

# FIRST COMMITTEE MONITOR

*NGO Reporting on the United Nations General Assembly  
First Committee on Disarmament and International Security  
3 October–1 November 2011*

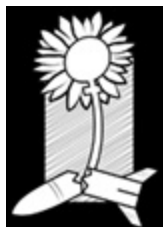
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*Contributing organizations and projects to this edition:*  
Global Security Institute  
Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy  
NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security  
Reaching Critical Will of WILPF



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COVER IMAGE: Daniel Gherca (Romania), winner of  
the Nuclear Crystal Ball Contest held by the World  
Federation of United Nations Associations in 2011.  
See <http://www.wfuna.org/nuclear-crystal-ball-winners>.

*The views in this publication are not necessarily those  
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- News and information about civil society engagement for a nuclear weapon free world.



**Editorial: Revitalization or procrastination?**

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

As delegates wrapped up the second week of First Committee, they began tabling their draft resolutions for the Committee's consideration. While most of the texts will not be circulated until next week, there are several competing drafts that seek to revitalize multilateral disarmament negotiations and begin substantive work on the Conference on Disarmament (CD)'s four core issues.

Details of these proposals can be found in this week's Disarmament Machinery article. In brief, the draft resolution submitted by Austria, Mexico, and Norway puts the CD on notice: while it urges the CD to adopt and implement a programme of work next year, it also has a contingency plan—for the General Assembly's 2012 session to consider alternatives for beginning substantive work on all four issues on the CD's agenda. Meanwhile, the draft resolution submitted by the Netherlands, South Africa, and Switzerland does not provide a mechanism for initiating work this year or next but instead seeks to slowly explore and consolidate options for moving forward. Finally, the Canadian delegation's draft seeks only to begin work on a fissile materials treaty—while it calls for the establishment of a group of governmental experts on the subject, it doesn't appear to have a mechanism for triggering negotiations at any particular time.

These three proposals offer a menu of options for moving forward, but only one of them provides a clear opportunity for substantive work on all issues in the near future. As the Norwegian delegation said in its nuclear cluster statement, the Austria-Mexico-Norway proposal “shows that alternative options are available if we really want to break out of the long-lasting impasse.”

Many delegations argue that the paralysis in the CD is caused by the lack of political will by a few states—either by Pakistan regarding fissile materials or the nuclear weapon states, in varying combinations, on the other

three core issues. Those states that firmly believe that political will is what perpetuates the deadlock should be putting great effort into breaking the status quo and issuing their support for initiatives that seek to overcome this hostage situation in the CD and begin substantive work on the four core issues.

As the Archbishop Chullikatt of the Holy See said during the nuclear cluster, “Peace must be built through law and law can only be realized if reason prevails.” He also emphasized that “the force of law must always prevail over the law of force.” In this vein, Costa Rica's Ambassador Ulibarri, whose nuclear cluster statement focused on building democratic institutions and strengthening the rule of law, argued that any actions taken to revitalize multilateral disarmament negotiations “must have human security as its focus.” These statements focusing on law and human security remind us that the CD does not exist in a vacuum—it is not simply an archaic institution that has ceased functioning amidst 21st century challenges. It is a body created to develop collective security through disarmament that has since fallen into a quagmire through the subversion of the guiding rule of consensus into a veto by several nuclear weapon possessors. As the Norwegian delegation said on Friday, “Substance should guide our methods of work, and we should not let ourselves be blocked by our own institutional structures.” If the CD cannot commence work on issues of nuclear disarmament, UN member states must find another way to begin this work.

“Can the political will around a determined and constructive way forward that breaks the stalemate be mustered?” asked Austrian Ambassador Kmentt. This is the main question before First Committee this year and its answer will have profound implications for the realization of collective and human security. •

## **Revitalizing Multilateral Disarmament: Assessing the Draft Resolutions**

**Tuesday, 18 October 2011**

**12:15-1:50 PM • Conference Room A**

- Ray Acheson, Project Director, Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)
- John Burroughs, Executive Director, Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy
- Paul Meyer, Fellow in International Security, Centre for Dialogue, Simon Fraser University; Senior Fellow, The Simons Foundation; former Canadian Ambassador for Disarmament

## Disarmament machinery

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Expressions of frustration with the Conference on Disarmament (CD) continued to mount during the second week of First Committee. As states engaged in a thematic debate on nuclear weapons issues, any reference to fissile materials inevitably addressed the ongoing stalemate in the CD. However, the vast majority of states want much more than just a fissile materials treaty from the CD. Above all, the deadlock in the forum has provided an opportunity for continued stalling on multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations and for maintenance of the status quo. Diverging views over the best way forward persist, though it appears that some positions are aimed at preventing progress rather than facilitating it.

Several delegations emphasized that the CD's rules of procedure should not be changed and no efforts should be made to initiate work on its agenda items. This position ensures that progress on any issue related to disarmament or arms control will be stifled indefinitely, as after fifteen years it is clear that some states do not want to move forward on some issues and others on other issues. Singapore's delegation cautioned against holding any one issue hostage to another in the CD, yet this is exactly what has happened.

### *Views on a fissile materials treaty*

Bangladesh and the United Kingdom argued that fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) negotiations must take place in the CD because it would ensure the participation of all nuclear weapon possessors. Iran, Pakistan, and Syria's delegations likewise rejected proposals to go outside the CD to negotiate a fissile materials treaty, arguing it would undermine CD. Still other delegations have continuously argued that if work in the CD cannot progress on fissile materials, then member states must decide to either commence work on this issue outside the body.

While the UK delegation argued that the problem with the CD is not "an intrinsic structural problem with the institution itself" but rather that the stalemate "is caused by one country blocking the will of the majority," it is in fact more than one country. One country may be blocking FMCT negotiations, but other countries are preventing progress on the other three core issues. The Pakistani delegation agrees with the United Kingdom that the problems in the CD are not procedural, but instead argues that the stalemate is the fault of the nuclear weapon states, which do not want to pursue nuclear disarmament.

Reiterating that it will not support FMCT negotiations, Mr. Tarar, Deputy Permanent Representative of Pakistan, argued that no treaty can be negotiated in the CD that is contrary to any state's security interests. However, as several countries have pointed out, the lack of negotiations on issues related to nuclear disarmament

and non-proliferation violate their security interests, because they depend on the rule of law to protect them from the countries that possess these weapons of mass destruction. Spain's delegation argued that "individual perceptions regarding national security" cannot be an excuse to get in the way of the development of collective security measures, which is what the CD was constructed to develop. Furthermore, as Ambassador Ulibarri of Costa Rica said, "The challenge of arms and violence also transcends the classical premises of national security."

Some delegations have also pointed out that one cannot know whether a treaty is contrary to one's security interests until it has been negotiated and that, as German Ambassador Hoffman argued, "states will be able to protect their security interest in the course of any possible negotiations." In his thematic debate statement, Mr. Tarar responded to this assertion by asking, if this is true, why do the states blocking commencement of negotiations on the CD's other three core issues maintain that their concerns cannot be addressed through negotiations? This is a valid point. Many delegations assert that FMCT is the only issue "ripe" for negotiation, but in reality, many more countries are interested in comprehensive multilateral negotiations for nuclear disarmament, while virtually every non-nuclear weapon state is ready to negotiate a legally-binding treaty on negative security assurances, yet these issues are not considered "ripe" by the major powers.

### *Advancing multilateral disarmament negotiations?*

There are multiple proposals out at First Committee to revitalize multilateral disarmament negotiations.

After some uncertainty, Austria, Mexico, and Norway decided to table their proposal, which aims to initiate substantive work on the CD's four core issues through General Assembly open-ended working groups. The proposal has already been watered down from an initial non-paper circulated during the opening week, certainly because the sponsors sought to garner a broader base of support for the resolution. The elements in the non-paper provided for two working groups: one on nuclear disarmament, which included multilateral work for a nuclear weapons free world, negative security assurances, and fissile materials—ensuring that each is embedded in an explicit disarmament context—and a second group on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. These working groups were to be automatically triggered if the CD is unable to adopt a programme of work by the end of the first part of its 2012 session. The version tabled now has four open-ended working groups, one per issue, which means fissile materials is no longer embedded in a nuclear disarmament context. This change was likely made to strike a balance between those who believe

*continued on next page*





*Disarmament machinery (cont.)*

FMCT is the “ripest” issue for negotiation and those who want to see simultaneous efforts on all the issues. Furthermore, the draft resolution now gives the CD another whole year to reach agreement on and implement a programme of work and if it failed to do so, First Committee would have to revisit the issue again next year. This change was probably made to reassure some delegations that the sponsors would prefer to work in the CD context to reach consensus.

While the text has lost some of its original boldness, it has had a tangible impact on discussions here at First Committee and has provoked other delegations to offer more benign proposals. The Netherlands, South Africa, and Switzerland have tabled a draft resolution that invites states to “explore, consider and consolidate options, proposals and elements” for a revitalization of the UN disarmament machinery as a whole, including the CD; urges the CD to adopt a programme of work in 2012; and recognizes the need to “regularly take stock” of “all relevant efforts” to initiate negotiations over the next year. It does not provide a mechanism for initiating work this year or next but instead seeks to garner consensus along the lowest common denominator. Perhaps the authors view it as a bridge-building text that will help slowly build more support for more substantive revitalization efforts in the future, though after having already spent 15 years in deadlock, it would be disappointing if states were not ready to try something a little bolder this year.

Finally, the Canadian delegation has tabled a draft text that deals exclusively with initiating work on fissile materials. While the draft tabled has not yet been circulated, an early version indicates that it will resolve to consider options for negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) if the CD doesn’t adopt a programme of work by the end of 2012; request the UN Secretary-General to establish a group of governmental experts in March 2012 “to consider options, including the necessary legal and procedural requirements, for the negotiation of” an FMCT; and support other processes such as a group of scientific experts to continue preparatory work on definitions, scope, and verification procedures. This early version did not include a mechanism to begin substantive work on any of the CD’s other core issues, nor does it appear to “trigger” the commencement of negotiations on an FMCT at any particular time.

Since none of these texts has been formally circulated, there has not been debate on them directly in plenary meetings. However, many delegations, from Peru to Montenegro to Iraq, have indicated that they will support the General Assembly taking up issues on the CD’s agenda and urged all other states to demonstrate flexibility. Others, such as Australia, Japan, Germany, and the Netherlands, as fellow members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, issued support

for Canada’s draft resolution. France also expressed its “sincere appreciation” for the Canadian resolution.

Meanwhile, the United States and the United Kingdom indicated again last week that they have been meeting here in New York to discuss possible ways forward at the CD, though they did not present details of their efforts.

During thematic debate, Pakistan’s delegation questioned why the leading “critics of the CD” do not seek to break the 32 year deadlock on nuclear disarmament, which is the *raison d’être* of the forum. However, he did not indicate his delegation’s feelings on the Austria- Mexico-Norway proposal for beginning substantive work on all of the CD’s issues in Geneva—a proposal which should address Pakistan’s concerns. The Pakistanis and many others argue that if no consensus can be found on beginning negotiations on a fissile materials treaty, than the CD should take up work on its other core issues. The Austria- Mexico-Norway proposal allows for just that—it would initiative substantive work on all four of the issues, allowing for negotiation on any of them, which would be determined by the working groups. Furthermore, given that virtually every delegation other than those of the nuclear weapon states are interested in including existing stocks in a fissile materials treaty, it is likely that negotiations in any UN forum would have to address the issue.

In the end, there is no consensus on how to move forward with the CD, just as there is no consensus on what treaty it should next negotiate. Liechtenstein’s delegation argued that the international community “cannot simply put the CD aside as an ineffective procedural tool that can only start operating once we have reached a world without conflict.” That said, Deputy Permanent Representative Barriga pointed out that the General Assembly has not yet giving the CD a deadline to commence work, indicating that this might be the only way forward at this point. The General Assembly has responsibility for disarmament; all of its member states now have the opportunity to help determine whether the status quo they speak out against is perpetuated or overcome. •



## CD membership and civil society participation

Gabriella Irsten | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

The expansion of the Conference on Disarmament (CD)'s membership has been discussed for many years, yet no action has been taken. In First Committee this year, Serbia, among many other states, supported the appointment of a special coordinator "as a means of providing a new impetus to addressing, in its view, one of the most pressing issues of membership expansion."

Portugal's delegation, which is an observer state to the CD, pointed out that "twelve years have gone by since the last review of the CD's membership and no further action has since been taken." Ambassador José Moraes Cabral argued that the Conference needs to be more open and inclusive. Denmark's delegation, also an observer state to the CD, agreed with Portugal. Ambassador Theis Truelsen stated that the CD "should be a legitimate forum for negotiations. With only a third of UN member states being members of CD, the conference clearly lacks this legitimacy. This is also contrary to the declaration of the first session on disarmament where it

is said that "all states have the right to participate in disarmament negotiations."

Some states, albeit vaguely, suggested that the extension should also include non-state actors, i.e. experts and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Mr Abdul Hannan, permanent representative of Bangladesh to the UN in Geneva, said that "we must recognize the need for making the CD more receptive to the global voices on disarmament by creating greater space for participation by other relevant stakeholders." Other delegations that have expressed their readiness to accept more participation by civil society in the UN disarmament machinery are South Africa, Indonesia, Chile, and the Holy See. While many of these calls were in regard to conventional arms, many delegations also believe that a deeper engagement of civil society in the CD would be beneficial to the Conference. UN High Representative Sergio Duarte emphasized the important role that civil society has had in pushing work on disarmament forward. •

UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR DISARMAMENT RESEARCH

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(presenting selected background papers)

Monday, 17 October 2011, 13:15-14:30

Conference Room A

### TCBMs in Outer Space Activities

#### *Looking Back and Moving Forward*

Wednesday, 19 October 2011, 13:15-14:30

Conference Room I

### International Law and War in Cyberspace

#### *Many Questions, Few Answers*

Thursday, 20 October 2011, 13:15-14:30

Conference Room I

## IDEAS FOR PEACE AND SECURITY



## Nuclear disarmament

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Nuclear disarmament continues to be priority of most UN member states addressing First Committee, which see the lack of progress on the issue since 1945 becoming increasingly untenable since the end of the Cold War. Many expected that as a more interdependent and complex world order developed, nuclear weapons would become ancient relics of a violent and dangerous past. Yet, as Switzerland's Ambassador Fasel noted, "efforts toward nuclear disarmament seem to be random rather than systematic, coordinated and verified. They often go hand in hand with budget cuts or technological developments instead of being based on a concerted approach and a genuine desire to disarm." While the nuclear weapon states addressing First Committee and other multilateral fora reassure the international community that they are in full compliance with their article VI obligations to disarm, the vast majority of states are not convinced. Indeed, as many others before him, Ambassador Kwon of the Republic of Korea called on nuclear weapon states to demonstrate a "higher standard of compliance" with their disarmament obligations.

In his op-ed marking the 25th anniversary of the historic summit on nuclear disarmament in Reykjavik, former USSR president Mikhail Gorbachev warned, "By failing to propose a compelling plan for nuclear disarmament, the US, Russia, and the remaining nuclear powers are promoting through inaction a future in which nuclear weapons will inevitably be used." This comment mirrors the sentiment in First Committee, where many delegations continued to express concern with the possible use of nuclear weapons and made it clear that they expect implementation of existing disarmament commitments as well as elaboration of new obligations.

Noting the difference between rhetoric and reality on nuclear disarmament, several states emphasized the importance of moving from discussion to action. In this vein, Serbia's Ambassador Starcevic called for "intensified joint efforts" to translate the 2010 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference outcome document into concrete results and the International Committee of the Red Cross called on states to fulfill the commitments undertaken at the NPT Review Conference as a "humanitarian, moral and political imperative."

The UK delegation said that the P5 has already begun work "to translate the RevCon final document from a Plan into tangible Action," though as the Egyptian delegation pointed out during general debate, what the P5 seem to consider actionable has a considerably narrower scope than what is actually in the NPT outcome document. At the same time, some of the nuclear weapon states—most notably France during the first week—rejected any calls for actions "beyond" what was agreed upon at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. In a slightly

more conciliatory tone, the Russian delegation likewise noted "growing expectations with regard to further steps in nuclear disarmament" and expressed its openness to "dialogue on this issue." However, it too indicated unwillingness to engage in further action in the near term, arguing that it is looking to "gather practical experience" from the implementation of New START and assess the treaty's "quality and viability".

However, several delegations said New START did not go far enough and called on the US and Russia to implement it quickly and continue adopting new measures. Indeed, experts such as Hans Kristensen of the Federation of American Scientists have described New START as a verification and confidence-building treaty rather than a reductions treaty. Furthermore, most non-nuclear weapon states have expressed their disappointment that the NPT action plan also did not go further than it did. For example, the Syrian delegation lamented that the NPT Review Conference did not produce a programme of work for nuclear disarmament within a time-bound framework. The Philippines again emphasized that work should begin on a nuclear weapons convention, while several delegations, including Chile, the Czech Republic, Germany, and the Philippines, called for work to begin on reducing tactical nuclear weapons.

A few delegates looked beyond the existing processes and structures for new and innovative ideas for engaging in substantive nuclear disarmament. Ambassador Cancela of Uruguay noted that there are many ongoing initiatives on nuclear disarmament and suggested that it would be beneficial to coordinate these existing initiatives so as to ensure that they converge in a constructive fashion within a clear-cut time frame. He also called for the elaboration of a decisive political message in which all players involved may come together to make headway on this agenda. Meanwhile, Sergio Duarte, UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, highlighted the success of UN Security Council resolution 1540 in helping to strengthen domestic infrastructure for preventing proliferation and lamented that a similar process has not been developed to ensure "that norms in the field of disarmament are reflected in mandates of specific agencies, domestic laws, military plans and doctrines, regulations, and policies."

One norm that many delegations are looking to further develop, so many decades after the Cold War, is that nuclear weapons reduce security for all states, including those that possess them. MERCOSUR and Associated States, as well as Austria, India, and Thailand, highlighted the importance of delegitimizing nuclear weapons as an instrument for international relations, arguing that their symbolic status as a tool of power is in impediment to disarmament, peace, and security. Austria's Ambassa-

## Nuclear proliferation

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Tensions continued building this week at First Committee as some delegations insisted on singling out others for alleged non-compliance with “non-proliferation obligations”. However, this is not a legally-defined term, whereas the safeguards agreements of each country are very specific. The varying opinions on obligations and compliance has resulted in a continuous flow of allegations and rights of reply between accusers and accused during First Committee plenary meetings, detracting from the work of the Committee to build consensus on vital issues of disarmament and international security.

In order to mitigate the rising tensions, especially from those emanating from calls for “strong responses” as issued by the Canadian delegation, Ms. Elsa Haile of Eritrea’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs urged that dialogue, rather than sanctions or threat or use of force, should be the central instrument for pursuing non-proliferation. Similarly, Swiss Ambassador Fasel said diplomacy is the only way to resolve issues of concern.

Furthermore, many delegations noted that nuclear disarmament is the only way to guarantee against proliferation, while Ambassador Kwon of the Republic of Korea called for deeper voluntary arsenal cuts as a way to increase the “moral authority and political legitimacy” of nuclear weapon possessors to call on non-nuclear weapon states to participate actively in strengthening non-proliferation mechanisms. Similarly, in his op-ed marking the 25th anniversary of the historic summit on nuclear disarmament in Reykjavik, former USSR president Mikhail Gorbachev suggested that if the nuclear weapon states fulfilled their article VI obligations on nuclear disarmament, it “would augment the diplomatic and moral capital available to diplomats as they strive to restrain nuclear proliferation in a world where more countries than ever have the wherewithal to construct a nuclear bomb.”

### *Vertical proliferation*

Despite the widespread recognition that disarmament will help facilitate non-proliferation, the modernization programmes of the nuclear weapon possessors continue, attracting increasing amounts of attention from the international community. Switzerland’s Ambassador Fasel criticized both the quantitative arsenal increases and the fact that “all nuclear powers are strengthening their arsenals at the qualitative level through modernization programmes.” Mr. Reza Najafi of Iran’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs lamented that some nuclear weapon states “continue to allocate billions of dollars to develop new types of nuclear weapons, build new nuclear weapons production facilities and modernize and replace such weapons.”

### *Strengthening the non-proliferation regime*

In addition to promoting disarmament as a means to non-proliferation, many delegations also reiterated the

importance of simultaneously strengthening measures against nuclear weapons proliferation to states and non-state actors. Switzerland’s delegation argued it is necessary to subject all nuclear material, including military material, to controls. Similarly, the Norwegian delegation emphasized the need to “secure all nuclear material from all sources.”

In this vein, Serbia’s delegation reported that it has been working with international partners to transfer irradiated nuclear fuel and enriched uranium from the Vinca Institute of Nuclear Science to the Russian Federation and thus no longer has enriched uranium in its territory, which it sees a way to prevent proliferation to non-state actors. Meanwhile, the Uruguayan delegation, speaking on behalf of MERCOSUR and Associated States, noted the Brazilian-Argentine Agency of Accounting and Control of Nuclear Material, the objective of which is to “guarantee both countries and the international community that all nuclear materials be used only for peaceful purposes.”

Several states highlighted the importance of implementing safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and ratifying the additional protocol, which they want to see become the standard non-proliferation toolkit. Japan’s delegation noted that the number of states with additional protocols increased from 102 to 110 over the past year and the Netherlands announced that it is granting 100,000 EUR to the IAEA’s efforts on universalization of the additional protocol.

### *Country-specific comments*

As noted above, a few delegations continued making country-specific comments:

**Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK).** A few delegations continued to cite concern with the DPRK’s nuclear programme. Some, such as Japan, called on the DPRK to abandon its nuclear weapons, uranium enrichment programme, and light water reactor construction activities. Canada’s delegation called on the DPRK to “demonstrate a sincere commitment to the de-nuclearization of the Korean peninsula, through concrete actions and not merely words.” Australia, France, and the Netherlands expressed concern over the DPRK’s “covert uranium enrichment capability”. Others, such as the Portuguese delegation, called on the DPRK to return to the NPT and its IAEA safeguards obligations. In a right of reply the DPRK representative reiterated that his country developed nuclear weapons because of the “hostile policy and nuclear threats of the US against the DPRK.”

**Iran.** A few delegations again called for resumption of the diplomatic process to resolve the issue over Iran’s nuclear programme. Oman’s delegation called for negotiation and dialogue for a peaceful solution that preserves security and stability in the region and the right of Iran to use nuclear technology. Saudi Arabia’s delegation said it

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*Nuclear proliferation (cont.)*

hopes that Iran's commitment to non-proliferation will "be shown in concrete action that eliminates the doubts about its nuclear program" and that resolves the crisis through peaceful means. The United Arab Emirates argued that while Iran has the right to develop nuclear power, it also has the obligation to implement its safeguards agreement and UN Security Council and IAEA resolutions.

However, some states took a harder line, insisting on Iran's obligation to "prove" the peaceful nature of its programme. Portugal's delegation expressed concern with the "lack of assurances" from Iran on its nuclear programme and urged the government to "engage without pre-conditions" in the "negotiation of a solution that gives credible and internationally verifiable assurances on the peaceful purpose of its programme." The Netherlands urged the same thing and also called on Iran to address the IAEA's outstanding. Similarly, Japan's delegation insisted that Iran "remove all suspicions from the international community and to win its confidence." Australia, Canada, and France expressed concern with the so-called "mounting evidence of the possible military dimensions" of the Iranian programme, though the Iranian delegation argued in a right of reply that this evidence is primarily based on forged documents. The Iranians have also pointed out that the IAEA continues to verify the non-diversion of declared nuclear materials at Iran's nuclear facilities in accordance with Iran's safeguards agreement, though the IAEA and Iran are at odds over other items that the IAEA considers "binding obligations" but that Iran insists have no legal basis.

**Israel.** The Israeli nuclear programme did not receive much comment this week, though again when it did warrant attention it was generally discussed this year in the context of the 2012 conference on the Middle East, which the international community hopes will help initiate the establishment of a zone free of mass destruction in the region. A few delegations called on Israel to accede to the NPT and to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards. In addition, the Iranian delegation accused the United States and France of supplying Israel with nuclear weapons and France of providing Israel with "missile technology and materials". In a right of reply, France requested the Iranian delegate to read the French President's statement on nuclear weapons.

**Syria.** Fewer delegations referred to Syria last week. France, the Netherlands, and Spain accused Syria of failing to comply with its safeguards obligations and the Netherlands "welcomed" the decision of the IAEA Board of Governors to report the issue to the UN Security Council. Canada and Portugal called on Syria to cooperate with the IAEA. Syria continued to deny in rights of reply that it was developing a nuclear weapon-related facility. •

*Nuclear disarmament (cont.)*

dor Kmentt argued that the alleged contribution of nuclear weapons towards stability through so-called "mutual deterrence" is "an unconvincing relict of the past."

He further argued that "the unimaginable humanitarian, environmental, health, and economic consequences of nuclear weapons renders them unusable weapons and an immoral concept for the conduct of international relations." Mr. Füllemann of the ICRC also emphasized the importance of building upon the recognition in the final document of the "catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons". He argued that more needs to be done to "inform policy makers, the media and public of the catastrophic human costs of these weapons, of the imperative that they are never again used and of the urgent need for a legally binding international instrument that will prohibit their use and lead to their elimination." •

**Outer space**

**Michael Dolmatch | Global Security Institute**

Delegations at First Committee placed little emphasis on issues related to prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) last week once deliberations on nuclear weapons began. The notable exception was Ambassador José Luis Cancela of Uruguay, who proposed that new multilateral tools are needed to advance the preservation of outer space for peaceful purposes.

Kazakhstan and Pakistan's delegation voiced frustration with the Conference on Disarmament's ineffectiveness with regard to PAROS. Kazakhstan specifically endorsed UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's efforts to revitalize the CD, but emphasized that Member States must take the initiative and "demonstrate an unequivocal political commitment to overcome differences." (See the Disarmament machinery article for more details on the CD's deadlock.) Mr. Israil Tilegen of Kazakhstan also argued that, in order to be effective on PAROS, the CD must engage with other international bodies relating to space exploration.

On Thursday, 13 October, the government of Canada hosted a side event on outer space issues in coordination with Project Ploughshares, a Canadian NGO. The event, "Space Security: the 2011 Space Security Index and Options for Space Diplomacy," marked the launch of the latest edition of the Space Security Index, which is published annually by Project Ploughshares. Mr. Cesar Jaramillo, Program Officer with Project Ploughshares, outlined the scope and utility of the Index in providing information and analysis on key trends and developments in the outer space field. Former Canadian Ambassador Paul Meyer also spoke at the event, outlining his perspectives on the challenges and opportunities for space security governance in the years ahead. •



## Gensuikyo's "Appeal for a Total Ban on Nuclear Weapons"

The Japan Council against A and H Bombs (Gensuikyo) sent a 16-member delegation to the United Nations in New York on Oct. 2-9 and submitted 1,029,031 signatures for a total ban on nuclear weapons to Ambassador Jarmo Viinanen of Finland, chair of the First Committee and Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, on Oct. 5.

The submitted signatures included those of 766 mayors, 97 assistant mayors, 557 chairpersons and 42 vice-chair persons of municipal councils and 131 chairpersons of local education boards. The number of the mayors who signed, alone, represents 44 percent of the 1,746 Japanese municipalities.

The signature campaign in support of the "Appeal for a Total Ban on Nuclear Weapons" was launched on February 15, 2011, to take a step forward for the realization of a nuclear weapon-free world. Persistent efforts were made to collect such number of signatures even in difficulties caused by the East Japan earthquake, tsunami and Fukushima nuclear power plant disaster.

The delegation also petitioned the representatives of 12 governments, including nuclear weapon states, and urged them to build consensus on the need to totally ban nuclear weapons.

The following is the paper presented at First Committee:

*October 2011*

*On the occasion of presenting the petition in support of the "Appeal for a Total Ban on Nuclear Weapons,"*

**We call on all UN member states to act for the start of negotiations on a nuclear weapon convention**

On the occasion of the Opening of the deliberation of the First Committee of the 66th UN General Assembly, we wish you very fruitful discussion and its outcome in promoting the UN's founding objective, the elimination of nuclear weapons, disarmament and peace.

Our organization, the Japan Council against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs (Gensuikyo), was founded on September 19, 1995 against the backdrop of mounting public demand for a ban on atomic and hydrogen bombs, triggered by the H-bomb test conducted by the United States on March 1, 1954 at the Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands, the Pacific. Since then, we have been continuing our work to reach our three basic goals of 1) preventing nuclear war, 2) a ban on and elimination of nuclear weapons and 3) the relief of the Hibakusha, the A-bomb sufferers, by organizing the World Conference against A and H Bombs every year since its first

one in 1955, disseminating stories of the Hibakusha and thus making known the damage and aftereffects of the A-bomb, organizing peace marches and signature campaigns at grassroots, and using many forms of actions.

The purpose of the visit of our delegation to the UN, this time, is submit to the UN General Assembly the signatures in support of the "Appeal for a Total Ban on Nuclear Weapons", which we launched on February 15, 2011 in Japan and in cooperation with many other peace groups around the world, and thus convey to the UN member states governments the deep desire of the Japanese people for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

We herewith submit the **1,029,031** signatures collected by September 30, 2011 in the form of this letter with the picture depicting them, and with some signatures, which we are asked to submit by mayors and other prominent persons. Among those who signed are 766 mayors, 97 assistant mayors, 557 chairpersons and 42 vice-chair persons of municipal councils and 131 chairpersons of local education boards. The number of the



mayors who signed, alone, represents 44 percent of the 1,746 Japanese municipalities. This petition was collected in regions, workshops or streets in both cold winter and hot summer, including in areas afflicted by the huge earthquake, tsunami and subsequent nuclear crisis at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant.

With the passing of 66 years since Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed with nuclear weapons, we are facing an important opportunity to set the world free of nuclear weapons. In May last year, on the eve of the NPT Review Conference, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said to us, representatives of international peace movements assembled in New York, that the world without nuclear weapons was now "on the horizon", and encouraged us to continue our action.



*Gensuikyo appeal (cont.)*

The NPT Conference agreed on achieving “the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons” as “principle” and “objective”. It further agreed on the action plans that the nuclear weapons states would “accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals”, that all states would “make special efforts to establish a necessary framework” for it, and that the Conference noted the five point proposal of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, including the negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention.

We also noted the voting results of the nuclear disarmament-related resolutions by the UNGA session in last December. Above all, the resolution put forward by Malaysia and 38 other countries, calling for a start of multilateral negotiations leading to an early conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention drew support from 133 countries, including China, one of the five nuclear weapons states, and India and Pakistan, which both developed their nuclear arsenals, staying outside NPT, and even North Korea.

Combined with the fact that of 189 parties to NPT, as many as 184 countries are placing themselves under the obligation of Article 2 of the treaty, i.e., of not developing or acquiring nuclear weapons on themselves, the above vote result clearly shows that if only a handful nuclear weapons make a decision, the start of the negotiations of a treaty totally banning nuclear weapons is possible even now.

Unfortunately, even now, two years after “a world without nuclear weapons” was promised by the special session of the UN Security Council in 2009, the path to a total ban on nuclear weapons is still blocked by such arguments and doctrines as “nuclear deterrence” or “ex-

tended deterrence”. However, if nuclear powers and their allies remain asserting that nuclear weapons are a guarantee for security, a nuclear weapon-free world will never be realized, nor is the danger of further proliferation of nuclear weapons be overcome.

We call on all governments that are committed to a world without nuclear weapons to work to overcome the wrong “nuclear deterrence” assumption, and take concrete steps to start the process of totally banning nuclear weapons.

We support all efforts to fulfill past agreements, including further cut in nuclear arsenals of the US and Russia, early entry into force of CTBT, the start of negotiations and early conclusion of FMCT, diminishing the role of nuclear weapons in the security policy, and the convening an international conference on a Middle East zone free of the weapons of mass destruction in 2012. We also want to emphasize that the effort to build consensus on the need to totally ban nuclear weapons is important even to promote each specific measure we listed above.

On March 11 this year, a huge earthquake and tsunami, and then nuclear meltdown at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant hit the eastern half of Japan. As the movement that has worked for “No More Hibakusha”, we cannot allow any further damage wrought to the humans by nuclear radiation. We are renewing our determination to strengthen our solidarity action for the switch on energy resources away with nuclear energy to sustainable energy. As Fukushima tragically shows, when a severe accident occurs, the human race does not know to contain the radiation within any given area, nor has any means by which to drastically clean up environment. We therefore sincerely wish that on this issue, the international community will endeavor to build a consensus to move towards safe and secure, sustainable energy resources. •



Photo by Tim Wright



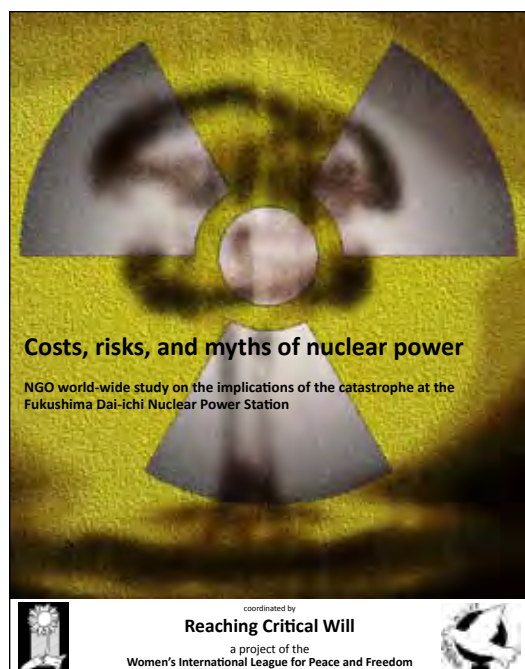
## Nuclear energy and the fuel cycle

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will  
of WILPF

Issues related to nuclear energy and the fuel chain were not as robustly discussed as during the opening week of First Committee. Similar to last week, several delegations touched upon the disaster at the Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Station as a clarion call for addressing problems with nuclear power. The delegate of the Holy See noted that the disaster at Fukushima obliges the international community to review nuclear safety and security standards and procedures and the Netherlands joined “the international call for elevating the safety of nuclear power plants to the highest level and strengthening nuclear safety measures worldwide.”

Liberia’s delegation suggested that the Secretary-General’s high-level meeting on nuclear safety and security will help promote the highest international standards and put the issue “on the front-burner of negotiations.” Nicaragua’s delegation called upon the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to strengthen emergency relief mechanisms for nuclear disasters. Singapore and Oman’s delegations welcomed the high-level meeting and the IAEA action plan on nuclear safety.

Singapore’s delegation also announced that it would be holding an Asia-Europe nuclear safety seminar in 2012 to address regional cooperation on emergency preparedness and response capabilities, while Thailand’s delegation announced that it has proposed to its ASEAN colleagues the establishment of “an informal network among nuclear regulatory bodies or relevant authorities in the region to enhance regularly capacity to ensure safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the region.” •



## Negative security assurances

Tayyaba Khokhar | NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security

During the thematic debate on nuclear weapons, a number of states again raised the issue of negative security assurances (NSAs), stressing the need for a legally-binding instrument but also looking at assurances as a moral obligation. The states that mentioned NSAs this week included Bangladesh, Iraq, Uruguay, Pakistan, South Africa, Kazakhstan, Tanzania, Senegal, Algeria, and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

States such as Senegal, DPRK, Tanzania, and Uruguay advocated for a legally-binding instrument on NSAs. Bangladesh’s delegation felt that existing assurances given to non-nuclear weapon states by nuclear states were not enough to make them feel secure. “Bangladesh, therefore, continues to stress on the need for commencing negotiations on a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument for NSAs as a matter of priority,” said Ambassador Hannan. Algeria’s delegation echoed this sentiment that non-nuclear weapons states still feel threatened due to a lack of legally binding NSAs.

Meanwhile, Pakistan and South Africa’s delegations added a moral component to the issue of NSAs. South Africa’s Ambassador Gumbi asserted that non-nuclear weapon states have a right to NSAs pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, while Pakistan’s delegation equated NSAs to a moral obligation, stating, “Intransigence on achieving progress on this issue is tantamount to supporting a morally reprehensible policy of using nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states.” Mr. Tarar of Pakistan stressed that NSAs would not undermine the security interests of any state and would only lead to global security. Finally, the DPRK delegate insisted that “international relations in which a certain country is free to pose nuclear threats while others are exposed to the threats should no longer be tolerable.” He argued that states should abandon doctrines of a preemptive strike using nuclear weapons and adopt legally-binding NSAs. •



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## Nuclear weapon free zones

Thomas Garofalo | NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security

On 14 October 2011, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon announced that the 2012 conference on establishing a weapons of mass destruction free zone (WMD-FZ) in the Middle East would be hosted by Finland and the facilitator will be Jaakko Laajava, Under Secretary of State in Finland's Foreign Ministry. This news was welcomed in First Committee by the Arab Group, the European Union, the United States, United Kingdom, and Russian Federation, and Ireland. Israel did not make a statement. The Iranian delegation reiterated that it has been a supporter of such a zone in the Middle East since it was first proposed in 1974. The Iranian delegation took note of the announcement and indicated it would elaborate its position further during the debate on regional disarmament and security.

The Chair of First Committee, Ambassador Jarmo Viinanen of Finland, read out a statement on behalf of his country. He indicated this government is "humbled by the challenges ahead" but is also confident that the shared understanding and commitment to this long-standing goal will help them to succeed in this task. The Finnish government noted that constructive deliberation and cooperation by all stakeholders are vital and hoped that all countries in region will come together for dialogue.

While states continued to call for the success of this conference during the thematic debate on nuclear weapons, it is not the only nuclear weapon free zone (NWFZ) with which states are currently concerned.

The Treaty on the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (SEANWFZ) was signed in 1995 by 10 Southeast Asian nations. This Treaty included a protocol to be signed by the P5 to respect the provisions of the Treaty, to not interfere in its implementation in any way, and to commit to negative security assurances for member countries. Minister Counselor of Thailand Mrs. Siriporn Chaimongkol stated, "Thailand and our fellow ASEAN members have continued close consultations with Nuclear-Weapon-States ... and hopes that Nuclear-Weapon-States will be able to accede to the Protocol very soon." The Russian Federation indicated its support for signing the protocols and cited the recent talks between the P5 and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Geneva and New York recently. Mr. Victor Vasiliev also stated, "We hope that consultations among the P-5 and ASEAN countries ... will help remove the remaining questions and open the way to signing a relevant protocol on security assurances."

Meanwhile, the Secretary General of the Agency for Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), Ambassador Ubeda of Costa Rica, addressed First Committee as the representative of the only NWFZ with a standing secretariat. She indicated

that OPANAL looks forward to commemorating the 45th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco. She further indicated OPANAL's support for the 2012 conference on developing a WMD-FZ in the Middle East. •

## De-alerting nuclear weapons

Gabriella Irsten | Reaching Critical Will/WILPF

The side event on "Operational Readiness of Nuclear Weapon Systems" hosted by PND Nuclear Flashpoints kick-started the second week of First Committee. The event engaged experts from civil society and governments to discuss the issue of de-alerting nuclear weapons. The fact that a significant number of nuclear weapons are still today on high alert and capable of being launched in only a few minutes is worrying for many states and civil society. This concern was reiterated in First Committee by Mexico, India, Japan, and the de-alerting group (Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, and Switzerland).

The seriousness of this issue is especially worrying since accidents have taken place involving nuclear command and control systems. De-alerting has been suggested as a way of reducing these risks. The side event raised issues such as the Cold War doctrine still occupying most of the debates, the invisible discussion of environmental and human effect of potential launch, and the fact that the assessment of launching the weapons is limited to only a few minutes. In response to the present threat, India's delegation announced during the plenary on 13 October that it will be once again tabling a draft resolution on "Reducing nuclear danger". The resolution is intended to encourage direct steps to reduce these accidents through de-alerting.

The states most directly involved in trying to move the de-alerting issue forward are Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, and Switzerland, also known as the de-alerting group. On 13 October, Ambassador Alexandre Fasel of Switzerland took the floor on behalf of the group to address the issue of decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems. Ambassador Fasel said that while the tensions from the Cold War have decreased, significant numbers of nuclear weapons are still at high-alert levels. The group has in recent years presented a draft resolution to First Committee on the topic, but will not do the same this year. Instead, it intends to address the issue during the forthcoming NPT review cycle, starting with the preparatory committee in May 2012. •

## Nuclear testing

Daria Medvedeva | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

The Comprehensive nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) aims to ban nuclear explosions on the Earth's surface, in the atmosphere, underwater, and underground. Many delegations argue that the CTBT remains a core part of nuclear disarmament, as it constrains non-nuclear states from creating nuclear bombs and nuclear weapon states from upgrading and modernizing their existing weapons. They also argue that the CTBT is geared toward preventing the extreme damage caused by radioactive emissions from nuclear explosions to humanity and environment.

The international community has largely recognized the Treaty to be an effective instrument of collective security and an important pillar of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Ambassador Hellmut Hoffmann of Germany underscored that the early entry into force of CTBT remains Germany's high strategic priority and that it would be a "core element of advancing nuclear disarmament". Mexico and Sweden have jointly taken on the role as Coordinating States during the next two years for the facilitation of the entry into force of the Treaty. Less than a month ago, on 23 September 2011, in New York, the Mexican and Swedish Foreign ministers co-chaired the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, also known as the Article XIV Conference.

Accession of states to such a global treaty always gains a sound approval in the international community. Representatives of Austria and the Philippines, among others, praised Indonesia and the United States for their declared commitment to move towards ratification of the CTBT. All delegations speaking on the CTBT urged the other remaining of annex II states to ratify the CTBT without delay.

Many delegations also expressed support for the continuing development of the CTBT Organization (CTBTO)'s International Monitoring System (IMS). Dutch Ambassador IJssel urged states to further explore "the scope for expanding civilian use of the Monitoring System in other areas of early warning and emergency response". Ambassador Hannan of Bangladesh announced that his country has set up an auxiliary seismic station under the IMS. Georgian Ambassador Lomaia declared that Georgia also continues to actively cooperate with the CTBTO Provisional Technical Secretariat to strengthen the monitoring and verification system. Ambassador Jo Adamson of the United Kingdom indicated her delegation's anticipation of co-hosting with the CTBTO an on-site inspection meeting for P5 experts later in 2011. She was also pleased to announce that the Integrated Field Exercise is on track to take place in 2014. Ambassador Adamson also welcomed and congratulated Ghana and Guinea on their ratifications and accentuated the UK's support for a project to promote ratification among small island countries.

Many states consider verification to be an indispensable part of the CTBT. Ambassador Peter Woolcott of Australia emphasized the necessity of strengthening the legal framework of CTBT for effective verification. However, states are sometimes reluctant to open their borders for monitoring and inspections. A round-table discussion "Detect and Deter: Can countries verify the nuclear test ban?" hosted by the Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the UN, strongly emphasized that the verification would become more effective if nuclear weapon states show their willingness to actively participate in this process. •

## Missiles and anti-missile systems

Gabriella Irsten | Reaching Critical Will/WILPF

Despite the lack of attention to missile-related issues during the two first weeks of First Committee, many governments and civil society actors consider them to be an important issue for disarmament and non-proliferation. While they have the potential to carry and deliver weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and while the proposed development of anti-missile systems has increased tensions internationally, they are virtually ignored in discussions at First Committee.

That said, during the thematic debate on nuclear weapons, the Russian Federation dedicated a portion of their statement to the issue of missiles. Mr. Victor Vasiliev, alternative representative of the Russian delegation, explained that Russia believes that the issue of missile defense is one of the most "acute" topics on today's disarmament agenda, especially since there has been no real progress moving it forward. Mr. Vasiliev said that neither the United States nor NATO have indicated readiness "to allow equal participation of Russia in the development of" a European missile defense concept and architecture, "or to start to elaborate confidence and transparency building measures as regards missile defense." Mr. Vasiliev expressed disappointment that no change has happened in "addressing the key issues of Russia-US/NATO interaction on missile defense" and warned that the progress made at the Lisbon Summit could be lost.

Meanwhile, in relation to missiles rather than missile "defense", Mr. Reza Najafi of Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs asserted that France covertly provided Israel "with all kinds of missile technology and materials to promote its capacity in delivering weapons of mass destruction." France denied the allegation in a right of reply.

It is clear that even though few states address missiles or anti-missile systems during these debates, the issues have created tension between member states. •



## Biological and chemical weapons

Harry Smith and John Burroughs | Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy

On 12 October, Ahmet Üzümcü, Director General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), addressed the agency's future role, stating that the focus will need to change from elimination of existing arsenals to prevention of the reemergence of such weapons and of the misuse of toxic chemicals. By 2016, only one percent of the global chemical weapons stockpile will remain. However, the United States and Russia will not meet the April 2012 deadline under the Chemical Weapons Convention for the complete destruction of stockpiles, with 10% still remaining for the US and 40% for Russia.

In response to a question from Iran regarding US and Russian non-compliance, Mr. Üzümcü said that Russia will take at least five years to fully dispose of its stockpile, and the United States longer, since the last US disposition facility will become operational around 2019. He stated that both states have expressed determination at the highest levels to complete the job. He expressed the hope that states parties will find, by consensus, a satisfactory solution to the problem of handling the situation within the treaty framework. Also in reply to Iran, Russia and the United States reiterated their intention to finish the elimination process while meeting safety and environmental standards.

Regarding Libya, Mr. Üzümcü stated that the OPCW has been in regular contact with national authorities and

has received assurances that the Libyan stockpile is under the control of the National Transitional Council.

Concerning the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, noted that while the treaty has no implementing agency, its strength resides in part in the extent to which "the global taboo on biological weapons has been accepted and integrated into domestic law and policies."

As in the first week, several states commented on the Seventh BTWC Review Conference to be held in December. José Moraes Cabrai, Permanent Representative for Portugal, noted that the BTWC "remains the only convention on weapons of mass destruction that still lacks a verification mechanism" and added that "we hope this situation can be changed."

Pakistan's Deputy Permanent Representative Raza Bashir Tarar stated that Pakistan "attaches priority to developing an effective mechanism on implementation of Article X" concerning access to non-military biological technology and products.

Deputy Permanent Representative Roman Oyarzun of Spain called for the Review Conference to reach "conclusive results" as to "reinforcement of confidence-building measures, development of a dynamic plan for the next inter-sessional, and strengthening the Support Unit for the implementation of the Convention." •



International  
Network on  
Explosive Weapons

### Briefing on explosive weapons in populated areas ahead of the UN Security Council Open Debate on the Protection of Civilians

In preparation for the next open debate on the Protection of Civilians to be held in November, the Austrian Permanent Mission to the UN and the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW) will host a briefing on the humanitarian impact of explosive weapons in populated areas. Research undertaken in Libya from 5-10 October on the impact of explosive weapons in populated areas will be presented.

**Thursday, October 20, 2011 \* 1:15-2:30 p.m., CR. A**

Lunch will be available

The briefing will be chaired by **Mr. Thomas Nash**, the Coordinator of the *International Network on Explosive Weapons* and by the *Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations*.

#### Speakers

- ❖ **Ms. Judy Grayson**, Senior Adviser, Child Protection, *UNICEF*
- ❖ **Mr. Richard Moyes**, Coordinator, *International Network on Explosive Weapons*

INEW is an NGO partnership calling for immediate action to prevent human suffering from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. *The founding INEW members are Action on Armed Violence, Handicap International, Human Rights Watch, IKV Pax Christi, Medact, Norwegian People's Aid, Oxfam, and Save the Children UK.*

For more information please email [aboehm@inew.org](mailto:aboehm@inew.org)





## Disarmament and development

Gabriella Irsten | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

The nuclear weapons issue is too often left out of discussions and processes regarding human rights, peace obligations, and development—and vice versa. Yet their existence and maintenance has profound obligations for all of these issues.

On 9 October 2011, the former USSR president Mr. Gorbachev argued, “Our world remains too militarized. In today’s economic climate, nuclear weapons have become loathsome money pits. If, as seems likely, economic troubles continue, the US, Russia, and other nuclear powers should seize the moment to launch multilateral arms reductions.”

During the second week of First Committee, a few delegations articulated the direct influence that nuclear weapon expenditure has on societies and expressed concern with this situation. This was surprising, especially since numerous states during the first week of general debate indicated their concern about development being sacrificed for weapons and war. Many states have drawn the connection between the relocation of resources from arms expenditure toward development goals, yet few have pointed to nuclear weapons as a possible source of such funds. The investment in nuclear weapons and their modernization—weapons that many nuclear weapons states themselves say are not intended for use—is just as Mr. Gorbachev aptly states: a diversion of vast sums away from social spending.

At a time of incredibly strained financial resources and cutbacks from the most vulnerable citizens in societies, states must start challenging these kinds of priorities. Ms. Nadine Traore from Burkina Faso’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs voiced her belief that it is governments’ job to revise their priorities.

During the first week of debate, while many states did question the priority of military expenditure, only South Africa brought up the specific issue of nuclear weapons. South Africa’s Ambassador Leslie Gumbi pointed out that the elimination of nuclear weapons would help free up means of socioeconomic development. During the second week’s continuation of the general debate, the Nicaraguan delegation brought to attention the unjustifiable idea that more money should be spent on nuclear weapons than human development. During the thematic debate on nuclear weapons, Mexico and Cuba raised concerns about financial resources being spent on nuclear weapons and their modernization programmes, instead of improving the standard of living of human beings.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Ambassador Alexander Fasel of Switzerland both spoke about the relevance of incorporating human rights and international humanitarian law (IHL) into discussions and initiatives on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Mr. Walter A. Fülleemann of the

ICRC also highlighted the importance of disseminating information on the catastrophic human costs and humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. In a more general manner, Ambassador Abdul Hannan, permanent representative of Bangladesh, stated that it is obvious that a paradigm shift is needed in international peace and development dialogue and that consideration must be placed on the “development dividend likely to emerge from arms control and disarmament.”

However, Costa Rica’s Ambassador Ulibarri emphasized that disarmament and development are not merely linked by the (mis)allocation of financial resources. Development through disarmament will also spare countries and societies the tremendous consequences that weapons, war, and proliferation have on the society as a whole. Burkina Faso’s delegation argued that disarmament would decrease the direct loss of life, as well as the destruction and the dispersion of families and society. Botswana’s delegate also suggested that disarmament would relieve political tensions and help mitigate conflict. As Costa Rica, Burkina Faso, and Botswana articulated, there are many different reasons to disarm. What they have tried to impress upon the international community is that disarmament is not just a goal in itself, but a tool for pursuing globally sustainable peace and stable societies. Disarmament cannot take place in a vacuum; it needs to reflect realities and be addressed from multiple angles, including the nuclear weapons debate.

The debate thus far on the issues of militarization, arms racing, and proliferation show that misprioritization by governments affects human beings in two distinct ways. The first is that militarism and weapons lead to and intensify conflict and violence and inhibit the provision and protection of human rights in the most direct sense. The second way is the diversion of resources that indicates states’ failure to use their resources to build peace and security for human beings. •



UN DPI/NGO Conference in Mexico City 2009:  
*For Peace and Development: Disarm Now!*