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LIAR, LIAR, PEOPLE ON FIRE

Ray Acheson | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

With two and a half days lost to debates over visa restrictions imposed by the UN host country against certain delegations, the First Committee bureau was compelled to impose strict time limits on statements during the third week of work. Delegates raced through the thematic debates on nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and conventional weapons, but were still able to paint a starkly clear picture of the key challenges that weapons pose for human security—and of the demarcations between those governments who seek to end, mitigate, or ignore these challenges.

During the nuclear weapon debate, we saw the nuclear-armed states defend the “necessity” of their arsenals. The United Kingdom, for example, argued that its “independent nuclear deterrent remains essential to our security today, and will do for as long as the global security situation demands.” It, along with the United States, France, Israel, and the Czech Republic, rejected the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Most nuclear-supportive countries, which include nuclear weapons in their collective security policy, did not refer to the Treaty directly, though most reiterated their commitment to the “step-by-step” approach to nuclear disarmament as a tacit dismissal of the TPNW. Finland, for example, said that “achieving nuclear zero requires serious negotiations” and that it “supports serious endeavours in nuclear disarmament.”

Meanwhile the vast majority of other states participating in the debate emphasised their alarm about the serious catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences of nuclear weapons. “Nuclear weapons by their very existence pose a potent threat and subject the world to needless fear and anxiety,” said Samoa, which has suffered “the emotional scars of terror and mistrust from real-life experiences of nuclear testing.” Recognising that the continued existence of nuclear weapons is fueled by the desire of certain states “to achieve a competitive edge over others at whatever cost,” Samoa pointed

out how this has undermined united global action on climate change, peace, and prosperity. The Caribbean Community similarly said its fears about nuclear weapons are increasing due to “the obvious trend towards abandoning longstanding principles that have guided the international community’s approach to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.” Switzerland reiterated its similar concern and appealed for the preservation of the rules-based nuclear order. “Precisely when the situation is demanding, the stakes rise for arms control, and we must together standup against a new and dangerous arms race,” said the Swiss representative.

This divide between those who seek to collective well-being of people and planet and those who seek to gain or preserve a sense of military might was also clear during the debates about other WMD and conventional weapons. Virtually all participating states condemned the recent uses of chemical weapons as an abrogation of a vital international norm, as immoral, repugnant, and unacceptable. The majority supported the work of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in investigating this use and identifying perpetrators in order to hold them accountable. Yet a handful of states insist this process has been politicised and that the OPCW should not engage in these types of activities. While assessing the activities and findings of the OPCW or other mechanisms is well beyond the scope of this publication, the key point here is the problematic double standards employed on all sides: many of those governments insisting on accountability for chemical weapon use defend the possession, threat of use, and, based on security doctrines, the use of nuclear weapons. Meanwhile, some of those governments complaining about investigation and attribution simultaneously insist on such accountability from the nuclear-armed states.

Meanwhile, the use of explosive weapons in populated areas has been shown time and again to primarily result in civilian death and injury and

the destruction of homes, schools, hospitals, and markets. Ireland delivered a statement on behalf of 71 governments expressing grave concern with the “humanitarian impact resulting from the way active hostilities are conducted in populated areas and in particular by the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects.” These states called for full compliance with international humanitarian law and argued that such compliance could be strengthened through the development of a political declaration and other measures. On the other hand, the US delegation argued that efforts “to ban or stigmatize the use of explosive weapons is impractical and counterproductive,” arguing that it could “encourage bad actors to use human shields and to hide in urban areas.”

Stopping the use of explosive weapons in populated areas is not about letting “bad actors” get away with something. The illegal actions of some parties to conflict cannot justify illegal actions by others. But there are profits to be made from allowing the continued use of explosive weapons in populated areas: arms producers and exporters gain financially from supplying and resupplying those that are bombing and shelling towns and cities with bombs and other heavy weapons and munitions. The motivations of those seeking to prevent humanitarian crises and those seeking to profit from them comes further into view.

Not surprisingly, the division between those who seek profits from weapons and war and those who seek to prioritise the protection of human beings was clear also in discussions about the development of new technologies of violence. In regards to fully autonomous weapons, for example, Poland argued that the application of artificial intelligence to weapons is inevitable, while the US argued this will “improve” protection of civilians. Russia said no regulation of this type of weapon is necessary and that “humanitarian issues” should not lead to the imposition of restrictions. On the other hand, other countries such as Austria and Kazakhstan argued that the weaponisation of artificial intelligence poses dangerous risks and challenges. Austria articulated the position of many governments in arguing, “It is

a legal, ethical and moral imperative that humans must remain in control of armed conflict and the weapons that are deployed and used.” This is why the members of the Non-Aligned Movement and other governments support a legally-binding approach to the autonomous weapon issue.

The examples of these opposing approaches to disarmament, arms control, and security are endless. And while a handful of delegates have consistently blocked the development or undermined the universalisation of multilateral treaty-based regulations and prohibitions on weapons, now we are also seeing the systematic dismantlement of bilateral treaties over which those same states have control. “The disarmament architecture has become weak with the rise of a new arms race and the bending of the international rules-based system to fit only a few States’ competitive agenda for power and control,” warned Samoa. The answer for those opposed to this is to keep forging ahead with the development of rules and systems that protect humanity and our planet.

One of the best things about the conventional weapons debate is witnessing the increasing normalisation of the Mine Ban Treaty. It too was once treated as illegitimate, naïve, and unimportant. Now, the vast majority of countries—including non-states parties—pay respect to the Treaty’s efforts to eliminate the scourge of landmine and provide for victim assistance. While not yet universal and while implementation challenges remain, the turn towards humanitarian mine action and away from the profits of production of these heinous weapons is something we can all celebrate and view as a clear signal of how the majority can continue to make progress in disarmament despite the odds stacked against us. This is especially important as we listen to the so-called military powers call each other liars and bullies in repeated right of replies. People are dying and the rest of us have an obligation to act with urgency and determination.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Ray Acheson and Katrin Geyer | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Throughout the thematic cluster of nuclear weapons, most states expressed their deep concern at the imminent and growing threat of the continued existence of these weapons. Egypt observed that the rising level of tensions, coupled with the rapid technological advances, renders the risk of intentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons to one of the highest levels of since the Cold War. Finland said that in an increasing tense security climate, “escalations can happen very fast.” Senegal observed that continued disagreements around major nuclear weapons instruments, as well as the recent death of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) are “killing the few glimmers of hope,” which is compounded by the “chronic paralysis” of conference mechanisms. Ireland observed that, “a combination of irresponsible rhetoric on the use of nuclear weapons; the ongoing qualitative arms race to modernise nuclear arsenals; the deterioration of trust, and the progressive erosion of disarmament agreements” has exacerbated risks and given way to a new nuclear arms race. Against this backdrop, Nepal urged “for disenchantment with the Faustian bargain that is plaguing humanity.”

The vast majority of states, including the African Group, European Union (EU), Mexico, Egypt, Nepal, Nigeria, Italy, Iran, Eswatini, Malawi, Ecuador, Peru, Sweden, Austria, Ghana, New Zealand, Ireland, Portugal, the Holy See, and Switzerland expressed their deep concern at the humanitarian and environmental consequences if a nuclear weapon was to be used. Ecuador reminded that not even the most powerful countries would be able to withstand the devastating consequences. Similarly, El Salvador reminded that no country or organisation could assume the serious consequences of nuclear weapons. Samoa recounted its “emotional scars” from the experiences of nuclear testing.

In light of these deep humanitarian concerns, Samoa described the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) as the “silver lining” to the current situation. Ghana observed that the Treaty has “revived the disarmament debate and provided clear political justification for the prevention of the devastating humanitarian consequences of such weapons.” The Arab Group said that the Treaty has established an international base for the prohibition of nuclear weapons, which puts nuclear weapons on an equal footing with other weapons of mass destruction (WMD) that are prohibited in line with basic rules of international humanitarian law (IHL). The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the Arab Group, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Samoa, Nepal, Austria, Ghana, Eswatini, the Holy See, El Salvador, and Malaysia, amongst others, said that it complements existing efforts under non-proliferation and disarmament regimes.

The New Agenda Coalition (NAC), Samoa, ASEAN, Algeria, Peru, Malawi, Brazil, Eswatini, Malaysia, Ecuador, Nigeria, Kazakhstan, Africa, Thailand, El Salvador, the Philippines, the African Group, the Maldives, New Zealand, Ghana, Ireland, Argentina, the Holy See, South Africa, Mexico, Iraq, the Group of Arab States, and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), amongst others, welcomed the TPNW. Many of these said they are pleased at the progress made towards its entry into force and called on those that haven't yet done so to sign and ratify as soon as possible.

CARICOM, Austria, and Mexico welcomed those states that have ratified the Treaty, with Dominica as the latest ratifying state. CARICOM welcomed the fact that the Treaty “is now two-thirds of the way towards the 50 ratifications needed for entry into force.” Togo informed that its ratification of the Treaty is almost complete. CARICOM informed that it held regional forum on the TPNW in Georgetown, Guyana earlier this year to “discuss ways of furthering support

for the Treaty,” culminating in the adoption of the “Georgetown Statement.”

A few states expressed their opposition to the TPNW, including the France, Israel, the United Kingdom (UK), the United States (US), and the Czech Republic. They argued that the Treaty undermines the existing non-proliferation regime and international security, and/or that it has “procedural and substantial shortcomings,” as the Czech Republic said.

Meanwhile, various states referred to the bilateral agreements that are under threat or have already been destroyed. While the US confirmed that it and Russia continue to implement the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), Switzerland, Poland, Slovakia, Austria, Ireland, the Netherlands, Finland, Germany, and Canada perceive the extension of New START as a matter of priority. Germany called the future of New START a “litmus test” for nuclear disarmament under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The EU said it would welcome “early and active dialogue on its future post-2021 and on other arms control arrangements.” The EU encouraged the US and Russia “to include also non-strategic nuclear weapons into arms control and nuclear disarmament processes.” The NAM expressed concern that there are no negotiations underway for further strategic reduction nuclear arms reduction beyond the expiration of the New START Treaty in 2021. Singapore had similar concerns. Russia also expressed concern over the US’ lack of interest to start negotiations.

With respect to the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, the NAM, Kazakhstan, the EU, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the African Group, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), Portugal, Turkey, Switzerland, Germany, Singapore, and Slovakia, amongst others, expressed concern at its demise, and the implications for international peace and security. Ireland urged that achievements under the Treaty must be preserved, and ASEAN urged concerned parties to “find ways to negotiate and renew their commitment in this field”. Switzerland also appealed to the US and Russia to refrain from developing and

deploying any systems prohibited under the INF.

The US, the Netherlands, and Poland argued that Russia bears the sole responsibility for the Treaty’s termination. The EU and Slovenia said they were disappointed that Russia did not address the serious concerns about its missile system 9M729 and related concerns about non-compliance with the INF Treaty. France and Latvia also expressed regret that Russia did not respond to concerns. Russia said that it will have a moratorium on ground-based missile until US-produced missiles appear in “certain regions”. The US maintained that Russia has already fielded “multiple battalions of 9M729 ground-launched missiles in Russia with range of European capitals.” In a right-of-reply, Russia argued that it took unprecedented transparency steps by revealing its missiles, and blamed the US for the INF’s breakdown.

With respect to another nuclear non-proliferation agreement under the threat, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), many states continued to reaffirm their commitment to the agreement. The EU, the Netherlands, and Slovakia expressed regret at the US withdrawal from the agreement, and the EU, Slovakia, and Switzerland regretted the US re-imposition of sanctions on Iran. The EU and Switzerland expressed worry about the recent measures taken by Iran that are inconsistent with its commitments under the agreement. The EU called on Iran to reverse these activities, to refrain from any further steps that risk aggravating the situation and to provide full and timely cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), including on the implementation of its Safeguards Agreement and the provisional application of the Additional Protocol.” Singapore, France, Portugal, the Netherlands, and Thailand also called on Iran to continue fulfilling its obligations.

With respect to the Korean peninsula, Switzerland, Hungary, Turkey, Latvia, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Thailand, and Canada expressed their support for advancing the process of denuclearisation on the Korean peninsula. ASEAN and Singapore welcomed the three Inter-Korean Summits, and the two Summits between the United States and the DPRK.

Canada added that all involved parties must demonstrate bold leadership and political will to ensure that the DPRK denuclearises. ASEAN urged all concerned parties to continue working together towards a lasting peace and stability in denuclearised Korean peninsula. The ROK said even though negotiations between the DPRK and the US haven't produced tangible results, it seems that both sides "are keeping the door open for future discussions."

The Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), Portugal, Singapore, and the US called on all states to continue implementing relevant UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. The EU said the ballistic missile launches by the DPRK are in violation of multiple UNSC resolutions. The Netherlands, the EU, and Slovenia also expressed its deep concern about the recent missile tests.

In a right-of-reply, the DPRK said that nuclear weapons are "inevitable for its self-defense." It also argued that the implementation of the UNSC resolutions won't work, but will only exacerbate the situation, calling the sanctions "brutal and inhuman." The DPRK further cautioned that the process is "threatened by a dark cloud of war," and said that US military exercises were openly resumed. It concluded that success in negotiations depends entirely on the US decisions, and that the DPRK will "prepare for all scenarios".

In this bleak scenario, many states referred to additional "building blocks" to advance nuclear disarmament. In this vein, Norway observed that there is no "fast track to a world without nuclear weapons," but that it will be made of "mutually reinforcing building blocks."

Many states stressed the significance to achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Russia called on the US to ratify the CTBT before the 2020 Review Conference of the NPT. The NAM expressed concern at the US decision not to seek ratification of the CTBT, "as announced in its 2018 Nuclear Posture Review." The EU, Italy, and others called for states to abide by a moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions

or any other nuclear explosion. Mexico said that a moratorium is welcome but cannot substitute the CTBT.

Many states reiterated their support for negotiations to commence on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other explosive devices (FMCT). The EU called for states to uphold a respective moratorium until the Treaty's development. Pakistan said that the FMCT would threaten its security and reminded that it is opposed to the Treaty.

The NAC encouraged nuclear-armed states to ensure the irreversible removal of all fissile material designated by each nuclear-armed state as no longer required for military purposes. It called on states to develop appropriate nuclear disarmament verification capability and legally binding verification arrangements to ensure fissile material remains permanently outside military programmes in a verifiable manner.

In terms of other "building blocks," the EU welcomed the "current momentum on risk reduction" and called on nuclear-armed states to engage in related measures as set out in the 2010 NPT Action Plan. Switzerland also said that nuclear risk reduction is an area where progress can and should be made.

The EU, Norway, Japan, Canada, Brazil, Argentina, South Africa, the Netherlands, Poland, Hungary, Italy, and Switzerland further welcomed the work of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on nuclear disarmament verification (NDV) and its consensus report. Many of those states hoped for continued work on this topic, either in form of a GGE or as group of scientific experts. Switzerland observed that the GGE allowed "for the first time a focused discussion on NDV in a UN setting." Norway observed that the initiative shows that collaboration between nuclear-armed and non-nuclear-armed states without either partner breaching their non-proliferation obligations under the NPT, and expressed its hope for progress on this topic at next year's NPT Review Conference. The EU, the UK, Poland, Argentina, Japan, the Netherlands,

and Switzerland also expressed support for the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV). The EU expressed support to the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership (QNVP), and the UK-Norway initiative (UKNI).

The De-alerting Group reiterated that the case for urgent action on de-alerting is “compelling.” It recounted the many accidents and close-calls in the past, and observed that we “should not rely on good fortune.” It called on nuclear-armed states to implement previously agreed commitments instead of promoting nuclear weapons on high alert status.

Almost every single state referred to the NPT’s upcoming tenth Review Conference in 2020. Germany observed that the NPT is at a “critical juncture” in light of geopolitical shifts and technological developments. Many states criticised the lack of progress of the Treaty’s implementation in relation to nuclear disarmament. South Africa said that it continues to witness attempts to negate and reinterpret the nuclear disarmament commitments under NPT. New Zealand argued that “notwithstanding the flexibility” that Article VI offers to advance nuclear disarmament, “not even the most de minimis reading possible ... can give any basis for a [nuclear-armed state] to move backwards on its implementation.” The Arab Group, EU, Nigeria, Spain, and many more underscored the need for nuclear-armed states to comply with Article VI of the NPT.

The NAM expressed concern that the nuclear-armed states’ dialogue has remained limited. Looking ahead to 2020, the NAM called on nuclear-armed states to demonstrate political will to enable the 2020 Review Conference to have concrete recommendations. The NPDI also said that high-level political leadership and diplomatic dialogue are needed to make concrete progress. Australia called for states parties to approach the Review Conference with a “growth-mindset”. It reminded that “we do ourselves a disservice if we take a reductionist approach.” The Netherlands on behalf of a group of states called on nuclear-armed states to increase their efforts to deliver outcomes in 2020. Switzerland expressed its hope that the Review Conference decide on a “work

package” for risk reduction, building on Action 5 of the 2010 Action Plan. Many states also called for the universalisation of the NPT. The NAC, the Arab Group, and CARICOM, and others, called on states to fully comply with all decisions, resolutions and commitments made at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences.

States spoke to two recent initiatives launched ahead of the Review Conference. Australia, the UK, Germany, Spain, Slovenia, and the EU welcomed Sweden’s “Stepping- Stones” approach. Sweden presented its initiative, developed in close dialogue with non-nuclear-armed states and nuclear-armed states. It underscored that it is imperative that there is no backtracking, especially from commitments under the outcome documents of 1995, 2000 and 2010.

The US reported back from the Working Group Kick-Off Plenary of its initiative “Creating the Environment for Nuclear Disarmament” (CEND). It said that experts from 42 diverse countries, including the P5 and three NPT non-state parties participated. The US explained that arms control is a tool that can help reverse [the worsening of the security environment], but it is not an end to itself.” Australia, the UK, Turkey, the ROK, Slovenia, Poland, the Netherlands, and the EU welcomed the initiative. Canada said that the initiative offers means to engage in meaningful dialogue to progress on nuclear disarmament. Latvia described the initiative as crucial means for confidence building. The Netherlands informed that as a co-chair of the working group aiming to increase incentives for further action on nuclear disarmament, this does not mean to replace disarmament commitments or to find new conditions. However, the Philippines expressed concern that disarmament is being made contingent on an improved security environment. Ireland also rejects the notion that progress on disarmament can only be made when the right security conditions exist and urged states to retain “a sense of ambition.”

The NAM, African Group, NAC, Mexico, New Zealand, Singapore, Iran, El Salvador, Austria, Philippines, and others either expressed concern about, and/

or called for the immediate stop to nuclear-armed states' modernisation development of their arsenals and the development of new weapon types. Some also expressed particular concern at nuclear-armed states' enhanced investment in nuclear weapons and underscored how these resources could be used to advance the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, such as New Zealand and Nigeria. Nigeria called the cost of maintenance and modernisation "outrageous and inexcusable" when compared to resources allocated by states to development. The African Group criticised the continued enhancing of long-range nuclear war heads "at astronomical costs and at the expense of developmental programmes and promotion of SDGs."

The NAM, CARICOM, Nepal, India, Ecuador, Mexico, El Salvador, Cuba, and the NAC, amongst others, expressed concern at the continued reliance of nuclear weapons in security and military doctrines. In this regard, CARICOM noted, "The situation is made even more disconcerting by the obvious trend towards abandoning longstanding principles that have guided the international community's approach to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation." The NAM criticised the inclusion of nuclear weapons in the US security doctrine. The Arab Group also rejected the adoption of military doctrines allowing the use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states.

The UK argued that nuclear deterrence is essential as long as the security environment demands. In contrast, Mexico argued that the deterrence doctrine doesn't hold water in light of the intentional or accidental explosion of nuclear weapons that would cause an unimaginable catastrophe. Austria also noted that despite every state's endorsement of global nuclear disarmament, nuclear-armed states continue to present these weapons as "inevitable and essential for their security," investing their nuclear arsenals' modernisation "for decades to come." It argued that proclaiming that nuclear weapons are necessary for states' security are a key driver of nuclear proliferation, and goes therefore against the NPT.

Mexico and Brazil warned that non-nuclear armed states have started to speak about the protection that nuclear weapons could afford them.

The NAM, Senegal, Cuba, Algeria, Iran, Bangladesh, and Pakistan stressed that a universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory, and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances (NSAs) should be concluded as a high priority. The EU said that it recognises the legitimate interest of non-nuclear armed states to receive NSAs as part of binding and agreed security arrangements. The EU, Ukraine, and Poland recalled that Russia violated its commitment to refrain from the threat or use of force against Ukraine under the Budapest memorandum of 1994 on security assurances.

Many states continued to express their commitment to nuclear-weapon-free-zones (NWFZ) as a priority objective. Some states called on nuclear-armed states to sign and ratify relevant protocols to the Treaties establishing NWFZ. The majority of delegations continued to welcome the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone free of Nuclear Weapons and other WMDs, which will convene its first session in November 2019, to be chaired by Jordan. NAM, Arab Group, Algeria, and Saudi Arabia called on all states in the region to participate and to work towards the conclusion of a legally-binding Treaty for the establishment of the zone. The Arab Group said that the creation of a NWFZ in the Middle East is a collective responsibility, or else the NPT's credibility is on the brink. Egypt reaffirmed that the Conference doesn't aim at singling out one state in the region, and said it was a "genuine attempt to achieve a long standing agreed commitment." Israel reiterated that it will not participate in the Conference as the initiative singles out Israel and is counterproductive.

Resolutions

L.1, "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East," contains only technical updates from previous years. The resolution urges further action on establishing this zone and to act in accordance with the spirit of

such a zone in the meantime. It is typically adopted without a vote, though a vote was taken last year, at which Israel and the US voted no.

L.2, “Risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East,” contains only technical updates from previous years. It calls for Israel’s accession to the NPT and IAEA safeguards and for implementation of the 2005 and 2010 NPT outcomes related to the Middle East. This resolution is usually more controversial, with European states abstaining and Israel, the United States, and a handful others opposing.

L.4, “Follow-up to nuclear disarmament obligations agreed to at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons,” was last tabled in 2017 by Iran. It contains only technical updates from that version, which reaffirms the validity of past NPT decisions and in particular the practical steps from past review conferences for the implementation of article VI.

L.6, “Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons,” contains only technical updates from last year. It reaffirms the need for negative security assurances and appeals to nuclear-armed states to work “actively towards an early agreement on a common approach” that could result in a legally-binding instrument.

L.11, “Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices,” is a decision tabled this year by Canada, Germany, and the Netherlands as a placeholder for the agenda item.

L.12, “Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons,” contains only technical updates from last year, including to reflect the current number of signatures and ratifications of the Treaty. The resolution welcomes the TPNW’s adoption and calls upon states to join the Treaty and promote adherence to it.

L.13, “Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons,” contains only technical updates from last year. The resolution highlights the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and calls on all states to prevent any use or proliferation of nuclear weapons and to achieve nuclear disarmament.

L.14, “Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco),” was last tabled in 2016. It deletes a PP referring to the 50th anniversary of the Treaty’s opening of signature. It has a new PP noting with satisfaction the adoption of resolution 73/71 in 2018 deciding to convene the fourth Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zones and Mongolia as a one-day conference at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 24 April 2020. New OP2 notes that 2019 is the 50th anniversary of the Treaty’s entry into force and OPANAL’s establishment. It deletes former OP2’s reference to the ministerial commemoration of the anniversary of the Treaty’s opening of signature in 2017.

L.17, “Reducing nuclear danger,” contains only technical updates from last year. It calls for a review of nuclear doctrines and urgent steps to reduce the risks of unintentional and accidental use of nuclear weapons.

L.18, “Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons,” contains only technical updates from last year. It reiterates its call on the CD to commence negotiations on this subject.

L.19, “Nuclear disarmament,” contains only technical updates from last year. The resolution remains focused on the CD and its failure to proceed with substantive work and urges nuclear-armed states to take effective disarmament measures.

L.20, “Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments,” includes a few updates from the 2018 version. The resolution continues to focus on calls for the nuclear-armed states to implement their nuclear disarmament obligations.

Changes to the preamble:

- PP3 in reference to the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit has been streamlined.
- A new PP22 has been added acknowledging the 2018 decision to convene a conference aimed at elaborating a treaty on the establishment of a Middle East WMD free zone.
- PP26 adds language expressing serious concern with “the extensive modernization programmes under way, all of which contribute to the erosion of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime.”
- PP29 adds language urging the US and Russia to extend New START and conclude negotiations on a successor agreement as soon as possible.

Changes to the operative part include:

- OP14 has been updated to reflect the dates of the 2020 NPT Review Conference.
- OP16 on the DPRK deletes the reaffirmation of firm support for the Six-Party Talks.
- OP22 slightly adjusts the call on NPT states parties to improve the measurability of the implementation of nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments through “a set of benchmarks or similar criteria” to “a set of benchmarks, timelines, and/or similar criteria”.

L.21, “Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world,” contains only technical updates from last year. It calls upon all states to acknowledge the humanitarian impacts and risks of a nuclear weapon detonation and makes a series of declarations about the inherent immorality of nuclear weapons underlying the need for their elimination.

L.22, “Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas,” was last introduced in 2017. PP9 has been updated to welcome the preparations for the fourth Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones. PP11 has been updated to welcome the seminar on fostering cooperation and

enhancing consultation mechanisms among NWFZs held in Kazakhstan in August 2019. OP6 language on welcoming the steps taken to establish a NWFZ in the Middle East has been adjusted.

L.24, “Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty,” contains some changes from 2018:

- It deletes the PP welcoming the 20 Years CTBT Ministerial Meeting in 2016.
- PP8 has been updated to welcome the adoption of the Final Declaration at the 2019 CTBT Entry Into Force (EIF) Conference and to recall the Joint Ministerial Statement of 2018.
- PP9 has been updated to note the contribution of diverse participation in working for EIF of the CTBT, including the Youth Group of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission. It deletes the reference to the group of eminent persons.
- The PP on the verification regime has been updated to reflect the establishment of 298 certified facilities.
- OP 5 on the DPRK’s nuclear tests has been updated to note with encouragement the DPRK’s statement “concerning a moratorium on nuclear tests and efforts towards the dismantlement of the Punggye-ri nuclear test site,” and to welcome “all efforts and dialogue” towards denuclearisation, including the inter-Korean summits and US-DPRK summits “and encourages all parties to continue such efforts and dialogue.”
- OP6 combines further OP6 and 7 encouraging signature and ratification.
- New OP7 welcomes Zimbabwe’s ratification.
- Former OP10 that welcomes the report of the UNSG has been deleted.

L.26, “Nuclear disarmament verification,” has been introduced only as a draft decision the past two years while the group of governmental experts established by the 2016 resolution was meeting. This year’s version contains some substantive changes.

Changes to the preamble include:

- Former PP4 reiterating deep concern at the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons has been deleted.
- Former PP5 recalling the unequivocal undertaking of nuclear-armed states to nuclear disarmament has been deleted.
- Former PP6 recalling that nuclear disarmament steps should promote international security has been deleted.
- Former PP7 recalling the commitment to irreversibility, verifiability, and transparency has been deleted.
- Former PP9 saying verification will foster confidence and facilitate efforts for a nuclear weapon free world has been deleted.
- Former PP10 recalling resolution 62/21 of 2007 and other earlier UN work on verification has been deleted.
- Former PP11 on the IAEA has been deleted.
- Former PP12 on the role of verification in various types of agreements has been deleted.
- Former PP13 highlighting challenges of verification has been deleted.
- Former PP14 noting initiatives and partnerships has been deleted.
- New PP6 recognises the “pioneering nature” of the work of the GGE.
- New PP7 notes that a “credible multilateral verification regime in which States have confidence will also be essential for achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons.”
- New PP8 notes capacity-building on verification is a valuable component in the nuclear disarmament process and that it is faced with practical challenges.
- New PP9 recognises that nuclear disarmament

verification “must be balanced against legitimate sovereignty-, security-, safety-, and proliferation-related concerns of the parties to or participants in an agreement or arrangement in this area.”

Changes to the operative part include:

- Former OP1 calling for further reductions and elimination of nuclear weapons has been deleted.
- Former OP2 reaffirming that disarmament and arms limitation agreements should provide for verification has been deleted.
- Former OP3 and OP4 calling on states to identify and develop practical and effective disarmament verification measures has been deleted; a new OP4 and 5 welcomes efforts for capacity-building and encourages further work on verification.
- New OP1 welcomes the adoption by consensus of the report of the GGE.
- New OP2 requests the UNSG to seek the substantive views of member states on this report.
- New OP6 requests the UNSG establish another GGE of up to 25 participants, on the basis of equitable geographical and gender representation, to meet in Geneva for four sessions of one week each in 2021 and 2022 to consider nuclear disarmament verification, including the concept of a Group of Scientific and Technical Experts.
- New OP7 requests the chair of the GGE to organise in New York two informal intersessional open-ended consultative meetings.
- New OP8 requests the UNSG to render all necessary assistance to the GGE.
- New OP9 calls on the UNSG to transmit the GGE report to the UNGA 77th session.

L.31, “Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament,” is an annual NAM resolution that highlights the value of promoting 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons in furthering nuclear disarmament. This year a new PP expresses concern with nuclear weapon modernisation and the US nuclear posture review. Otherwise it only contains technical updates.

L.34, “Convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament,” is a NAM resolution that encourages the establishment of SSOD IV. While the 2018 version welcomed the conclusion and recommendations of the open-ended working group on this issue, the 2019 version merely recalls them.

L.36, “African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty,” contains only technical updates from last year. It calls upon all African states to join and for Protocol III states apply the Treaty to relevant territories.

L.37, “Prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes,” was last tabled in 2017. It calls upon states to take measures to prevent any dumping of nuclear or radioactive wastes and urges the CD to take into account radioactive waste in any negotiations for a convention on the prohibition of radiological weapons. It only contains minor changes from 2017; where PP2, PP8, PP9 used to welcome various initiatives, this version recalls them.

L.40, “Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons,” adds a new PP “noting continued efforts towards realizing nuclear disarmament, including through the UNSG’s disarmament agenda.” Otherwise it is unchanged from 2018. The resolution underlines the ICJ advisory opinion from 1996 and calls on all states to engage in nuclear disarmament negotiations.

L.41, “Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty),” is a draft decision tabled by ASEAN as a placeholder for the agenda item.

L.47, “Joint Courses of Action and Future-oriented Dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons,” was tabled by Japan in replace of its usual resolution, “United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons”. Since 2016, Japan has increasingly watered-down the “United action” text in order to appeal to the US government’s diminishing commitment to nuclear disarmament. This year, the change in title indicates a further weakening of the resolution, and the contents prove this to be the case.

The resolution does not reference the TPNW at all (it also did not in 2018). It weakens its references to the 2010 NPT action plan outcomes, selectively choosing actions to be carried forward at the 2020 Review Conference. It does not mention or express concern at the erosion of international arms control or multilateralism, nor does it refer to the INF Treaty, New START, or the JCPOA.

Changes to the preamble include:

- In 2018, PP1 had the UN General Assembly “Reaffirming its commitment towards a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons.” Now the UNGA is, “Reaffirming that achieving a world without nuclear weapons is a common goal for the international community.” Thus, eliminating nuclear weapons is no longer a commitment of member states, but simply a goal.
- The new PP2 no longer describes the NPT as “the cornerstone of international nuclear non-proliferation regime,” which is boilerplate language for virtually other states, except perhaps now the US delegation which has clearly stated its opposition to everything agreed “in the past”. PP2’s elements have also been reordered.
- PPs 3–6 are an amalgamation of PPs from the 2018 resolution.
- The former PP5 has been eliminated, which stressed the centrality of the NPT to the rules-based international order and recalls that it has “contributed to the achievement of major

reductions in the nuclear arsenals of nuclear-weapon States.”

- PP4, which focuses on the Middle East, reduces the text devoted to this issue from 2018. It now reaffirms the importance of implementing agreed steps from 1995, 2000, and 2010 NPT outcomes documents, whereas in 2018 it reaffirmed support for the establishment of a WMD zone in the Middle East and “the resumption of dialogue towards this end involving the States concerned.”
- A new PP7 stresses the importance of negotiating an FMCT.
- A new PP8 stresses the importance of the CTBT’s entry into force.
- There is a new PP9, “Recognizing the importance of reducing the risk of nuclear weapons being used, due to misunderstanding or miscalculation.” This language neglects to mention the intentional use of nuclear weapons as being a risk that needs to be reduced.
- There is a new PP10, “Recalling the indispensable role of effective and credible nuclear disarmament verification in the course of achieving and then maintaining the elimination of nuclear weapons with compliance, and welcoming the substantive work of the Group of Governmental Experts as contained in A/74/90.”
- There is a new PP11, “Recognizing the value of cooperative work across the existing multilateral disarmament machinery to support work towards disarmament objectives.”
- There is a new PP12, “Noting the importance of considering possible impacts of developments of science and technology on nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and international security.”
- The new PP13 stresses that nuclear disarmament and the enhancement of international security are mutually reinforcing, but deletes language from 2018 stating that “it is in the common interest of all States to improve the international security environment and pursue a world free of nuclear weapons in line with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.”
- There is a new PP14 “Reaffirming that further strengthening of the international regime for nuclear non-proliferation is essential to international peace and security.”
- A new PP15 welcomes “recent diplomatic efforts to achieve the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of all of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles of all ranges including through the U.S.- North Korea Summits.”
- A new PP16 notes “that disarmament and non-proliferation education encompassing different generations, areas and genders underscores efforts and creates momentum towards achieving a world without nuclear weapons.” While useful, it is important to note that language “Recognizing the importance of ensuring the equitable representation and participation of both women and men in disarmament discussions to enable a truly comprehensive approach to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament” has been deleted from the resolution.
- PP17’s reference to the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons is much weaker than the agreed language in the 2010 NPT outcome document and from the 2018 version of Japan’s resolution. The previous resolution reiterated the 2010 agreed language and added, “Recognizing that the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from the use of nuclear weapons should be fully understood by all, and noting in this regard that efforts should be made to increase such understanding.” Now the paragraph simply recognises “the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from the use of nuclear weapons.”
- A new PP19 reaffirms “that the international community needs to take immediate actions together and to conduct future-oriented dialogues in order to further facilitate

the implementation of concrete nuclear disarmament measures through confidence building.”

Changes to the operational part:

- OP1 previously renewed the determination of all states to take united action towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Now it reaffirms that all NPT states parties are committed to the “ultimate goal” of elimination through easing international tensions, increasing trust, and “full and steady implementation” of the NPT, including article VI.
- The former O2, which in 2018 had very problematically rewritten the agreed formulation of the nuclear-armed states’ unequivocal undertaking for nuclear disarmament, has been removed. The new draft does not mention the unequivocal undertaking at all.
- The new OP2 calls on NPT states parties to “identify concrete measures to put the commitments into practice towards the 2020 Review Conference”—and then very selectively lists actions agreed by consensus at the 2010 Review Conference, including transparency through reporting; risk reduction (as in the preamble, only for the accidental use of nuclear weapons, leaving open intentional use); a moratorium on fissile material production; signature and ratification of the CTBT; “practical contributions to nuclear disarmament verification”; and facilitation of disarmament and non-proliferation education.
- The new OP4 focuses on “future-oriented dialogues,” encouraging nuclear-armed states to set out their nuclear policies and doctrines at international fora and for all states to “conduct interactive dialogue” on these; for all states to conduct dialogue on possible impacts of science and technology on arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation; and on the relationship between nuclear disarmament and security.
- The new OP5 focuses on denuclearisation of the DPRK, reaffirming “the commitment to achieving the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of all of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles of all ranges and related nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.” It does not reference the goal of denuclearisation or peace on the Korean peninsula, as agreed at the US-DPRK and inter-Korean summits.

CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Allison Pytlak | Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

Around 50 delegations spoke about chemical weapons during the thematic cluster on Other Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). Statements tended to coalesce around the themes of condemning use; views on the different investigative mechanisms; the related importance of accountability; stockpile destruction; and other matters relating to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

Every delegation that spoke on this subject condemned the use of chemical weapons, even those suspected of using them.

Delegations expressed diverse views on the recent establishment by CWC states parties of an Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) within the Technical Secretariat of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to investigate use in Syria—and relatedly, how this decision may be politicising the Secretariat and its work. The European Union (EU), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Switzerland, Republic of Korea (RoK), France, Netherlands, Australia, Germany, Brazil, Slovakia, Japan, Austria, New Zealand, Turkey, and Ireland welcomed the IIT. Some of these also noted positively the OPCW’s Fact Finding Mission (FFM) and Declaration Assessment

Team (DAT). The EU, Switzerland, Netherlands, France, Australia, Netherlands, Spain, and RoK, among others, expressed confidence in the OPCW's ability to conduct its work in an impartial way.

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) urged that the OPCW be strengthened to deal with ongoing or future challenges without distorting its mandate. China, Cuba, Iran, Argentina, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Russia expressed concern about politicisation or manipulation of the OPCW's mandate. The Netherlands warned against politicisation but also indicated faith in the OPCW's impartiality; Brazil spoke of the importance of impartiality and that it expects the IIT to also play a role in preventing future use. NAM, Poland, and Cuba regretted that the decision to establish the IIT was taken by vote, meaning that consensus has been broken within the CWC.

The United States (US), EU, France, RoK, Netherlands, Nordic Countries, Germany, and Turkey, among others, referenced recent use in Syria; the EU, RoK, Nordic Countries, Germany, and Turkey urged Syria to cooperate with the OPCW in its investigations such as by allowing access and sharing information. Syria stated that it has eliminated its chemical weapons programme and destroyed all production facilities, and that it is the OPCW which has suspended consultations. China noted that any effort to resolve the chemical weapons issue in Syria has to be "conducive to promoting the Syrian political settlement process and maintaining peace and stability in Syria and the Middle East."

Most expressions of support for the OPCW's investigative work, even from delegations concerned about politicisation, were connected to statements about ending impunity for chemical weapons use. The NAM, EU, Switzerland, Poland, France, Slovakia, Ecuador, Australia, Austria, France, New Zealand, Netherlands, Spain, Pakistan, United Kingdom (UK), Germany, and Japan reinforced the importance of accountability. France spoke on behalf of its International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons, which includes 39 states, to say it has published the names of hundreds of

people involved in using and developing chemical weapons or transferring sensitive substances and materials to Syria. The UK noted that Russia continues to prevent effective action at the UN Security Council to investigate and hold to account those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The EU shared that it has in place a dedicated sanctions regime against the proliferation and use of chemical weapons. Egypt highlighted the contradictions in the positions of some states who, on one hand, call for investigations into WMD use, but on the other hand have shown reluctance in supporting a WMD-free zone in the Middle East.

The NAM, Cuba, Russia, Iran, and China noted that the US is the only remaining CWC state party to not fulfill its stockpile destruction requirements while Kazakhstan, South Africa, and Algeria urged that all states parties meet this obligation; Malaysia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) welcomed progress in stockpile destruction overall. China and Japan described their work to remove abandoned chemical weapons. Russia noted that it had met its destruction requirements.

A few delegations, like the NAM and RoK, stressed CWC universalisation. Iran noted that Israel has not ratified the CWC.

France urged more attention be given to the chemical weapons programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

Australia, Switzerland, and the US are working to see that the aerosolised use of central nervous system-acting chemicals in the context of law enforcement are recognised as inconsistent with the CWC. These states regretted the lack of attention to the issue among the wider CWC membership to date, although the US announced that 24 states have recently co-sponsored a draft decision on this. The US also said that the upcoming Twenty-Fourth Session of the OPCW's Conference of the States Parties in November is an opportunity to add Novichok chemical families to the CWC Annex of Chemicals.

ASEAN, South Africa, and the Philippines called for stronger cooperation and capacity building in the context of the CWC.

Poland introduced its annual resolution, **L.10, “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction”**. It said that the resolution’s goal is to show the strong and clear support of international community for the CWC and the OPCW. Poland said that in consultations it was confronted again with “fundamentally divergent views” on the content but, as the sole sponsor, has done its utmost to reflect in a “balanced manner issues critical for CWC implementation but remain frank when it comes to the key challenges to the Convention.”

Until 2014, this resolution had been adopted without a vote. But following the re-emergence of the use of chemical weapons, it began referring to specific incidents and relevant UN Security Council (UNSC) decisions and investigation mechanisms. In response, some countries began accusing Poland, and resolution supporters, of politicising the resolution unnecessarily. The voting

pattern demonstrates consistently that a majority of countries support the direction in which this resolution has evolved.

The 2019 resolution has a new preambular paragraph that honours the memory of and pays tribute to all victims of chemical weapons. Other changes are technical updates and note events that occurred subsequent to the 2018 First Committee session, such as the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties (PP6) and the findings of the final report of the OPCW’s FFM on Douma (OP3).

Throughout the Other WMD cluster there were expressions of concern from the EU, CARICOM, Bangladesh, Maldives, France, Nepal, India, UK, Pakistan, France, Australia, Iran, and Spain, among others, about the potential for WMD acquisition by terrorists or non-state actors, sometimes made in connection to statements of support for UN Security Council Resolution 1540. Draft resolution **L.16, “Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction,”** has been put forward again in 2019 with no changes from the previous text, which was adopted without a vote.

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

Filippa Lentzos King’s College London

Six groups of states and 38 individual states spoke on biological weapons in the thematic discussion cluster on Other Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Hungary, following established practice, wishes to remain the sole sponsor of the resolution on the Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention (BWC) (**L. 44 “Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction”**) and took the floor to introduce it. The key substantive changes in the draft reflect decisions taken by the 2018 Meeting of States Parties to address the on-going financial crisis in the Convention. The draft introduces new language

encouraging the equitable participation of women and men in the framework of the BWC. The draft also encourages the 2019 Meeting of States Parties to agree on practical arrangements for the Ninth Review Conference in 2021. The annual resolution has so far been adopted by consensus each year, and there are no indications that it would not also be adopted by consensus this year.

While a set of financial measures, including the establishment of a working capital fund, was adopted by the 2018 Meeting of States Parties, the financial situation of the BWC remains “extremely precarious” as the European Union pointed out in its statement, “due to the accumulation of arrears and continued

late payments of assessed contributions by certain States Parties.” Many other delegations addressed this concern, calling on all states parties to pay their assessed contributions on time and in full, and urging states in arrears to settle their debts without delay.

Most statements emphasised the importance of the BWC, and the global norm it embodies against biological weapons, for international peace and security. Many states—including Algeria, Argentina, China, Ecuador, the European Union, India, Kazakhstan, Myanmar, the Nordic countries, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom—emphasised the importance of universal adherence to, and full implementation of, the Convention. Tanzania’s accession to the BWC in August this year was welcomed by two of the depositary Governments of the Convention: Russia and the United Kingdom.

The “robust discussions” and “interactive atmosphere” at the Meeting of Experts over the summer was appreciated by a number of states, including Argentina, Austria, India, Italy, and Switzerland. Switzerland picked up on a point made in the general debate by Russia and the Philippines in emphasising the importance of capturing key aspects of the discussions in the final document of the upcoming Meeting of States Parties, implicitly referring to the lack of a substantive outcome document from last year’s meeting. Along similar lines, Indonesia urged states to refrain from politicising the meeting. Looking ahead, Switzerland highlighted the need to assign certain decision powers to intersessional meetings going forward, echoing India’s statement in last week’s general debate.

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) statement focused on the Convention’s lack of a verification system and called for resumption of multilateral negotiations to conclude a non-discriminatory legally binding Protocol. These points were reiterated by Brazil, China, Cuba, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, and Thailand in their national statements. The United States (US) firmly pushed back on the NAM approach, saying “a small

number of States Parties have repeatedly blocked action, insisting that the only way ahead is to return to negotiations on a Protocol to the Convention. We could be strengthening implementation, ensuring prompt, effective assistance in the event of an intentional outbreak, and improving international cooperation. We are not. The United States calls on those obstructing progress to join in efforts to reach consensus on such measures. Those who continue to advocate for a new legal instrument, that is your right, but do not paralyze the BWC any longer.”

Various initiatives for a pragmatic way forward were emphasised. The European Union, France, Pakistan, and the United Kingdom were among states supporting the UN Secretary-General’s Mechanism to investigate allegations of biological weapons use. Argentina, Austria, Netherlands, and Spain emphasised strengthening the Convention’s confidence-building measures. France, Netherlands, and Spain emphasised the value of peer review.

The Republic of Korea noted that advances in science and technology have “increased the risks of biological weapons proliferation” and “lowered technical barriers to their acquisition and development”. This was acknowledged by a number of other states too. Germany and the Netherlands pushed for an expert advisory forum on science and technology to be set up within the BWC framework. China pushed for a model code of conduct for bio-scientists.

Finally, unsupported allegations and insinuations of activities in contravention of the BWC were made. Iran spoke of Israel’s non-adherence to the BWC as endangering the security of BWC states parties in the Middle East. Syria accused the US of “modernization new biological weapons”. France referred to North Korea’s illegal biological programme. China, firmly opposing the compliance reports produced by the United States, said the US should “reflect first on its own implementation of and commitment to these treaties and conventions [including the BWC], so as to effectively address the related international concerns.”

FULLY AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS

Isabelle Jones | Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

At least 27 states raised fully autonomous weapons in the conventional weapons debate: United States, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Poland, Austria, Italy, Germany, India, Israel, Kazakhstan, Cuba, Mexico, Portugal, Namibia, Republic of Korea, France, Ireland, Japan, Brazil, Netherlands, China, Russia, Turkey, Australia, Ecuador, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, as well as the Nordic Countries, the European Union, and the Non-Aligned Movement.

Namibia spoke on this subject for the first time, becoming the 30th country to explicitly call for a ban on fully autonomous weapons. It expressed support for the development of a protocol prohibiting autonomous weapons and regulating use of semi-autonomous systems such as military drones, due to their unacceptable impacts on civilians.

Australia, France, India, and other speakers described the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) as an “appropriate forum” for continued talks on concerns over killer robots. Several welcomed the ten “guiding principles” developed at the CCW in 2018. Japan welcomed the development of an additional guiding principle in 2019, affirming the importance of “human-machine interaction”. Germany encouraged CCW states to endorse the principles and to work for “progress towards strong normative and operational frameworks” by the CCW’s Fifth Review Conference at the end of 2021.

A few states claimed fully autonomous weapons will provide potential benefits. The US argued that “advanced technologies that enable more accurate battlespace awareness and the discriminate use of force have been shown to improve the protection of civilians in armed conflict.” The Netherlands noted “the many potential benefits of the increased autonomy of weapons systems,” but conceded that “we cannot turn a blind eye to the potential risks.” Russia cautioned that humanitarian concerns should not lead to imposing restrictions on states and found there is no need to regulate autonomous weapons.

In stark contrast, there were numerous calls to accelerate the CCW talks on killer robots by developing policy and legal outcomes to address the concerns raised. Sri Lanka urged states to deepen and fast-track work to establish a legally binding instrument retaining meaningful human control over weapons systems. The EU called for substantive recommendations on “aspects of a normative and legal framework.” Brazil warned that a “historic window” to develop appropriate legal and operational framework is quickly closing. Switzerland said states at CCW should focus “on developing concrete measures that clarify the operational and normative framework governing these weapons.”

L.54, the annual CCW resolution, again notes “with satisfaction” the deliberations on lethal autonomous weapons systems by the CCW’s Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on the topic, including the two sessions held during 2019.

The operative section of the 2019 resolution includes this new line: “Also welcomes the work of the Group of Governmental Experts related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems, including its 2018 report, which has provided a basis for further work.”

This year’s CCW resolution also includes more text reflecting the CCW’s financial challenges, such as: “anticipating that the issue of non-payment will be addressed in order to deliver adequate and timely funding, enabling a positive financial situation that will allow meetings to be held next year.”

The 2019 CCW resolution again recalls the 2016 Review Conference decision to establish the GGE and to also add Protocol III on incendiary weapons to the “agenda of the next Meeting of the High Contracting Parties in 2017.” It does not repeat the line from the previous year’s resolution on the need to “retain the agenda item “Protocol III.”

EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS IN POPULATED AREAS

Laura Boillot | International Network on Explosive Weapons

A particular highlight of the conventional weapons debate was the joint statement on explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA), coordinated by Ireland and endorsed by 71 states.¹ The statement expressed that states “remain gravely concerned at the humanitarian impact resulting from the way active hostilities are conducted in populated areas and in particular by the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects.” These 71 states said they “believe that there are a number of complementary ways through which compliance” with international humanitarian law may be strengthened, “notably through the elaboration of a political declaration, the application and where necessary, the development of operational policies more responsive to the challenges of protecting civilians and civilian objects during urban conflict and through the sharing of good policies and practice.”

There was also a significant increase since last year in the number of states raising the issue of EWIPA in their national statements. Around 20 states addressed EWIPA in national statements including Austria, Bangladesh, Colombia, Ecuador, France, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Ireland, Italy, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Philippines, Spain, and Switzerland. It was also raised in a group statement by the European Union.

These delegations raised concerns over armed conflicts increasingly taking place in urban areas, posing serious challenges for the protection of civilians and high levels of humanitarian harm including civilian deaths and injury, and destruction to civilian infrastructure (including Austria, Bangladesh, Ecuador, France, Germany, Guatemala, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, the EU, and the joint statement). Austria, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway and the joint statement voiced particular concern with the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas.

Calls from states in both the joint statement and in their national capacity, including Austria, Ecuador, Germany, Ghana, Ireland, Italy, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, supported efforts towards the development of an international political declaration to address the humanitarian harm from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas including developing military policies and improving military practice. Austria, France, Guatemala, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, the EU, and the joint statement by 71 states placed an emphasis on the need to enhance compliance with international humanitarian law.

The US and Russian delegations expressed scepticism about the issue, with the US arguing that banning or stigmatising the use of explosive weapons in populated areas would allow “bad actors” to use human shields.

The growing interest and engagement in EWIPA follows regional meetings in Mozambique and Chile and more recently an international conference in Vienna, Austria. Open consultations to start developing an international political declaration on EWIPA are now scheduled in Geneva on 18 November; registration to participate has opened.

Note

1. Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Austria, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte D'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Fiji, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia; Malta; Mauritius; Mexico; Monaco; Montenegro; Mozambique; Namibia; Netherlands; New Zealand, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Uganda, Ukraine, and Uruguay.

LANDMINES

Jelena Vićentić | International Campaign to Ban Landmines

This week's conventional weapons debate started with a sobering reference from the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to landmines as a source of terror and as causing suffering to civilian populations.

Several others reiterated concern about the impact of mines, such as Kuwait in sharing its experience of landmine contamination. It also pointed to the urgency of addressing the humanitarian impact of mines as they are an obstacle to development. Thailand also made the point about the necessity of taking a broader approach that goes beyond viewing mine action as a disarmament issue alone. It reported on employing a "whole-of-society" approach, ensuring persons, families, and communities affected by landmines have full and equal participation in society. Italy emphasised the significance of inclusion of victims in broader development, human rights, and humanitarian programs while considering gender and diversity aspects. Ireland emphasised that it is "crucial to situate our mine action efforts within an integrated approach, informed by the objectives of broader humanitarian, developmental, and peace and security agendas."

The Philippines stressed the importance of the Mine Ban Treaty (Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention) as an instrument for mitigating the suffering inflicted by landmines. Italy reiterated its concern about the indiscriminate humanitarian and socio-economic impact of the landmines on civilians and attached importance to assisting survivors and their families as a "key element in long-term development strategies." The NAM noted that technical and financial assistance are an essential need in the process of providing rehabilitation to victims. India, which is not a party to the Treaty, highlighted the importance it attaches to the issue of victim assistance, relating this to its ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Norway, host of the upcoming Fourth Review

Conference of the Convention, identified increased mine clearance, mine risk education, prevention measures, and integration of a gender perspective into all components of mine action as areas of future progress for the Treaty. Italy highlighted universalisation and effective implementation, stressing the importance of international cooperation. Thailand made an offer of assistance in capacity building to states parties to make "the common goal of a mine-free world by 2025 a reality." The Czech Republic stressed the relevance of the EU Council Conclusions from June 2019 on strengthening the ban against anti-personnel mines and expressed support for redoubling the efforts of the international community. Japan urged a future focus on innovation of clearance methodology, comprehensive victim assistance, and demonstration of national ownership.

Norway, Japan, and Colombia highlighted the need to ensure that the use of improvised landmines is addressed within the Treaty.

The commitment to the Mine Ban Treaty and the work of the Fourth Review Conference as an important step towards a world free of anti-personnel mines was expressed by Algeria, Austria, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Czech Republic, DRC, France, Guatemala, Ireland, Indonesia, Ecuador, Lithuania, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain, and Turkey. Spain reminded that since the adoption of the Convention more than 51 million landmines had been destroyed and that 31 countries have been declared cleared.

States summarised some of the long-term efforts made towards a mine-free world. Italy made a reference to its Trust Fund for Humanitarian Demining devoting more than 58 million Euros to clearance, stockpile destruction, risk education and assistance to victims since 2001. The Czech Republic mentioned its support to mine action in Afghanistan, Jordan, Iraq, Bosnia and Herzegovina,

Serbia, and Ukraine. Ireland has allocated €3.2 million to mine action programmes in 2019. The Netherlands mentioned its efforts as a donor to mine clearance work. China, not a party to the Convention, communicated its commitment to international humanitarian demining assistance and reported on assistance at the amount of RMB 100 million to more than 40 countries, supporting training programmes that produced over 800 professional demining technicians.

Ukraine reported on the challenges it is facing in mine clearance and its increased efforts to dispose of mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) in cooperation with several UN agencies, and other regional and international partners. Thailand expressed its determination to complete clearance by 2023. Bangladesh called on Myanmar to accede to the Convention and take urgent steps to ensure mine clearance and end casualties, while commending

the efforts of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty Special Envoy in 2018. Myanmar reported on more than 36,000 landmines and ERW cleared since 2011, while cooperating regionally under the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' Regional Mine Action Centre. India, not a state party to the Convention, reported on observing a moratorium on the export and transfer of landmines. Similarly, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea aligned itself with the Treaty, while it is yet to accede.

Draft resolution L.45, "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction" has only technical updates. This includes a reference to the 2019 Fourth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention to be held in Oslo from 25 to 29 November 2019.

CLUSTER MUNITIONS

Jelena Vićentić | Cluster Munition Coalition

Vigorous overall support for the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and its principles was well represented in statements this week. South Africa avowed that the Convention continues to define the international norm on the prohibition these weapons. Austria, the Czech Republic, and Ecuador declared their continuing strong support for the Convention. Guatemala and Lao PDR spoke to their commitments to implementation. Indonesia and Japan recognised the devastating humanitarian consequences of cluster munitions and Indonesia expressed solidarity with cluster munition-affected countries.

Non-signatory state Myanmar expressed that "cluster munitions have an indiscriminate and negative effect on human beings" as well as the environment. Myanmar further noted that supports the provisions of the CCM in principle and shares the view that it is essential to take effective, efficient and coordinated approaches to removing and destroying cluster munitions.

States parties articulated their enduring and avid desire for attaining increased membership of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Austria and Lao PDR declared that they will continue to work towards the Convention's full implementation and universalisation. Burkina Faso, Ecuador, France, Lao PDR, and Sri Lanka all highlighted collective responsibility for universalisation, with Sri Lanka also commending recent members. Samoa expressed universalisation as an important step towards global peace and security, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Focusing on the value of regional approaches to universalisation of the Convention, Guatemala sees the declaration of Central America as the first zone free of cluster munitions as a practice for all regions. New Zealand reported hosting a regional workshop in Manila this year. South Africa welcomed the latest ratification by an African country, The Gambia.

Guatemala, Netherlands, and Portugal stated

their vehement condemnation of any use of cluster munitions by any actors and under any circumstances.

Lao PDR reported on its implementation measures and South Africa reiterated its resolve to finish stockpile destruction within the eight-year time frame mandated by the Convention, which is 1 November 2023.

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) emphasised the need for technical and financial assistance to rehabilitation of victims and for clearance, an issue also highlighted by Lao PDR. Czech Republic, Japan, and Ireland noted their international cooperation and assistance under the Convention.

Ecuador called for an end to financing and investment in cluster-producing companies and the Netherlands noted its legislation that prohibits direct

investments in the production, sale, or distribution of cluster munitions and components.

Japan, Lao PDR, and Samoa expressed support for the CCM's Second Review Conference to be held in 2020, with Switzerland as its President. Lao PDR and South Africa noted participation in the Ninth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions in September 2019. New Zealand reported on a side event co-hosted with Iraq that focused on the future of the Treaty as it celebrates 10 years since its entry into force.

The draft resolution **L.46, "Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions"** has been updated since 2018 with only a small amendment to include a request to the UN Secretary-General to convene the second Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRADE

Aaron Lainé | Control Arms

Despite significant delays due to a delay in adopting the First Committee program of work, the conventional weapons cluster proceeded as according to plan with 58 states and regional groups referring to the international arms trade and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in their statements. The majority shared the sentiment expressed by Switzerland when they stressed that "conventional weapons fuel today's conflicts, exacerbate humanitarian crises, hinder sustainable development and represent a threat to peace and security."

The vast majority of references urged the necessity of proper implementation and universalisation of the ATT, including by large arms importers and exporters, to mitigate the devastating human consequences of conventional arms proliferation. Some states, such as Spain, Samoa, Portugal, and the Bahamas, welcomed the focus on gender and the gendered impact of armed conflict from the Fifth

ATT Conference of States Parties (CSP5). Others, including Malaysia, Thailand and China, noted that national legislation for Treaty accession is underway.

Ambassador Carlos Foradori of Argentina, as President of CSP6, described the ATT as a "fundamental instrument that articulates three central dimensions for the arms trade: production, responsible trade and human rights." He explained that the implementation and universalisation of the Treaty is thus a vital step to create a transparent and responsible system of commerce, avoiding the proliferation of conventional weapons and their use against civilians, through the establishment of criteria, parameters and common standards for all states when authorizing a transfer." He introduced the annual ATT resolution. This year's resolution, **L.25**, includes technical and linguistic updates as well as a few substantive changes in the following paragraphs:

- PP5 [language added] underlines the urgent need to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms and to prevent their diversion to the illicit market, or for unauthorized end use and end users, including the commission of terrorist acts and thereby preventing [the exacerbation of armed violence, and the violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law].
- PP6 is a new paragraph that emphasises the responsibility of states to effectively regulate the international arms trade in conventional arms, in accordance with their respective international obligations.
- OP5 [language added] [calls upon states to submit], and encourages to make available, in a timely manner, and to update, as appropriate, their initial report, as well as their annual report for the preceding calendar year.
- OP10 [language added] encourages further steps to enable States to increasingly prevent and tackle diversion of conventional arms and ammunition to unauthorized end uses and end users [and recognizes that enhancing reporting rates, transparency and information sharing, in line with Treaty-obligations, are fundamental measures to achieve this goal].
- OP12 [language added] [Welcomes the adoption of action-oriented decisions on gender and gender-based violence] that States parties agreed to review these aspects on an ongoing basis and in that respect....
- PP4 [new language] welcomes the [2019] report of the Secretary-General on the continuing operation of the Register ... including the recommendation that those Member States in a position to do so, [using the seven-plus-one formula, provide information on exports and imports of small arms and light weapons, as appropriate, through the online reporting tool or the optional standardized form for reporting international transfers of small arms and light weapons].
- PP6 [updated language] welcomes the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty on 24 December 2014, [as it enhances transparency through reporting on arms transfers as well as through other mechanisms].
- PP7 is a new paragraph that expresses “its concern at the low number of reports that have been submitted to the Register by the Member States.”
- PP8 is a new paragraph that notes “the concern expressed in the report of the 2019 group of governmental experts that the current level of resources of the Secretariat in the field of database management is insufficient to carry out the effective operation of the Register.”
- OP3 is a new paragraph that emphasises “that it is important for those Member States in a position to do so, using the seven-plus-one formula, to provide information on exports and imports of small arms and light weapons, and decides to adapt the scope of the Register in conformity with the recommendations contained in the 2019 report of the Secretary-General.”

The Netherlands resurrected **L.30, “Transparency in Armaments,”** last tabled in the 71st session of First Committee in 2016. It notes that “an enhanced level of transparency in armaments contributes greatly to confidence-building and security among States and that the establishment of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA) constitute s an important step forward in the promotion of transparency in military matters.” This year’s resolution contains some technical and linguistic updates as well as a number of substantive changes:

SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Rose Welsch | International Action Network on Small Arms

During the thematic debate on conventional weapons, many member states expressed how vital the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (UNPoA) and International Tracing Instrument (ITI) are in efforts to control the devastating effects of the illicit trade, transfer, and circulation of small arms and light weapons (SALW). A significant number of countries in the Global South expressed concern over how SALW hinder their sustainable development, and many states expressed concern about SALW fueling the activities of terrorists and other non-state actors. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and Cameroon noted the extra challenges they face controlling illicit flows of SALW because of their porous borders. Whether illicit or not, some accumulate great wealth through SALW while others suffer great harms from them, stated the Holy See, urging weapon producing states to control and strictly limit production.

Transparency in armaments was another topic of discussion. The Chairperson of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on the UN Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA) gave a briefing on this instrument, which encourages states to voluntarily report their holdings of conventional weapons to facilitate transparency and confidence-building. The adoption of a seven plus one formula now puts SALW on equal footing with other conventional weapon reporting categories. Noting that UNROCA is a living instrument that is as relevant as it was in 1991, the GGE urged that the Register be given more attention and recommended that all states participate in the Register—including smaller importer and exporter states. The Netherlands expressed disappointment that reporting to UNROCA is low; Israel and China stated that they submit reports to it regularly; the United States urged all member states to report; and Argentina said that it was active in establishing UNROCA.

Many regional groups and states addressed ammunition in their statements. CARICOM said

SALW and ammunition proliferation are among main drivers of criminality in the region. Nordic Countries welcomed the convening of a GGE in 2020 on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus and noted the UN Secretary-General's placement of importance of a comprehensive approach to addressing arms and ammunition. Côte d'Ivoire echoed that the proliferation of SALW and their ammunition calls for a comprehensive response that includes military, regulatory, and community components, and Ghana advocated strongly for a holistic approach throughout ammunition lifecycle. Ammunition is a key vector of today's conflicts, said Switzerland, noting that it has spent many years working to ensure that ammunition stockpiles are managed safely and securely to prevent diversion. Colombia said it seeks to curb and combat the illicit trafficking of ammunition, parts, and components. Brazil, Ghana, and Guatemala expressed satisfaction that the outcome document of the third Review Conference (RevCon3) on the UNPoA recognised the importance of addressing ammunition. Brazil also noted that it has been at the forefront of efforts in this field, including through pioneering legislation and industry practices on the marking and tracing of ammunition. Turkey also expressed concern over the excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread of SALW and ammunition, and said it hopes the GGE on ammunition will help achieve progress on the issue. Myanmar called on states to exchange good practices on SALW and ammunition, and the Czech Republic said strong regulations on SALW and their ammunition should be supported. The Bahamas noted it places limits on licenses of gun and ammunition. Israel said it believes the GGE—not the UNPoA—is the venue to address ammunition. The United States declared that SALW and ammunition characteristics are fundamentally different and require distinct approaches to safety, security, and preventing diversion.

Resolutions

L.43, “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects,” is an omnibus resolution tabled annually by Colombia, South Africa, and Japan. It welcomes Kenya as the Chair of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States (BMS7) in 2020. It also adds recognition that voluntary sharing and applying of best practices at regional, subregional, and national levels supports the full and effective implementation of the UNPoA and the ITI, and should be an ongoing effort to address challenges associated with SALW diversion and illicit trade. It reaffirms the importance of states identifying groups and individuals engaged in the illegal manufacture, trade, stockpiling, transfer, possession, and financing for acquisition of illicit SALW, and of taking action under appropriate national law against them. Recognition was also added that opportunities and challenges associated with developments in the manufacturing, technology, and design of small arms and light weapons—including polymer and modular weapons—must be addressed in a timely manner.

L.43 includes three new requests:

1) for the UN Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on best practices, lessons learned, and new recommendations on preventing and combatting the diversion and illicit international transfer of SALW to unauthorized recipients and to include them—along with views from the United Nations system and inputs from INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization—in a report for consideration at BMS7.

2) For the UN Secretariat to use information submitted by states to present an analysis of implementation trends, challenges and opportunities relating to the UNPoA and the ITI at BMS7.

3) for the Secretariat to report on support provided by the UN system for the implementation of the PoA and the ITI.

L.53, “Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus,”

adds recognition of the need to encourage the full involvement of both women and men in ammunition management practice and policy. It also added text on the importance of applying a lifecycle approach to tackle problems related to ammunition, including those related to diversion, in a comprehensive manner. It adds note of a report of the GGE to consider further steps to enhance cooperation with regard to the issue of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus, as well as note of the establishment of the Ammunition Management Advisory Team to support interested states in the safe and secure management of ammunition.

In reference to the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG), L.53 added note of the IATG’s support guides, as well as recollection of the intention to update the IATG on a regular basis. L.53 also notes with appreciation the series of informal consultations on conventional ammunition management held in 2018, as well as appreciation for Germany’s informal paper and inputs from member states on the informal consultative process. Finally, L.53 reiterates its request to the Secretary-General to convene a GGE in 2020 on matters of conventional ammunition management within the United Nations system and beyond, and requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly on the work of the group upon its completion.

L.38, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific,” adds mention of a capacity-building project it carried out for states of South and Southeast Asia on gun violence and illicit small arms trafficking from a gender perspective, and welcomes the youth-focused outreach activities undertaken by the Regional Centre.

Resolutions L.27, “Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them”, L.38, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Africa”, and L.42, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean” do not contain any substantive changes from last year.

OUTER SPACE

Jessica West | Project Ploughshares

Rapidly developing political and technological developments in outer space warrant strong efforts by the international community to preserve the security of this environment as a domain for peaceful uses. Five draft resolutions have been tabled ahead of the thematic discussion on outer space and the special joint meeting of the First Committee and the Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonisation), which mandates the work of the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). An overview of these resolutions demonstrates significant continuity in substance from previous years. Where there is change, it is primarily political.

Resolution L.3 “Prevention of an arms race in outer space” (PAROS) remains on the table, with 20 sponsors: Algeria, Angola, Bolivia, Brazil, China, Cuba, Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Libya, Malawi, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Syria, and Thailand. Noting the draft treaty by China and Russia (“Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects”) proposed to the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in 2008 and 2014, the resolution invites a working group on PAROS within the CD as the “sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.” However, the resolution also notes “growing convergence of views” in support of elaborating additional transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs). But while such convergence may exist in theory, support for TCBMs has fractured in practice.

The traditional resolution on TCBMs originated cooperatively among China, Russia, and the United States. This year, it has split into two different versions. **Resolution L.55 “Advancing transparency and confidence-building measures for outer space”** is sponsored by the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US) while Resolution **L.60 “Transparency and confidence-building**

measures in outer space activities” is sponsored by China, Cuba, Russia, Suriname, and Syria. Both highlight the work of COPUOS as a contribution to TCBMs; call on states to review and implement the recommendations from the 2013 Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on TCBMs; welcome joint meetings between the First and Fourth Committees; and encourage discussions at COPUOS, the CD, and the Disarmament Commission (DC). But while L. 55 asks the UN Secretary-General to draw up a report on the coordination of efforts across UN bodies, L.60 regrets the inability of the DC to conduct its work, and points to the value of initiatives including the PPWT and political commitments.

Similar to previous years, **Resolution L.59 “No first placement of weapons in outer space,”** has 17 sponsors including China and Russia. It calls on states to uphold political commitments not to be the first to place weapons in outer space. **Resolution L.58 “Further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space”** first introduced in 2017 with leadership from China and Russia, reflects on the failure of the GGE on PAROS to agree an outcome earlier in 2019. It blames this outcome on a single expert and points to plans by some states to place weapons in orbit.

This collection of resolutions demonstrates a complete absence of cooperation across political divides. The resolution on preventing the placement—which lacks support among Western states and the majority of those with advanced spacefaring capabilities—is mentioned in four of the five resolutions, each of which reflects a similar group of sponsors. On the other side, support for TCBMs led by the US and UK is focused instead on the security and stability of outer space as an operating environment. The lack of effort to build consensus or common direction across these resolutions is startling.

GENDER AND DISARMAMENT

Katrin Geyer | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

More than 20 delegations made references to gender in thematic clusters on nuclear weapons, conventional weapons, and other disarmament measures.

The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu reassured the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs' support for the work of its regional offices in Togo, Peru, and Nepal in advancing "gender inclusion and women's empowerment in disarmament."

The European Union (EU) informed that it funds a project that seeks to mainstream gender into the fight against arms trafficking and misuse. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) said it is pleased "with the increasing attention being given to mainstreaming a gender dimension in disarmament processes including those related to conventional weapons." The Philippines said it is important to ensure different perspectives in the field of nuclear disarmament, including gender perspectives. Lithuania and Thailand also supported gender mainstreaming in these efforts.

Many delegations continued to address the gendered impacts of armed violence and conflict. CARICOM and The Bahamas stressed that women are often disproportionately impacted by situations of armed conflict and violence. CARICOM and Ghana underscored the need to give attention to the gendered impacts of conventional weapons. Australia recognised that conventional weapons "violently [intersect] with gender and disability issues at many levels." It affirmed that all of its arms control policies are gender-sensitive, age-sensitive, and disability inclusive. Ireland, in a joint statement on explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA), encouraged further research on the potential gendered impacts of EWIPA. The New Agenda Coalition (NAC) reminded of its deep concern about the humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, including their gendered impact. Ireland

also underscored the disproportionate impact "on the health of women and girls of ionising radiation" caused by a nuclear weapons detonation. Norway called for the integration of a gender perspective in all aspects of mine action. Poland specified that gender-differentiation for mine education measures for boys and girls is "of utmost importance."

CARICOM, Guatemala, The Bahamas, and Ghana welcomed the final outcome of the Third Review Conference (RevCon) of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (UNPoA on SALW), which recognises the gendered impacts of SALW and calls, amongst others, for the mainstreaming of gender concerns in policies of SALW transfers. Thailand encouraged the promotion of synergies, including between the UNPoA, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and mainstreaming gender perspectives. The Nordic Countries, Norway, Ireland, Samoa, Portugal, and Latvia welcomed this year's priority theme of the Fifth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (CSP5) that focused on gender and gender-based violence (GBV). Norway said that the Treaty has "great potential to reduce ... [GBV] that results from armed violence." Portugal argued that the priority theme contributed to enhancing the Treaty's implementation and universalisation efforts, while Ireland is confident that the adopted decision forms a strong basis to strengthen the implementation of the Treaty's GBV provision. Samoa and Latvia welcomed the adopted recommendations on gender equality. Latvia, which presided over CSP5, noted that civil society and industry representatives' contribution was invaluable for the adopted outcome. Australia argued that the effective implementation of the ATT also supports commitments under the Women, Peace, and Security agenda.

Many delegations continued their calls for gender diversity and equal participation in disarmament efforts. The Nordic Countries called for the advancement of gender equality in all disarmament

and arms control processes, including in First Committee. CARICOM affirmed that “women have a special contribution to make to disarmament processes.” It observed this is evident in its region, “where women’s influence at the grassroots level has been important in de-escalating tensions in situations of armed violence.” The Nordic Countries also said that the advantages of women’s full and equal participation “are abundantly clear.” Côte d’Ivoire informed that its community-approaches to combat the proliferation of SALW focuses on mobilising women, amongst other stakeholders.

The Chairperson of the GGE on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms informed that out of 16 experts in the GGE, eight are women, and that for the first time, the Group was chaired by a woman. The European Union emphasised that “active and equal partnership and leadership of women will be crucial in achieving further progress” in the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review process.

This upcoming week, under the thematic cluster of disarmament machinery, Sweden, on behalf of a group of states, will deliver a statement on gender. It calls for the inclusion of gender perspectives in all disarmament and arms control efforts, urges consideration of gendered impacts of weapons, calls for equal participation of women and men, and welcomes recent positive developments in this field. We encourage delegations to support this joint statement.

Resolutions

L.7, “Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels,” recognises for the second time in its PPs the “importance of equitable representation of women in arms control discussions and negotiations.”

L.20, “Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments,” notes as last year the “strongly disproportionate and gendered impact of exposure to ionizing radiation for women and girls.”

L.21, “Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world,” has kept the same language from last year, declaring that “greater attention must be given to the impact of a nuclear weapon detonation on women and the importance of their participation in discussions, decisions and actions on nuclear weapons.”

L.23, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific,” welcomes in PP9, as in previous years, efforts by the Regional Centre to promote the role and representation of women in disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control activities. This year, it has new language in PP6 expressing its appreciation to the Centre for its work in project “for States of South and South-East Asia on gun violence and illicit small arms trafficking from a gender perspective.”

L.25, “The Arms Trade Treaty,” welcomes the “the adoption of action-oriented decisions on gender and gender- based violence and the fact that States parties agreed to review progress on these two aspects on an ongoing basis.” Similar to last year’s resolution, it encourages states parties and signatories to ensure the full and equal participation of women and men in the Treaty’s implementation. The resolution has also kept language taking into account the impact of conventional arms and related ammunition on women and girls and calls upon states “to address the link between conventional arms transfers and the risk of serious acts of gender- based violence and serious acts of violence against women and children.”

L.26, “Nuclear disarmament verification,” requests the UN Secretary-General to establish a group of experts of up to 25 participants, chosen on the basis of equitable representation of women and men to further consider nuclear disarmament verification issues.

L.38, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa,” has kept the same language relating to women’s role in disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control from last year’s resolution and welcomes in OP6 efforts

by the Regional Centre to promote the role and representation of women in disarmament activities.

L.42, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean,” has kept the same language from last year, recognising the Regional Centre’s important role in promoting women’s participation in the implementation of the nexus between sustainable development and disarmament. It also welcomes the Centre’s activities to promote the “equal representation of women in all decision-making processes” in disarmament.

L.43, “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects,” has kept the same language from last year, recognising the need for strengthened participation of women in decision-making processes relating to the UNPoA and International Training Instrument, and reaffirms the need to mainstream gender dimensions in their implementation.

L. 44, “Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction.” This resolution includes for the first time language that encourages “equitable participation of women and men in the framework of the Convention.”

L.45, “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction,” reaffirms its determination to put an end to these weapons killing or injuring women and girls. It has retained the same language from last year that calls for the inclusion of gender aspects in mine action.

L.46, “Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions,” has previously addressed the impact of cluster munitions on women. Since last year, it includes stronger language, recognising the gendered impact of cluster munitions and calling for “adequate, gender- and age-sensitive assistance to victims of cluster munitions.”

L.47, “Joint courses of action and future-oriented dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons,” is an update to Japan’s annual “United action...” resolution. It notes that “disarmament and non-proliferation education encompassing different generations, areas and genders underscores efforts and creates momentum towards achieving a world without nuclear weapons.” But it deletes last year’s language “Recognizing the importance of ensuring the equitable representation and participation of both women and men in disarmament discussions to enable a truly comprehensive approach to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.”

L.48, “Youth, disarmament and non-proliferation,” is a new resolution that recalls that the full and effective participation of men and women is essential for sustainable peace and security.

L.53, “Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus,” tabled last in 2017, recognises for the first time the need to encourage “the full involvement of both women and men in ammunition management practice and policy”.

L.54, “Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects,” emphasises as in previous years the importance of including perspectives of women, men, boys, and girls in considering issues related to the Convention and its Protocols.

L.61, “Regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa,” contains the same language from 2018. It urges member states of the Standing Advisory Committee to strengthen the gender component and women’s representation in its meetings. It calls on states to ensure that disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes take into consideration the needs of women.

DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Danielle Samler | Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy

This week, states expressed the urgent need to focus on socio-economic and humanitarian development in the face of the presence of landmines, cluster munitions, nuclear weapons, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW), and increasing military expenditure.

Nuclear weapons and their impact on development were addressed by Peru and Samoa. Peru noted the consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, mainly the harm they cause to socio-economic development, food security, and the environment. Samoa went further to say that the presence of nuclear weapons is “fuelled by the human tendency to achieve a competitive edge over others at whatever cost,” and this tendency means that any efforts towards sustainable development are “sidelined, ineffective, and any goodwill compromised and unsustainable.”

Landmines, cluster munitions, unexploded ordnance (UXO) and their impact on development was highlighted by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Bangladesh, Kuwait, and Lao PDR. ASEAN focused on the long-term effects of UXO, stating that “their long-lasting impact affects communities and undermines global sustainable development efforts.” Bangladesh and Kuwait brought attention to the humanitarian consequences of the use of landmines, pointing out that the victims are primarily civilians, and that landmines cause not only death, but also forced displacement of civilians.

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM), ASEAN, South Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Eritrea, Guatemala, Spain, Turkey, Côte d'Ivoire, Colombia, and Mexico, among others, described the direct negative impact that SALW have on sustainable development by exacerbating armed conflict, fueling terrorism, and increasing gun violence.

South Africa highlighted that the illicit proliferation of arms and inadequate or weak control systems

“destabilises communities, negatively impacts security and compromises development.” CARICOM seconded this by denouncing how the use of these weapons, in a single occurrence, causes widespread loss of life and environmental impacts. Mexico further expressed their belief that effectively controlling SALW is a humanitarian imperative.

Excessive military expenditure on conventional and nuclear weapons was decried by a number of delegations. Cuba stated that the resources used to modernise weapon systems should be diverted to the millions of people living in extreme poverty, who suffer from hunger, who do not have access to education, and who lack basic services like clean water or sanitation. Pakistan, Samoa, India, NAM, Nepal, the Bahamas, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, the African Group, and Nigeria also expressed concerns with global military expenditure. Nepal expressed that if military budgets and modernisation programmes were diverted to social and humanitarian causes, the money could help to achieve many of the SDGs well before 2030. Above all, Nepal urged for “disenchantment with the Faustian bargain that is plaguing humanity.”

A side event held on 23 October “Rethinking unconstrained military spending” discussed the importance of addressing military spending and the ever-increasing trend towards militarism in light of a new publication from the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) on this subject.

Michael Spies from UNODA gave a brief history of the United Nations’ efforts to decrease military spending and encouraged listeners to re-examine disarmament and include climate change, social, and economic development. Ray Acheson of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom articulated a feminist perspective by describing how we are caught in a system where militarism is celebrated and recognized as the only credible solution to conflict. This imperative

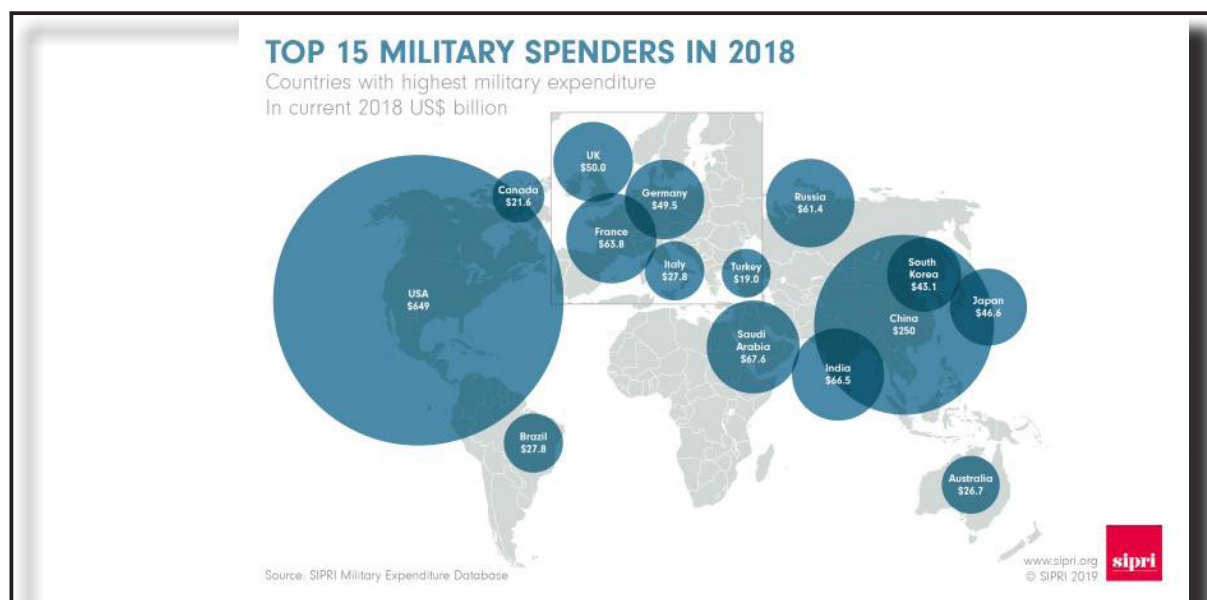
towards militarism stems from expectations for appropriate masculinity and the assumed need to protect “women and children.” WILPF suggested that taking a humanitarian disarmament approach that puts the interests of people and the planet over economic gains is essential. Miriam Pemberton, a research fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies, critiqued private interest and reminded the audience that the inertial force for firms and communities to keep spending on armaments is quite powerful. She outlined four elements necessary to achieving convergence.

Resolutions

L.29, “Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control,” contains only technical updates from last year. It reaffirms that international disarmament forums should take fully into account relevant environmental norms in negotiating and implementing disarmament and arms limitations treaties and calls on states to adopt measures for the application of scientific and technological progress “without detriment to the environment or its effective contribution to attaining sustainable development.”

L.35 “Relationship between Disarmament and Development,” does not have significant updates from last year. This resolution outlines the symbiotic relationship between disarmament and development and expresses concern over global increase in military expenditure which should be spent on development needs. It calls upon states to devote available resources from disarmament and arms limitation agreements to economic and social development and reminds states about the provision in the UN Charter which envisions peace and security with the least diversion of resources.

L.51 “Reduction of military budgets: objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures,” has only minor updates from 2017. This includes stronger language in paragraph 3 that now “Invites Member States to supplement their reports with explanatory remarks” whereas in 2017 it only invited “Member States in a position to do so to supplement their reports, on a voluntary basis.” This resolution calls for increased transparency mechanisms and reporting when it comes to military expenditure so as to create an environment of trust and confidence building among states with regards to military operations and spending.



MULTILATERALISM

Ray Acheson | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Throughout the 2019 session of First Committee, the vast majority of states have expressed profound concern with the erosion of multilateralism and existing international and bilateral disarmament, arms control, and non-proliferation agreements. Furthermore, the work of First Committee was significantly disrupted by challenges over the denial of visas to delegates of certain countries, which some delegations have highlighted as an affront to the spirit of multilateralism and equity among member states of the United Nations. Three texts focus on these questions this year—the annual Non-Aligned Movement resolution on multilateralism; a new resolution on the system of treaties and agreements related to disarmament, arms control, and non-proliferation; and a new draft decision on the location of First Committee's 2020 session.

L.32, “Promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation,” is an annual NAM resolution. PP12 has been updated in its expressions of grave concern with the continuous “and progressive” erosion of multilateralism in this field and in recognising “that the abrogation of major instruments” as a result of unilateral actions would jeopardise international peace and security and undermine confidence in the international security system and the UN. Otherwise it is unchanged from 2018; overall it reaffirms the core principle of multilateralism and underlines the importance of preserving existing agreements and of renewing and fulfilling commitments to multilateral cooperation. It also requests states parties of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) instruments to “consult and cooperate among themselves in resolving their concerns with regard to cases of non-compliance as well as on implementation ... and to refrain from resorting or threatening to resort to unilateral actions or directing unverified non-compliance accusations against one another.”

L.56, “Strengthening and developing the system of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation

agreements and treaties,” is a new resolution tabled by Angola, China, Cuba, Russia, and Syria.

It recognises “the common interest of all humankind” in strengthening the system of arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation treaties and agreements and the “paramount importance” of full and strict implementation of such treaties and agreements. It also underlines that weakening confidence in or compliance with treaties and agreements “diminishes their contribution to global or regional stability and undermines the credibility and effectiveness of the international legal system and regime applicable to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.” It further recognises the responsibility and obligation of member states to ease international tensions and “refrain from steps that negatively affect the security environment.”

The operative portion of the resolution urges states to implement their obligations; strengthen the relevant system; give “serious consideration to the negative implications of undermining” this system; support efforts aimed at the resolution of “implementation issues;” consider that undermining the system also undermines global stability and international peace and security; and support efforts “towards safeguarding the integrity of” the system. It also welcomes the UN's role in this system; expresses the need to “maintain the effectiveness and efficiency as well as the consensus-based nature of the relevant multilateral instruments;” requests cooperation among states and from the UNSG to uphold the integrity of the system and implement agreements; and notes the importance of effective verification provisions for this system.

L.57, “Improving the effectiveness of the work of the First Committee,” is a new decision introduced by Angola, Russia, and Syria. Due to the visa issues encountered by several states, these delegations suggest the 2020 session of First Committee convene in Geneva or Vienna.

YOUTH, DISARMAMENT AND NON-PROLIFERATION

Anna Ikeda and Christian Ciobanu | Soka Gakkai International and Amplify, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation

The leadership roles of young people have been increasingly recognised and valued in recent years, such as seen through the growing movement calling for climate action. This is an encouraging trend, and it is now being reflected in some areas of the United Nations (UN) work, including Youth 2030: The United Nations Youth Strategy; UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2250 on youth, peace and security (2015); and now in the First Committee through its new resolution **L.48 “Youth, disarmament and non-proliferation.”**

The resolution on this subject encourages initiatives to promote meaningful and inclusive participation of young people in discussions in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. It also stresses the importance of education and capacity building to help youth realise their full potential. We welcome the recognition of these points, which civil society organisations and academic institutions focusing on youth have been advocating for. It is the first time there has been a resolution on this subject in the First Committee.

The resolution “Calls upon Member States, the United Nations, relevant specialized agencies and regional and subregional organizations to consider developing and implementing policies and programmes for young people to increase and facilitate their constructive engagement in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.” In this regard, it would be vital for civil society groups to work with the United Nations to implement programs for young people. Consequently, the core co-sponsors should consider the possibility of creating an informal group between civil society, member states, UN, youth, and specialised organisations to engage

in constructive dialogue on youth programmes that would have the greatest impact on making a difference in young people’s lives.

While the resolution promotes the inclusive participation of young people, it could have been improved upon including a clear reference about full participation of youth on delegations. Each delegation should be urged to have a designated youth advisor. It should also stipulate the need for member states to support humanitarian-based disarmament education, which expounds upon international humanitarian law (IHL) and recent developments in the disarmament sphere.

Additionally, in a subsequent version of this resolution, member states should consider the inclusion of language that calls upon the creation of an international funding mechanism or scholarship to support educational initiatives and programmes by both universities and non-governmental organisations. Often it is difficult for non-governmental organisations to plan programmes and bring under-represented youth, especially youth from the global south, to the UN. An international funding mechanism would significantly help civil society and states to bring fresh voices and perspectives from these countries.

Overall, the resolution is a good first step toward youth inclusion and empowerment. There is still more that must be done however as youth must have a full seat at the policy making table. Therefore, we encourage delegates to consider our views and incorporate them into future resolutions.

EVENT REPORT: PROMOTING THE CWC

Katherine Ketterer | Pace University

This side event on 16 October organised by the Permanent Mission of Poland, opened with Poland's view on the challenges of chemical terrorism. Chemical terrorism is evolving and affects the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)'s activities, said its representative. Toxic chemicals are becoming increasingly available, and so are emerging technologies and emerging chemistry.

Veronika Stromsíková, Director, Strategy and Policy of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW was the first panelist. She stated it was observed that many member states, when referring to the OPCW, only mention the chemical weapons file on Syria, or how the OPCW is the UN watchdog on chemical weapons. The representative stressed that the OPCW has many more responsibilities and programmes. In the event they elaborated their work on chemical terrorism as well. She reminded that the OPCW's mandate is to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons through constant vigilance, the promotion of the peaceful use of chemistry, national implementation, assistance and protection, preventing re -mergence, and overseeing destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles.

Shawn DeCaluwe, Head of the Assistance and Protection Branch of the OPCW Technical Secretariat, explained that OPCW capacity building falls under three key pillars of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC): its Article VII, Article X, and Article XI. Under Article VII, lies the review, development, and adoption of national legislation, along with outreach and engagement in CWC implementation. Under Article X, chemical weapons are the focus.

This includes response capabilities, supporting implementation of Article X obligations by all states parties, and maintaining the readiness of the Technical Secretariat to coordinate and deliver assistance. Lastly, Article XI references chemical safety and security management, enhancing lab capabilities, expanding chemical knowledge, and information exchange.

Kazi Russel Pervez was the final panelist and he explained that Bangladesh was the first country to implement the HOSPREP Project. HOSPREP institutional capacity building initiatives of the OPCW Technical Secretariat. Its focus is on preparing the capabilities of an institution or facility in case of a chemical emergency. The HOSPREP programme began after the 1995 sarin attack in Tokyo, Japan. Hospitals had the primary responsibility to treat those who were victims of the attack, but there was no plan for chemical weapons attacks. The HOSPREP approach is to create a project team that assess the extent to which states parties' medical facilities have planned in the event of a chemical attack.

The discussion touched on the views from some states that the OPCW is being political or politicised. OPCW representatives explained that by definition, there is a political element to their work, but it is important to distinguish between what the Technical Secretariat does and how the work is given to them. Specifically, in regard to Syria, they were mandated to carry out investigation on all chemical weapons there and deliver reports. They also emphasised again that investigating Syria is not the only thing the OPCW does.

EVENT REPORT: THE URGENT NEED TO RETAIN MEANINGFUL HUMAN CONTROL OVER THE USE OF FORCE

Farah Bogani | Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

A Campaign to Stop Killer Robots side event on Monday, 21 October highlighted the urgent need to launch negotiations on a new ban treaty to retain meaningful human control over the use of force. More than 100 people attended the event, which attracted comments and questions from states including Austria, Germany, Netherlands, and Mexico.

Mary Wareham, global coordinator of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, moderated while the Campaign's friendly robot campaigner, David Wreckham, called to attention with its brief appeal for states to "launch negotiations on a treaty to ban killer robots."

UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu provided high-level remarks that drew attention to the Secretary-General's 2018 "Agenda for Disarmament" and his serious concerns over lethal autonomous weapons systems. She reiterated the Secretary-General's call for a ban on fully autonomous weapons to ensure "human control over the use of force is always retained" and commended the tireless efforts of the Campaign's in "providing impetus to the diplomatic process" and its "imagination and inclusiveness."

Liz O'Sullivan is a member of the International Committee for Robot Arms Control (ICRAC), who has worked in the artificial intelligence (AI) industry for the past eight years, most recently for Clarifai, a small New York-based company that provides computer vision technology. She highlighted six fundamental technology flaws that states should consider regarding fully autonomous weapons, including algorithmic bias, the risk of hacking, the 'black box' created by applied deep learning, failure

to consider context and causality in decision-making, a limited understanding of how machines, such as drone swarms, would interact with one another in a real-life conflict situation, and the speed of machines executing decisions.

As a young Scout from Colombia, Mariana Sanz described how she and her fellow Scouts first learned about killer robots during the World Scout Jamboree held in July 2019, where the Campaign had an interactive booth. She expressed particular fear that states will develop autonomous weapons despite the obvious risks to civilians. Sanz shared fears this would someday be her future and urged states to take action to negotiate a ban, because "if we wait for the youth of today to be in positions of power, it's going to be too late."

Nobel Peace Laureate Jody Williams, chair of the Nobel Women's Initiative, described killer robots as an ethical boundary that states may seek to cross for the sake of military power and urged countries to find their moral compass and avoid relegate the decision to take a life to a machine. Williams said states at the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) should move from talk to action by delivering the urgently needed ban treaty. Responding to a question claiming that existing international law is sufficient, Williams reminded delegates that states felt similarly about landmines and cluster munitions, until their horrific consequences on civilians were acknowledged and acted on.

In closing the discussion, Sanz called on states to "act, act, act" now as the reality of fully autonomous weapons draws nearer each day.

EVENT REPORT: THE ROLE OF THE ATT IN PREVENTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Danielle Samler | Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy

Control Arms and the Permanent Mission of Ireland hosted a side event on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and its role in addressing gender-based violence (GBV) pursuant to Article 7(4) of the Treaty, which states that when making risk assessments, state parties to the ATT “shall take into account the risk of the conventional arms...being used to commit or facilitate serious acts of gender based violence or serious acts of violence against women and children.”

The event focused on a training conducted by Control Arms in May of 2019 that had the aim of teaching export licensing officials from countries in central and eastern Europe about how to assess for the risk of GBV when considering authorising a weapons license. The goals were to increase knowledge, build capacity of officials involved in arms transfer decisions, and to increase communication across governments and across sectors. Speakers included both participants in, and organisers of, the training. Samara Gintere, of the Latvia government, and Iulia Vladescu of Romania shared the experiences they had participating in the training. Allison Pytlak from Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom and Anna Crowe, a lecturer on Law and the Assistant Director of the International Human Rights Clinic at Harvard Law School provided reflections as facilitators and organisers of the training.

Speakers highlighted that the most important things they took away from this training included that there are different types of gender-based violence, how it is perceived by different states, the importance of open dialogue and sharing of best practices, and how GBV risk assessment can be integrated into other policy frameworks.

Both Ms. Gintere and Ms. Vladescu pointed out that the training was an important way to open up communication and dialogue as well as share best practices among governments. This open dialogue can help capacity building as well as confidence building measures among states when addressing GBV. Not only were governments able to interact with each other in a more personal way, but the participation of and interaction with civil society was an important component for keeping dialogue open. Ms. Pytlak pointed out the links between the ATT and other policy frameworks such as human rights law, international humanitarian law, and particularly the Women Peace and Security Agenda (WPS).

Speakers, as well those in the audience, also agreed on the importance of ensuring that commitments made in UN settings have impact and assist those they are intended to help. Civil society representatives from Cameroon spoke from the floor about relevant trainings and activities they have conducted. There were also urgings to close the gap between arms control policy and arms control

EVENT REPORT: SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Amelie Namuroy | International Action Network on Small Arms

Several side events related to small arms and light weapons (SALW) took place in the margins of the third week of First Committee. The International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) and the

Permanent Mission of Ghana organised one on 23 October to discuss the merits of bottom-up versus top-down approaches to controlling SALW. Ms. Asha Challenger of Antigua and Barbuda chaired the event.

Mr. Fred Frimpong of the Ghana Mission underscored that despite important progress made in implementing the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms (UNPoA), many legal and normative issues remain. He called for international cooperation and for states to continue building their legal frameworks, share information, and report on their progress.

Mr. Daniel Prins of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) emphasised, however, that progress can and has been difficult to achieve when the current multilateral approach to the UNPoA rests largely on states with different SALW issues on the ground regarding spending much time trying to come to global consensus on an outcome document at UNPoA meetings. He suggested adding a new approach to strengthen UNPoA implementation in which countries set their own voluntary national goals on SALW—similar to frameworks such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—and use UNPoA meetings to report on their progress, exchange information and practices, and match needs with resources. Such an approach would also introduce more measurability of implementation, according to the UN Secretary-General's 2019 report on the illicit trade in SALW (A/74/187).

Dr. Natalie Goldring of IANSA used the issue of ammunition to demonstrate that it's possible to link bottom up and top down approaches to controlling SALW. She also said that ammunition could be used as a test of the extent to which states have implemented commitments they made at the Review Conference (RevCon3) on the UNPoA. She suggested that bottom-up approaches at the local and national level could include efforts to ban particularly dangerous types of ammunition such as high-capacity magazines. She argued to prevent diversion, states need to control and trace weapons and their ammunition from the point of manufacture. Top-down approaches at the global and regional level could reduce the supply of the weapons and ammunition that fuel conflicts, while also increasing

attention to the destruction of surplus and excessive weapons and their ammunition.

Mr. Ivan Marques of IANSA in Brazil emphasised that it is important to follow the tracks of RevCon3 to identify what cannot be left out of the 2020 seventh Biennial Meeting of States (BMS7), the next UNPoA meeting. Two fundamental advances made at RevCon3 that should be pursued, he asserted, were the recognition that the participation of women should be improved in decision-making processes, and that efforts should be made toward the control and management of ammunition stockpiles. He added that it is crucial to better assess how the illicit trade in SALW influences crime rates as well as other global issues such as climate change effects.

Representing IANSA from a youth perspective, Ms. Shivani Somaiya discussed the nexus between armed violence and climate change. Her statement called for urgent control over the one billion guns in circulation worldwide in order to safeguard the future of youth, and she gave an example of how a local IANSA organisation in Africa has already begun activities to address both threats.

UNODA also held a side event on 24 October to launch the Saving-Lives Entity (SALIENT), a new UN trust facility. SALIENT will be piloted in countries chosen by UN country teams, and will provide funding and guidance from UNODA and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) to comprehensively help countries prevent armed violence and control SALW.

On 25 October, UNODA held a third SALW-related side event "Gender-responsive small arms control: from guidance to implementation" with the Small Arms Survey (SAS), the European Union, and the Canadian Mission to share details of a new project being undertaken with civil society, including IANSA, to more effectively mainstream gender into the small arms process. The SAS launched its new handbook on gender-sensitive arms control.

EVENT REPORT: ATT MONITOR REPORT LAUNCH

Katherine Young | ATT Monitor Project at Control Arms

Transparency and reporting is a core element for export policy that serves as a confidence-building measure and contributes to peace and security, noted Peter Horne of Australia as chair of a side event sponsored by Control Arms and the governments of Netherlands and Australia, with participation by Germany and the ATT Baseline Assessment Project (ATT-BAP). During this event, Katherine Young of the ATT Monitor project of Control Arms and Rachel Stohl of Stimson's ATT-BAP presented two reports that contribute to effective monitoring of ATT transparency and reporting obligations.

Sachi Claringbould of the Netherlands described the lack of progress on reporting as disappointing but underlined the need for a monitoring mechanism such as the ATT Monitor. She highlighted the ATT Monitor's thematic chapter on gender, gender-based violence, and the ATT, which includes examples of states' practice. To understand how states are implementing article 7.4 of the ATT, interviews were conducted with licencing officials from states parties. This was a limited sample and provides a snapshot to illustrate some of the similarities and differences in existing practice that can serve as a baseline for further discussion.

Paul Kaiser of Germany highlighted trends from the 2017 and 2018 annual reports, such as the steady decline in reporting rates and a clear need for capacity building on this important issue. Both the ATT Monitor and ATT-BAP pointed to examples of decreased public reporting, both for initial and annual reports, as well as a high percentage of annual reports that lack enough information to properly assess whether Treaty obligations were met. A detailed analysis from the ATT-BAP identified further worrying trends, which include an increased lack of knowledge over arms transfers and difficulty in assessing the application of the ATT.

Looking forward, all side event panellists agreed on the importance of continued dialogue between all stakeholders to the ATT transparency and reporting obligations and emphasised the role of civil society and research organisations, such as the ATT Monitor and ATT-BAP, in maintaining effective monitoring. Next year will mark five years of reporting and presents a good opportunity to look more in-depth at trends and patterns.

EVENT REPORT: THE ATT STATES PARTIES MEETINGS

Aaron Lainé | Control Arms

This annual First Committee side event provided an opportunity to look back at the achievements made in advance of and during the Fifth Conference of States Parties (CSP5) to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), presided over by Latvia, and to discuss expectations and aspirations for CSP6, under the leadership of Argentina.

Ambassador Pildegovičs of Latvia expressed Latvia's satisfaction at the outcome of CSP5, highlighting the "adoption of a draft action plan that aims to offer

a better understanding of the gendered impact of arms, to strengthen the implementation of the GBV criteria in the ATT as well as gender representation in ATT meetings and as other disarmament and arms control fora". When describing progress made during Latvia's presidency, Ambassador Pildegovičs made references to the eight new states that joined the Treaty, the successful ATT resolution at the 73rd session of First Committee, as well as his country's efforts to contribute to Treaty implementation and improving rates of reporting.

CSP6 President Ambassador Carlos Foradori of Argentina spoke about the importance of building on the work done so far by the previous presidency to advance Treaty implementation and universalisation. He stressed in particular the progress made on tackling diversion during the Japanese presidency and announced that the theme of CSP6 will be “transparency and information sharing for the prevention and combating of conventional arms diversion to the illicit market.” He said there is a need to strike a balance between increasing transparency and information sharing and maintaining confidentiality of sensitive information. He also announced that the Working Group on Transparency and Reporting will continue to be co-chaired by Belgium and Mexico while Switzerland will be replaced as the chair of the Working Group on Effective Treaty Implementation by the Republic of Korea.

The role of the ATT Secretariat is to support, both administratively and substantively, the ATT CSP President and the ATT Bureau and to contribute to the development of the programme of work for the ATT process, explained the Head of the ATT Secretariat Dumisani Dladla. He also stressed that the ATT Secretariat plays an important role in ensuring a smooth transition between the

Latvian and Argentinian presidencies. He likewise highlighted the important role the Voluntary Trust Fund plays in supporting states in implementing the Treaty as well as in strengthening their record keeping and reporting capacity. In the spirit of cooperation, Mr. Dladla emphasised the need to work as a team to reach the Treaty’s full potential.

Raluca Muresan, Programme Manager at Control Arms, outlined the role civil society plays in supporting the Treaty process, and stressed areas of concern, such as the continued armed transfers to warring parties in Yemen in violation of Article 6.4 of the ATT. She highlighted the many contributions that civil society made over the past year at the CSP5 and associated meetings, and outlined key priorities for the next year including a regional focus on Latin America and the Caribbean to strengthen ATT implementation, energise efforts to ensure public comprehensive and timely reporting and push for high normative standards as states parties. In response to a question regarding measuring the effects of the ATT, Ms. Muresan explained that although measuring impact on the ground is difficult, clear lines can be drawn from court decisions made in places like the UK and Italy on the legality of arms transfers to the Saudi-led coalition, as well as the commendable positions of several governments that have halted arms transfers to the coalition.



Photo by Control Arms

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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.

Reaching Critical Will is your primary source for information, documents, and analysis about the United Nations General Assembly First Committee and other multilateral disarmament conferences and processes.

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