than in the past. What is also evident is that there is a body of decisions, information, and prior work from the Groups of Governmental Experts that have been meeting to discuss information and security technologies (ICTs) since 2004 that is not only relevant, but constitutes a solid foundation of future discussion. This body of work needs to be complemented by good examples from bilateral and regional confidence building measures and joint security policies.

There are also suggestions and ideas from independent experts, which could be useful in moving the agenda forward within the UN context. Quite a lot of states agree that international law and the UN Charter apply in cyber space—but not all, and this will become important depending on the degree to which states determine that decisions should be consensus-based, often a stumbling block in other fora. There

seems to be general support in protecting human rights and digital freedoms, although in practice some states that espouse this could do better, whether it be limiting the production and sale of intrusive and malicious technologies used against activists elsewhere, or employing them.

Resolution L.52/Rev.1, “Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament,” is not about cyber, but it is thematically related. It was adopted in the First Committee without a vote, which presumably means that steps will now be taken to institute the panel and research that it mandates, and this could be inclusive of cyber. India, the resolution’s sponsor provided a general statement in advance of voting and Iran issued an explanation of vote. •



CLUSTER MUNITIONS

Amelie Chayer | Cluster Munition Coalition

Resolution L.41 on the implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions was adopted with a vote of 134-2-36. The slight decrease in favourable votes compared with the 2016 UN General Assembly (UNGA) result can be explained by the absence of a number of delegations at the time of voting. The two votes against, from the Russian Federation and Zimbabwe, are similar to last year's.

The 36 abstentions mark a modest improvement on last year's 39 abstentions: both Nepal and Yemen voted in favour of resolution L.41 after abstaining at the UNGA in 2016. South Sudan, which abstained in 2016, did not vote on L.41 this year. No state changed from voting in favour to abstaining. Oddly, two states that have actually signed the Convention (but still have to ratify it) have consistently abstained on the resolution since it was first introduced in 2015—Cyprus and Uganda.

No less than 30 states not yet on board the Convention voted in favour of resolution L.41, thus demonstrating that they embrace the humanitarian aims of the Convention. This included Equatorial Guinea, which supported the resolution after being absent last year. Other supporters were recurrent ones and included four states that have used cluster munitions in the past: Ethiopia, Eritrea, Libya, and Thailand.

Singapore, which voted in favour, provided an explanation that mentioned its indefinite moratorium on exports of cluster munitions.

Twelve states that abstained explained their votes. Argentina said that while it supported the aim of eliminating cluster munitions, it disagreed with the lack of ambition reflected in the Convention's Article 21, a view that Brazil also shared.

Cyprus said its favourable vote was held back by its security situation. The Republic of Korea expressed sympathy for the aims of the Convention and noted that only cluster munition with self-deactivation mechanisms could be included in its acquisition plans. Myanmar referred to a lack of implementation capacity when explaining its abstention.

Iran did not want to lend its support to an instrument concluded outside the UN disarmament machinery. Estonia, Finland, Greece, Pakistan, Poland, and Romania said the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) was the appropriate forum to discuss cluster munitions.

The Cluster Munition Coalition notes that states that believe Article 21 contravenes the spirit of the Convention should join in the instrument and defend their interpretation of the text as full states parties, thus reinforcing a strong norm against the use of cluster munitions under any circumstances. It also notes that there have been no deliberations on cluster munitions at the CCW since 2011, when the rejection of a draft protocol on these weapons left the Convention on Cluster Munitions as the sole international instrument dedicated to ending the suffering they cause. •

LANDMINES

Amelie Chayer | International Campaign to Ban Landmines

Resolution L.40 on the implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty was adopted with a vote of 158-0-16, a result consistent with previous years. Fourteen states not yet party to the Mine Ban Treaty voted in favour of the resolution, thus making a commendable demonstration of support for the aim of ending the suffering caused by antipersonnel mines. The 16 states that abstained are all outside the Treaty. As per past practice, no one voted against.

The slight decrease in favourable votes can be explained by the absence of some delegations at the time of voting. In the last decade, between 160 and 168 states voted in favor of the UNGA resolution on the Mine Ban Treaty, in December.

Singapore, a state not party to the Treaty, explained its favourable vote on L.40 and stated its support for initiatives against the use of mines.

Nine states that abstained explained their votes. The Republic of Korea mentioned its financial support to demining and victim assistance. Morocco spoke about its de facto compliance with the main provisions of the Treaty. Myanmar noted the importance of working effectively to remove landmines.

Cuba said it shared the legitimate concern regarding the "irresponsible" use of mines. Libya and Egypt recalled their disappointment that the Mine Ban Treaty does not request user states to bear a special respon-



sibility to address the consequences of landmine use, and Egypt further shared its view that the Treaty lacks a balance between humanitarian concerns and military necessity. India explained its long-held position that CCW Protocol II meets its defence requirements. Iran stated its appreciation for the humanitarian objectives of the resolution but said the Mine Ban Treaty does not adequately take security concerns into consideration. Pakistan referred to the role of landmines in its defence strategy.

Resolution **L.15/Rev.1** on countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices (IEDs) was adopted by consensus, as in previous years, but all explanations of vote included some form of reluctance to embrace its full content. Seven states delivered explanations. Austria and Liechtenstein said that IEDs are “a loose and undefined weapons category,” and that the text of the resolution should better reflect the fact that many IEDs are antipersonnel mines covered by the regime of the Mine Ban Treaty.

Cuba said its support for the resolution as a whole did not imply acceptance of its entire content. It offered

detailed input on many aspects of the text, such as the importance of limiting the duplication of structures and reports.

Pakistan supported the goal of addressing the impact of IEDs and recalled that some issues addressed in the resolution can be covered in existing fora. Iran stated its support for measures aimed at countering the threat posed by IEDs and noted the difficulty posed by the fact that materials used for their production are also used for acceptable civilian purposes.

Egypt noted that the vast scope of PP 12—covering matters such as good governance, human rights, the rule of law and socio-economic growth—tackled “a web of issues” beyond the scope of the resolution.

Switzerland, along with Austria and Liechtenstein, recalled that the International Mine Action Standards remain the accepted international guidelines for mine action. Switzerland further noted that any measures taken to implement the resolution must comply with the Charter of the United Nations, applicable international humanitarian law, and human rights law. •

EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS IN POPULATED AREAS

Laura Boillot | International Network on Explosive Weapons

Several states raised concern over the humanitarian harm caused by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas at First Committee. These included: Austria, Botswana, Canada, Germany, Guatemala, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, San Marino, and Switzerland, as well as the European Union and the Nordic states. It was also raised as a key issue of concern by the UN High Level Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW).

States drew attention to the disproportionate impact that the use of explosive weapons in populated areas has on civilians, with 92% of the casualties on average being civilian. Beyond deaths and injuries, which amounted to around 32,000 civilians last year, this practice causes psycho-social harm and trauma, and drives people to flee from towns and cities where these weapons are being used. Commenting states also placed significant emphasis on the humanitarian consequences that result from the damage and destruction to the built environment, including residential property, and critical infrastructure including hospitals, schools, water, sanitation, and power supplies.

INEW, the ICRC, and some states drew particular attention explosive weapons with wide area effects (which are due to warheads with a large blast and fragmentation radius, inaccuracy, and/or those which scatter explosives over a wide area) and problems arising from their use in civilian populated areas such as towns and cities. States and other parties to conflict have been advised by the UN Secretary-General and the ICRC to avoid the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas. Such weapons include: air-delivered bombs, artillery projectiles, missiles and rockets, mortar bombs, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

The UN High Level Representative for Disarmament Affairs, some states, and civil society also reiterated the calls of the UN Secretary-General—past and present—to develop an international political declaration as a tool to address harm from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, and the urgency of getting to work on this instrument.

On the margins of the First Committee, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs launched its Compilation of military policy and practice: Reducing the humanitarian impact of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, which highlights ex-

continued on next page

amples by militaries to provide better protection to civilians in armed conflict.

Whilst there were no resolutions relating to the use of explosive weapons in populated areas more broadly, states adopted by consensus a resolution on “Countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices” (A/C.1/72/L.15/Rev.1), a type of explosive weapon.

Austria and Lichtenstein, reminded states that some IEDs are anti-personnel mines as defined and prohibited by the Mine Ban Treaty, and should be addressed accordingly. This resolution, and a version of it from 2016, has also been subject to criticism for its focus on the users of these weapons and related security concerns, more so than the effects of these weapons and the humanitarian impacts they pose to civilians. •

ARMED DRONES

Elizabeth Minor | Article 36

At First Committee this year, seven states raised armed drones in their interventions: Lebanon and Portugal during the general debate; Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, and Ireland during the conventional weapons debate; and Pakistan during the “other disarmament issues” segment. All these states, apart from Cuba, raised drones in their statements during First Committee in 2016. In 2016 ten states raised this issue at First Committee, with similar levels of engagement seen in 2015. No resolutions dealing with drones were proposed this year.

The civil society joint statement on armed drones to First Committee this year was endorsed by 46 organisations from 17 countries, marking an increase in endorsements and diversity of organisations on last year, and representing the broad range interest in this issue amongst NGOs and others. Two side events were held on drones this year, attracting considerable interest from civil society and states. Germany and the Netherlands sponsored one of the discussions, which featured preliminary findings and recommendations from a study by UNIDIR of international ways forward on this issue.

In terms of the concerns states raised with respect to drones this year, on the issue of humanitarian harm Lebanon noted humanitarian concerns, with Portugal highlighting the need to protect civilians and human rights. Cuba also drew attention to civilian casualties from the use of drones, and Pakistan noted opposition from the UN Human Rights Council and human rights advocates to extrajudicial killings through the “targeting of civilians through ‘signature strikes’” using drones.

On legal concerns, Ireland highlighted that drones must be used in accordance with international law, including human rights law. Pakistan stated that the “trans-border unauthorised use of armed drones outside of international armed conflict” violates international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, as well as the UN Charter. Costa

Rica also noted a lack of transparency and accountability around the use of drones. Pakistan highlighted that non-state actors’ acquisition of drones represented a threat.

In terms of next steps, Costa Rica called for action on this issue, with Portugal suggesting that new laws or frameworks may be needed, and encouraging increased transparency. Pakistan called for international regulations to be developed on the use of drones, with Cuba also making a call for regulation. Ecuador and Ireland welcomed continued debate and discussion on the issue of drones, with Ireland highlighting that this should take place in all relevant forums, including those dealing with human rights.

Outside the First Committee room, a US-led process to develop standards on the export and subsequent use of armed drones continued, with a meeting of a group of states involved reportedly held in Vienna towards the end of October. The US also made a proposal at the meetings of the Missile Technology Control Regime in October to loosen the restrictions placed on the export of armed drones by this framework. Neither of these on-going developments attracted comment from states during First Committee, though civil society organisations raised concerns about the weakness and risks of the US-led process in their joint statement. If the concerns raised by armed drones are to be addressed through international action, greater engagement and debate will be needed. •

SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Rose Welsch | International Action Network on Small Arms

Discussions on small arms and light weapons (SALW) at this year's First Committee built on positive outcomes from the sixth Biennial Meeting of States in 2016 of the UN Programme of Action (UNPoA)—most significantly in building linkages between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and gender to the UNPoA.

Many states referred to the SDGs in their statements, with several highlighting the importance of Target 16.4, which aims to significantly reduce illicit arms and financial flows by 2030. Resolution L.56, "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects," was passed by consensus again this year. It includes a new paragraph underlining the importance of implementing the UNPoA and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) to achieve SDG 16 and its Target 4. In addition to SDG 16, some states highlighted SDG Target 5.2, which commits to ending all forms of violence against all women and girls. Linking the universally supported agenda of the SDGs to the UNPoA, an instrument that was also agreed by consensus, can help strengthen the implementation of both instruments. Since armed violence has long hindered countries' development around the world, the linkage may also help to encourage more states to include funding for arms control efforts in their development budgets.

In the final week, states took action on several resolutions related to SALW.

L.21, "Assistance to states for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them," was adopted without a vote again this year, with technical updates from last year's version of the resolution.

L.43, "Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus," was also adopted without a vote again this year. It had several updates from last year's version of the resolution, including a recommendation that the Secretary-General establish a group of governmental experts dealing with surplus ammunition (see 2017 First Committee Monitor Issue 4, pages 14–15 for additional details). Cuba and Pakistan issued explanations of votes on this resolution.

In its explanation of vote, Cuba expressed concern about this resolution, and made the point that the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is not universally accepted. It also pointed out that convening the type of expert group referred to in the resolution should be the exception rather than the rule. Pakistan said that the

countries with the largest militaries also have the largest stockpiles of conventional weapons, and said that this proposal could be accompanied by complementary measures at regional and sub-regional levels.

This year, states also made numerous references to women and gender in their statements. Canada dedicated its entire statement to gender issues this year—addressing topics such as narratives of masculinity, violence against women and girls (including domestic violence), the burden on women of caring for survivors of SALW, and the need for meaningful inclusion of women as full partners in security, disarmament, and arms control. Canada was joined by 42 other states in a new statement on gender and disarmament machinery, which recommended that all disarmament instruments include gender perspectives.

States also discussed international assistance and cooperation this year, with increased emphasis on the sustainability of assistance in discussions at First Committee as well as in side events and related symposia. This reflects a growing awareness that arms control efforts can falter if funding for programmes is inadequate or is reduced before they have a chance to produce results. This recognition of the need for sustainability was also apparent in **L.56/Rev 1, "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects,"** which included a new sentence ("While mindful of the need to ensure the adequacy, effectiveness, and sustainability of international cooperation and assistance") in a paragraph that emphasises that international cooperation and assistance remains essential to the effective implementation of the UNPoA and the ITI.

Many countries stated that they are looking forward to the Third Review Conference (RevCon3) of the UNPoA, which will be held in June 2018 and presided over by France. Based on this year's First Committee discussions and the outcome of BMS6, it is likely that gender, the SDGs, and international assistance and cooperation will be key issues at the conference. France is still holding consultations to receive input from states and civil society, and will not release a zero draft outcome document until January 2018. Ammunition, emerging technologies, terrorism, and crime may also be areas of focus for RevCon3. The 2012 Review Conference, as well as the one before it in 2006, did not lead to any substantive changes in the UNPoA. Enthusiasm for RevCon3, expressed not only by states but also civil society during First Committee may help to finally break that pattern and produce meaningful progress. •

INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRADE

Raluca Muresan | Control Arms

During the final week of First Committee, states took action on resolutions that addressed the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

L.27, “The Arms Trade Treaty,” seeks to strengthen the linkages between the ATT and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and welcomes progress towards universalisation as essential to achieving the Treaty’s object and purpose. The ATT resolution, introduced by Japan as the president-designate of the fourth Conference of States Parties to take place in 2018, also welcomes decisions taken by the third CSP earlier this year, particularly the establishment of the standing working groups on implementation, transparency and reporting, and universalisation. Seeking to further consolidate the Treaty’s institutional framework, L.27 calls upon states that have not done so already, to address their financial obligations under the ATT. The resolution also welcomes the successful operationalisation of the Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF), encouraging eligible states to make best use of the Fund and that states that are able to, should contribute to the VTF.

L.27 was adopted with 144 votes in favour, 0 votes against, and 29 abstentions. Positively, the resolution was co-sponsored by 91 member states, with Haiti, Kazakhstan, Chile, St. Kitts and Nevis, Maldives, and Guinea all having done so for the first time this year. There have also been a few significant changes in voting patterns this year. Most notably, Equatorial Guinea changed from an abstention to a yes vote, while the United States, a signatory to the ATT, abstained from voting on the resolution this year.

Many of the states that abstained from voting on the resolution, including Cuba, Armenia, Egypt, and Venezuela cited the lack of balance in the Treaty and the lack of consensus when the ATT was adopted. Armenia, Egypt, and Iran also stressed that they are disassociating themselves from all paragraphs on all resolutions which make reference to the ATT. Disap-

pointingly, the United States, which abstained from voting on the ATT resolution for the first time since the Treaty’s adoption, explained that it is “conducting standard reviews of various international agreements, including the Arms Trade Treaty, and as such [is] not in a position to vote yes.” Although the United States said that it would continue to support efforts to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms and prevent their diversion, this change in voting is a worrying sign regarding its continued engagement with the ATT under the current administration.

There were six other resolutions adopted at the First Committee, without a vote, that include references to the ATT. Similar to last year, both L.21, “Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them” and L.56/Rev.1, “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects” welcome the inclusion of small arms and light weapons in the scope of the ATT. L.20, “Regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa,” encourages states to provide assistance to those members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa that have ratified the Arms Trade Treaty, and encourages those that have not yet joined it to do so. Notably L.43, “Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus,” welcomes the ATT’s provision on establishing and maintaining a national control system to regulate the export of relevant ammunition and munitions. Resolutions L.48, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific,” and L.39, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa,” highlight the work of the two respective regional centres, noting their important work toward building national and regional capacity, and providing technical assistance for the implementation of the ATT. •

GENDER

Madison Goodliffe | Reaching Critical Will of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

Gender has been a prominent and growing topic throughout the discussions of First Committee. Although there were no draft resolutions on this topic this year, many national and group statements emphasised the need for women to be better recognised as a prominent force in disarmament globally. Some

also recognised the role that socialised gendered norms play in perspectives on weapons and disarmament.

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Ghana, Ireland, and Canada, among others, had strong state-



ments emphasising gender equality and inclusivity throughout First Committee. Ireland explained that the imbalanced nature of the First Committee, in terms of gender, has hindered the success of disarmament discussions. It suggested that states should ask themselves what can be done to resolve this issue, and identify what steps the international community will take to promote equality within disarmament forums. Ghana explained the essential role of women in addressing small arms and light weapons (SALW), calling on states to bring this topic to the forefront of discussions. Canada, on behalf of 42 other countries, stressed the need for balanced representation saying, “We also commit to work towards having a balanced representation of men and women in the disarmament machinery, and to making gender perspectives an everyday part of its discussions and documents, so that, what started as a norm, becomes just—the normal.” CARICOM strongly encouraged states to renew efforts in fulfilling obligations under related international frameworks and welcomed UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security as well as its follow-up resolutions. The 17th anniversary of the resolution was celebrated with an Open Debate in October that brought many women who engage in security issues at national and local levels to New York;

regrettably there was little recognition of this anniversary within First Committee.

Apart from growing calls to increase women’s participation and leadership in disarmament were statements highlighting the disproportionate impact of several weapons types on women. This includes conventional arms, nuclear weapons, the effects of the illicit transfer of SALW, as well as the violence connected with this, and the differing consequences of armed violence on men and women both during and after conflict. These references have been outlined in earlier editions of the 2017 First Committee Monitor.

The biennial resolution first introduced by Trinidad and Tobago, Women, Disarmament, Non-proliferation and Arms Control and adopted in 2016 for a fifth time, was not tabled this year but likely will be in 2018. This can open the door for increased conversation and awareness on the relationship between gender and disarmament. A gender inclusive approach in all aspects of disarmament is essential in order to fully understand the current realities of security challenges and incorporate the necessary and appropriate steps toward global disarmament. •

DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Kathryn Balitsos | Pace University

During this year’s First Committee discussions, many states highlighted the connections between disarmament and development, most often in association with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), small arms and light weapons (SALW), military expenditure, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), and landmines.

The Arab Group, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Australia, Paraguay, Cuba, Ireland, South Africa, Lao PDR, Trinidad and Tobago, Spain, Ghana, Guinea, Togo, Turkey, Cambodia, Mali, and Brazil referenced the SDGs in statements delivered at the First Committee, across the various clusters. SDG 16 was noted most often, with Target 16.4 mentioned in numerous statements. SDG 18 is an additional goal on clearance of unexploded ordnance (UXOs) that the Lao People’s Democratic Republic has established for itself.

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), African Group, Arab Group, Pakistan, Cuba, China, Paraguay, and Iran acknowledged that there are high levels of military expenditures. China was the only P-5 member to acknowledge high levels of military spending. Iran, Cuba, and the Arab Group mentioned military ex-

penditures in multiple statements. Iran announced it has decreased its military spending by seven per cent and called out the rise in military expenditures in the Middle East, which rose by 19 per cent.

In the final week, states took action on resolutions that touched on this topic.

L.30, “Relationship between disarmament and development,” focused solely on the role disarmament has in development, while resolutions **L.15/Rev.1, “Countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices,”** and **L.27, “The Arms Trade Treaty,”** also acknowledged the connection. L.30 was adopted without a vote, as it usually is. In its explanation of vote, the United States said that disarmament and development are two distinct issues and thus it would associate with the adoption of the resolution. In a joint explanation of vote, the United Kingdom and France questioned the symbiotic relationship between disarmament and development and noted that there is not an automatic link between the two, although they said they would support the resolution. Compared to 2016, these EOVs did not change greatly. •

SIDE EVENT: JAPAN AND THE BAN TREATY

Christian N. Ciobanu | Global Security Institute

On 26 October, in collaboration with New York University's (NYU) Japan Cultural Association, Global Security Institute (GSI), Peace Boat, PEAC Institute, Peace Action, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, Gensui-kyo, and Ban All Nukes Generation organised a public event entitled "Japan and the Ban Treaty" at NYU. Ms. Emilie McGlone, US Director of Peace Boat and Mr. Steve Leeper, Vice President of PEAC Institute addressed young students as well as activists about various international efforts to promote the Ban Treaty and the situation in Japan. Mr. Christian N. Ciobanu, Senior Associate at GSI, moderated the event.

Ms. McGlone highlighted that since 2008 Peace Boat has invited hibakusha (atomic bomb survivors) of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to participate in the Global Voyage for a Nuclear-Free World: Peace Boat Hibakusha Project. As of 2016, over 170 hibakusha have travelled around the world giving personal testimonies about the effects of the atomic bombs and calling for nuclear abolition. The messages from Hiroshima and Nagasaki have the potential to deeply move people around the world who are affected by war, violence, poverty, and environmental issues. She concluded her remarks by sharing Peace Boat's press release in which it praised the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) for receiving the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize.

During Mr. Leeper's presentation, he stated that, "Everybody in the UN agrees that we must work towards disarmament." Yet as he pointed out there are stark differences amongst states on how to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, especially between progressive states and those that rely on US extended deterrence policy. For instance, Japan relies heavily on this policy, and by extension, is therefore influenced by the US position on nuclear disarmament, despite

Japan's history and experience as a victim of nuclear arms. He also described the problems with the belief that mentioned that nuclear weapons are weapons that kill masses of people to "protect" us in which one would rather die than lose to its enemy. "This mindset is our greatest enemy. We have to learn to cooperate deeply, and intimately, enough, to preserve our ecosystems."

Mr. Leeper further informed the audience about the significant news that Ms. Setsuko Thurlow, a prominent hibakusha, will co-accept the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize with Ms. Beatrice Fihn, the executive director of ICAN. Specifically, he elaborated that this decision has accelerated the momentum towards raising public conscience about nuclear weapons and the necessity for states to support the ban treaty. He underscored that it will simply no longer be possible for certain states to silence the voices of the hibakusha because the entire world will hear the hibakusha's voice on 10 December.

Afterwards, the speakers engaged in a substantive discussion with the audience about the importance of creating grassroots movements. Mr. Leeper emphasised that Japanese people must change their country's perspective. He further mentioned that while the nuclear-armed states have rigid stances on nuclear deterrence, Japan has tremendous leverage to lead the world to nuclear disarmament. Ms. McGlone shared that other states must also implement strategies to pressure nuclear-armed states in order to support broader international nuclear disarmament measures.

All speakers and the moderator stressed the importance for youth to become involved in the nuclear disarmament movement. •

Steve Leeper speaks at the "Japan and the ban treaty" side event





CAMPAIGN TO **STOP** KILLER ROBOTS

SIDE EVENT BRIEFING

Rationale for Banning Fully Autonomous Weapons

Monday, 13 November 2017
13:15-14:45

Conference Room XXVII
United Nations Geneva

Introductory Remarks

- Prof. Toby Walsh, [University of New South Wales](#)

Speakers

- Prof. Denise Garcia, [International Committee for Robot Arms Control](#)
- Mr. Daan Kayser, [PAX](#)
- Ms. Ara Marcen Naval, [Amnesty International](#)
- Mr. Richard Moyes, [Article 36](#)

Moderator

- Ms. Mary Wareham, [Campaign to Stop Killer Robots](#)

The [Campaign to Stop Killer Robots](#) works to preemptively ban weapons systems that would select targets and use force without meaningful human control. At this briefing for delegates to the first meeting of the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) Group of Governmental Experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems, campaign members will present new publications, as follows:

- [Article 36](#) on how new international law managing the development of autonomy in critical functions of weapon systems could guide states to fulfil their obligation to conduct weapons reviews;
- [International Committee for Robot Arms Control](#) on the security implications of weapons systems that would lack meaningful human control;
- [PAX](#) on the positions of European states and need for meaningful human control of weapons systems;
- [Amnesty International](#) on the human rights imperative of banning fully weapons systems in all circumstances.

For more information see www.stopkillerrobots.org or contact:

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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 compiled, edited, and coordinated by Reaching Critical Will, the disarmament programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).

Contributing organisations and campaigns to this edition:

Article 36
Cluster Munition Coalition
Control Arms
International Action Network on Small Arms
International Campaign to Ban Landmines
International Network on Explosive Weapons
Pace University
Project Ploughshares
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

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Reaching Critical Will