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Reaching Critical Will | A programme of the
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Reaching Critical Will

EDITORIAL: COMMON GOODS

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

All governments, and all peoples, have an interest and a responsibility to establish a safer world through disarmament. This was a key argument presented by several delegations during the opening week of First Committee. It remains to be seen if First Committee will play a substantial role in meeting this interest and fulfilling this responsibility, but it certainly will have the opportunity to do so. In particular, the resolutions seeking to establish a mechanism to begin substantive work on nuclear disarmament and to establish renewed negotiations on an arms trade treaty (ATT) are the best chances the General Assembly has right now to set a course for a safer world.

"All countries have a responsibility to engage in nuclear disarmament," said Norway's Ambassador Pederson last Friday. The idea that it should be left up to the nuclear weapon possessors to decide when and how and at what pace they should reduce and eliminate their arsenals of terror is no longer acceptable to the vast majority of governments or to civil society. As the South African delegation argued, the humanitarian consequences that underpin the need for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons "demand a renewed determination by all States and members of civil society to permanently rid our world of the threat of annihilation." And the vast majority of delegations seem to agree with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's 2008 assertion that "a world free of nuclear weapons would be a global public good of the highest order."

Thus the lack of tangible nuclear disarmament, coupled with counterproductive anti-disarmament measures such as modernization, evoked justified criticism by most delegations taking the floor. Meanwhile, the continued stagnation of the UN-affiliated disarmament machinery also elicited consternation, with more governments than ever indicating that they are ready to examine any proposals for getting back to work.

In this regard, the Austrian delegation gave a preliminary glimpse of the resolution it will be tabling along with Mexico and Norway, which calls for the establishment of an open-ended working group (OEWG) that would convene in Geneva for up to three weeks during 2013 in order to "develop concrete proposals to take forward multilateral negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons." The Norwegian delegation explained, "We believe it is time to look at how we can make use of the General Assembly in our efforts to achieve progress on this issue. ... UN member states have an obligation to ensure that our multilateral institutions are equipped to deliver what is expected of them."

This is a strong option for moving forward with multilateral nuclear disarmament: it meets the demand of the vast majority of governments for tangible work on

this issue and is a more robust multilateral option than any that could be offered within the confines of the Conference on Disarmament, where only 65 governments can participate. An OEWG would invite the full participation of all UN member states.

Another opportunity at First Committee for establishing a safer world will come with the resolution extending negotiations for an arms trade treaty (ATT). During general debate, the majority of delegations lamented the failure of the July ATT conference to reach agreement on a robust treaty that would reduce human suffering resulting from irresponsible and illegal arms transfers, and expressed their interest in finalizing work on this treaty early next year.

However, some delegations also expressed concern that the resolution will extend not only the negotiations but also the rule of consensus. Ambassador de Alba of Mexico said participants must not allow the political or economic interests of a few states to impede the development of a robust ATT, while Norway's Ambassador Pederson argued that if consensus is again strictly applied, the conference risks repeating what happened in July. He noted, "The consensus requirement means that small minorities are able to prevent the adoption of international measures that could make a difference for civilians and vulnerable groups."

Indeed, over the years, consensus has become less a tool for encouraging creative compromises and more an instrument for demanding unanimity, usually resulting in failure, or at best, lowest common denominator agreements. In effect, consensus has become a veto. While some governments argue that the rule of consensus protects their security interests, it in fact functions to undermine the security of the majority that must rely on the rule of law to protect them.

As Ambassador Apakan of Turkey noted, "We live in a world where security has become indivisible." He emphasized that "we are at an age when one cannot argue that more arms would bring more security. There lies the virtue of disarmament." This First Committee has the opportunity to establish mechanisms for concrete, multilateral action on disarmament and arms control, thus helping to overcome what the Qatari delegate described as the "false security that the further accumulation of weapons may bring."

In her opening remarks, the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs noted, "A 'business as usual' approach may well be the easiest to pursue, but it will not suffice to solve the problems we face in achieving disarmament goals and will only aggravate the global crisis we are facing in this field." The following weeks will show whether or not member states are willing to take steps to truly strengthen international peace and security, as they are mandated to do. •

NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

On the opening day of this First Committee session, New Zealand's Ambassador Dell Higgie asked, "why is that, in a world in which no leader to our knowledge has publicly opposed the elimination of nuclear weapons, the obligation in Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) ... remains unfulfilled?" She noted, "Article VI has been on our books, and in force, for over 40 years now."

Ambassador Higgie was not the only delegate to express frustration with the lack of tangible progress on eliminating nuclear weapons. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), and the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) all voiced concern with the slow pace or stagnation of nuclear disarmament initiatives. On behalf of the NAC, Ambassador Mårten Grunditz of Sweden noted that while "significant progress" has been made on fulfilling the NPT's non-proliferation objectives, the other side of the bargain—nuclear disarmament—has yet to be realized.

Nearly 20,000 nuclear weapons still exist, a fact which Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba of Mexico described as absurd and incomprehensible, "especially considering the military uselessness of these weapons and the cost of their maintenance." The Indonesian delegation criticized the nuclear weapon states for backpedalling on their commitments to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which the Brazilian ambassador described as a "compliance deficit" in the NPT regime. Ambassador Usman Sarki of Nigeria likewise argued, "Compliance with the NPT in our view should go hand in hand with the willingness of the nuclear weapons states to disarm and disavow the continued possession of such weapons."

The lack of progress on disarmament is further exacerbated by plans for billions of dollars worth of investments in modernizing nuclear weapon complexes in the countries that possess them. Modernization runs directly counter to disarmament, which is why the NAM and the African Group called on nuclear weapons states "to immediately cease their plans to further modernize, upgrade, refurbish, or extend the lives of their nuclear weapons and related facilities." Individual delegations criticizing nuclear weapon modernization included Brazil, Cameroon, Kenya, Lesotho, Nigeria, Senegal, and Viet Nam, among others.

The continued inclusion of nuclear weapons in national and collective security doctrines has also prevented effective work on nuclear disarmament. The NAM called on NATO to eliminate nuclear weapons from its military doctrine, while the NAC recommended that states that are part of military alliances that include nuclear weapon states should report on steps planned to reduce and eliminate the role of nuclear weapons

in their collective security doctrines. The delegations of New Zealand and Switzerland also highlighted the importance of reducing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons.

Most delegations argued that the existence of nuclear weapons is the biggest proliferation risk. Lesotho and Kenya's delegations said it is apparent that nuclear deterrence is not effective but rather that it only encourages proliferation. Brazil's delegation criticized "persistent attempts to justify the possession of nuclear weapons, be it to sustain minimum security levels or to ensure an alleged undiminished security or to provide a hypothetical strategic stability, all these concepts being as outdated as nuclear weapons themselves."

Nuclear weapon possessors

Most of the nuclear weapon possessors delivered remarks during the first week of general debate. They largely reiterated the steps they have taken to implement their disarmament obligations and the obstacles they see to further work.

China, France, the United States, and United Kingdom all noted the ongoing "P5 process" to sustain dialogue among the NPT nuclear weapon states. China's delegation announced that last month it hosted the first P5 experts meeting on a glossary of definitions for key nuclear terms, while the UK noted it shared lessons from its UK-Norway nuclear disarmament verification work with the other P5 members earlier this year. India called for "meaningful dialogue among all states possessing nuclear weapons."

The US delegation indicated that it is engaged in a dialogue with Russia on strategic stability in order to lay the groundwork for future negotiations on reductions of their arsenals. However, the Russian delegation said that the US and Russia have "done everything possible in the field of strategic offensive arms as yet," arguing that the prospects of any new agreements are becoming increasingly elusive, primarily because of US plans for an anti-missile system. Mr. Mikhail Ulyanov cautioned that this is a trend that "may soon ruin any hope for disarmament". China's delegation likewise cautioned that anti-missile systems could undermine efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament.

Several delegations welcomed the P5 efforts as well as New START, though most noted that more tangible results are necessary. For example, Senegal's delegation pointed out that New START does not affect the alert status of nuclear weapons nor modernization programmes.

Humanitarian consequences

As governments and ordinary citizens have reiterated since the inception of the atomic age, the consequences of any use of nuclear weapons are catastrophic. The African Group emphasized that nuclear

weapons are not tools of security but rather pose an existential threat to global peace and the survival of the human race. The South African delegation argued that nuclear weapons “have no place in today’s security environment and the humanitarian imperatives that underpin the need for their complete elimination demand a renewed determination by all States and members of civil society to permanently rid our world of the threat of annihilation.”

Most governments acknowledge that the use of nuclear weapons would violate international humanitarian law, the UN Charter, and constitute a crime against humanity. As the delegate from Cambodia noted, “The catastrophe in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 is a horrific reminder of the destructive power of nuclear weapons and their potential to annihilate entire cities.” The Swiss delegation noted that no country would be immune from the consequences of the use of a nuclear

weapon. The NAC emphasized this is not a question of who possesses nuclear weapons or who might use them. “No nuclear weapon can ever be safe in any hands,” the NAC argued.

In this context, some delegations welcomed the opportunity provided by the meeting to be hosted in Norway in March 2013 to consider in full the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. Ambassador Geir O. Pedersen of Norway explained that the conference will “create an arena to discuss immediate humanitarian effects, longer term impacts and consequences, and the actual state of preparedness to provide adequate humanitarian response in case of a nuclear detonation.” The New Zealand ambassador noted that this focus on humanitarian consequences is in line with the paramount objective of protection of civilians that must guide all disarmament and arms control processes.

Negotiations for nuclear disarmament

The Association of Southeast Asian States (ASEAN) argued “that the mere existence of nuclear weapons on earth, together with a lack of a legal regime on the total elimination of such weapons, poses a threat to humanity.” Thus most delegations issued support for commencement of negotiations on nuclear disarmament in some form or another, arguing that the status quo is unacceptable. High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Angela Kane noted that over 140 member states support the negotiation of a nuclear weapons convention.

The NAM reiterated its proposal for phased reductions leading to elimination by 2025 and its call for a high-level international conference to identify ways and means of eliminating nuclear weapons. The NAC suggested establishing “a comprehensive framework of mutually reinforcing instruments for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons,” which “must include clearly defined benchmarks and timelines, backed by a strong system of verification.”

Switzerland’s Ambassador Urs Schmid called on the biggest nuclear weapon states to launch new disarmament negotiations as a priority. CELAC called for progress in reducing non-deployed and non-strategic nuclear weapons. The United Arab Emirates suggested negotiations to guarantee the full suspension of the development of all types of nuclear weapons and delivery systems.

The sentiment in the majority of general debate statements was eloquently expressed by Brazil’s Ambassador Viotti, who argued, “Nuclear disarmament is not a matter of goodwill, but a legal commitment to be complied with. It is high time for the international community to start asking when and how it will take place.” •

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NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

Beatrice Fihn | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

As in previous years, the debate on non-proliferation showed a split between countries that emphasize the links between disarmament and non-proliferation and countries that prefer to look at non-proliferation as an isolated topic. As Indonesia's delegation pointed out, there is a "trust deficit among UN Member States on how we create a good delicate balance between nuclear disarmament and non proliferation."

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) emphasized that proliferation concerns are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive, and non-discriminatory agreements, and stressed that efforts for non-proliferation must be parallel to efforts for disarmament. The Mexican delegation noted that the only way to strengthen the non-proliferation regime is through nuclear disarmament, arguing that "what doesn't exist can't be used or can't proliferate". Peru, Guatemala, Nigeria, and Brazil agreed, and while supporting all non-proliferation initiatives, also emphasized that such initiatives must be connected to nuclear disarmament. Tunisia's delegation called on states to examine and address the root causes of proliferation.

Cuba's delegation highlighted the challenges of vertical proliferation and noted that it is often left out of discussions, something that was echoed by both United Arab Emirates and Costa Rica. Yemen argued that in order to curb proliferation, elimination of nuclear weapons and achieving disarmament in all fields of weapons of mass destruction should be pursued.

At the same time, the nuclear weapon states had a slightly different view. The United States highlighted its "grave concerns" over "violations of non-proliferation obligations" by Syria, Iran, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and argued "These cases, above all, stand in the way of our shared disarmament goals." The French delegation agreed and stated that the continuation of such proliferation crises is a "hindrance to progress in nuclear disarmament". China believed that non-proliferation "constitutes an essential condition for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons."

DPRK

The EU and Norway urged DPRK to cooperate with the international community. Japan argued that DPRK's nuclear and missile programmes are serious violations of the relevant UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions, and, along with France, urged the DPRK to abandon these programmes. Spain and Portugal expressed concerns about this issue. DPRK denounced these calls through several rights of reply.

Iran

EU, Norway, Saudi Arabia, France, and Japan urged Iran to fully comply with all its obligations under relevant UNSC resolutions and to meet the requirements

of the IAEA Board of Governors. The EU also noted that the E3+3—China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the UK, and the USA—remain united in seeking a swift diplomatic resolution of the international community's concerns on the nature of Iran's nuclear programme. Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Oman supported efforts to solve this issue peacefully.

Israel

The Arab countries decided for the second consecutive year not to table the resolution entitled "Israeli nuclear capabilities" at the last General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in response to efforts to create favourable conditions for the success of the Conference. They expressed anticipation of a reciprocal and appropriate response from all other parties. The Arab Group, Yemen, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and Oman also called for Israel to place its nuclear facilities under comprehensive safeguards of the IAEA.

Syria

France, the EU, Japan, the US and Norway raised concerns about non-compliance by Syria with its non-proliferation obligations and called on the country to cooperate with the international community to ensure full compliance. Syria denounced these calls through several rights of reply.

Nuclear security

The Republic of Korea (ROK) highlighted the outcome of the Seoul Nuclear Security Summit held in 2012 and urged governments to "explore newer and more creative ways to further enhance nuclear safety and security in the next Nuclear Security Summit to be held in the Netherlands in 2014." Mongolia's delegation welcomed the IAEA Director-General's initiative to convene an IAEA Conference on Nuclear Security in Vienna in July 2013.

Some governments have undertaken regional or national initiative on this issue. On behalf of the Association of South East Asian States (ASEAN), Ambassador U Maung Wai of Myanmar announced that ASEAN has established a Network of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies or Relevant Authorities (ASEANTOM) "with the objective of enhancing regulatory activities and further strengthening nuclear safety, security and safeguards in ASEAN." The Ukrainian delegation noted that it hosted the 2011 Summit on Safe and Innovative Use of Nuclear Energy and the Thai delegation said has offered a venue to host the January 2014 preparatory meeting for the 2014 Nuclear Security Summit. Ambassador Adamson of the United Kingdom noted the UK's multilateral initiative on nuclear information security was supported by 31 countries at the NSS and Hungary said it will be offering training courses in physical protection of nuclear facilities and materials.

Nuclear terrorism

The Republic of Korea highlighted the importance of preventing nuclear terrorism, and called for the UN and IAEA to take lead roles in this matter. The European Union, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Switzerland, Nigeria, ROK, Thailand, India, Mongolia, and Burkina Faso welcomed the convening and highlighted the importance of the recent high-level meeting on nuclear terrorism. Switzerland pointed out that acts of nuclear terrorism would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences. Brazil welcomed the number of

countries making links between nuclear security and nuclear disarmament at this high-level meeting, “an aspect that the ... Nuclear Security Summit regrettably failed to reflect.”

NAM noted UNSC resolutions 1540, 1673, 1810, and 1977 as tools for combatting non-state actors access to WMDs, but cautioned against the “continuing practice” of the UNSC to define legislative requirements for implementing its decisions. NAM stressed the importance of addressing this issue in an inclusive manner by the General Assembly. •

NUCLEAR ENERGY AND THE FUEL CHAIN

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Once again, delegates to First Committee continued the largely stagnant debate over restricting the further spread of so-called “proliferation sensitive” nuclear fuel chain capabilities. Many countries, including those of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), reiterated the “inalienable right” of states to develop nuclear energy for “peaceful uses” under article IV of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Ambassador Octavio Errázuriz of Chile on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) expressed favour for the broadest possible exchange of information and equipment for developing civilian nuclear programmes in accordance with the NPT.

Other delegations expressed conditions for use of nuclear technology, arguing that in order to “benefit” from such technology, states must be in compliance with their International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards agreement. Ambassador Kim Sook of the Republic of Korea cautioned that there is “an inherent proliferation potential in nuclear fuel cycle technologies,” and argued that states with civilian nuclear programmes “must demonstrate a higher level of commitment to non-proliferation and full implementation of safeguards obligations in order to assure international confidence.” Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan of Turkey said that states in compliance with their safeguards agreements “should have unhindered access to civilian nuclear technology.”

Nuclear safety

A year and a half after the disaster at Japan’s Fukushima Dai-ich Nuclear Power Plant, issues related to nuclear safety are still high on the international community’s agenda. Cambodia’s delegation noted that the Fukushima tragedy “demonstrates that nuclear accidents are of no borders.” Nicaragua’s delegation said the world has learned that nuclear reactors can represent attacks against nature and humanity.

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the NAM reaffirmed the IAEA’s central role in establishing nuclear safety standards, with NAM emphasizing the

distinct implementation of nuclear safety and nuclear security within the IAEA.

Fuel cycle controls

Ambassador Barlybay Sadykov of Kazakhstan reiterated that his government has submitted an application to the IAEA to host the International Bank for Low-Enriched Uranium. In December 2010, the IAEA Board of Governors agreed to establish this nuclear fuel bank, which will set up a reserve of low-enriched uranium under IAEA control. Ambassador Sadykov argued that the fuel bank “will provide a guaranteed access of all States to nuclear fuel” and “in no way affects” their article IV “right,” as long as they meet the provisions of the NPT and the additional protocol. US Under Secretary Rose Gottemoeller welcomed the approval of “measures to assure IAEA members of reliable access to fuel for peaceful nuclear power plants.”

NAM emphasized that any decision on multilateral approaches to the fuel cycle must be taken by consensus. The Libyan delegation cautioned that imposing controls on access to civilian nuclear programmes politicizes this issue.

HEU minimization

Norway’s delegation reiterated the importance of reducing the use of highly enriched uranium. Argentina’s delegation announced it has successfully completed the process of reducing the use of highly enriched uranium in research reactors and is the first country to base its entire production of radioisotopes in low-enriched uranium. The Ukrainian delegation reiterated President Viktor Yanukovich’s 2010 pledge to give up all national stockpiles of the highly enriched uranium and recalled the Joint Declaration by Ukraine, Mexico, and Chile “to make special efforts to neutralize the risks of use of highly enriched uranium.” It noted that the Declaration remains open for signing.

Other issues

NAM noted that any attack against nuclear facilities poses a great danger to humans and the environment and would be a violation of international law. •

NUCLEAR WEAPON AND WMD FREE ZONES

Eloise Watson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

In their statements to the First Committee during its opening week, almost every delegate accentuated the importance of nuclear weapon free zones (NWFZs). Australia's ambassador, Gary Quinlan, described the value of NWFZs in regards to advancing nuclear disarmament: they are a "crucial complementary focus; they can strengthen global efforts, but they can also address specific regional concerns and insecurities."

Delegates consistently reaffirmed the need to expand NWFZs to regions where they do not yet exist. As such, many delegates underlined the importance of efforts geared towards the establishment of a weapons of mass destruction free zone (WMDFZ) in the Middle East, which would fully realize the objectives of the 1995 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) resolution and the 2010 NPT Review Conference final outcome. Egypt's delegate noted that the creation of such a zone is a "prerequisite" for achieving security and stability, while Yemen's delegate designated it as a "prerequisite" to implementing all provisions of the NPT and ensuring the treaty's universalization.

In this light, many governments welcomed the initial measures taken regarding preparation of the 2012 conference on establishing a NWFZ in the Middle East. The conference, which was determined at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, is to be hosted by Finland in December 2012. Libya proclaimed that this conference will be vital in consolidating security and stability and building confidence and trust within the region. Brazil, among others, echoed this sentiment, arguing that the conference could "foster confidence-building measures among neighboring states."

Most delegations expressed their support for this conference, and several made suggestions on the type of efforts needed to ensure the success of the conference. The representatives of the United Kingdom and Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), for example, asserted that constructive engagement of all concerned parties is key, while Russia stated that only the countries of the region will be able to "solve these tasks" related to establishing the zone.

Mr. Mikhail Ulyanov of the Russian delegation further outlined his government's position on the WMDFZ conference, noting that Russia and the other "co-convenors" will provide discussion topics for the conference, at which decisions should be taken by consensus. He also called on the countries of the region to "re-affirm their political will to establish the WMDFZ and demonstrate their ability to come to an agreement." He urged all the countries of the region to confirm their attendance at the conference.

Much concern was expressed over Israel's status as the sole Middle Eastern outlier of the NPT. Pending the establishment of a MEWMDFZ, delegates from the NAM, Iraq, and Oman, among others, called on Israel to promptly accede to the NPT and subject its nuclear facilities to the Comprehensive Safeguards System of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The MEWMDFZ is not the only zone with which states are concerned, as indicated by a number of statements in the opening week. Countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) welcomed progress made and encouraged continual discussion in the on-going consultations between ASEAN and the

P5 on the signing of the Protocol of the Southeast Asian nuclear weapon free zone Treaty. The United States and Russia highlighted their intentions to sign the P5 Protocol. Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan highlighted the importance of the Central Asian NWFZ.

Attention was also afforded to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlateloco). Brazil lauded this Treaty as a "pioneering instrument". Ambassador Octavio Errázuriz of Chile, on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, strongly urged nuclear weapon states to withdraw their reservations to the Additional Protocols of the Treaty, as did several other members of the Tlateloco Treaty. •

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The NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security ; the NGO Working Group on Israel-Palestine ; Peace Action and Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament invite your participation in a discussion.

THE IMPORTANCE AND POSSIBILITIES OF ESTABLISHING A WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION FREE ZONE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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Reaching Critical Will

NUCLEAR TESTING

Eloise Watson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

A large number of states taking the floor during First Committee general debate issued support for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The CTBT, not yet in force, aims at halting the further dissemination or development of nuclear weapons capacities by proscribing all explosive nuclear tests. Without the ability to test and subsequently confirm the validity of a nuclear weapon design, the development and modernization of states' existing arsenals would be significantly hampered.

Unfortunately, the treaty does not proscribe subcritical testing, in which a fissile chain reaction is not reached. Some delegations criticized this gap in the Treaty's provisions. Ambassador Anthony Andanje of Kenya said it is "worrying" that nuclear weapon states have resumed subcritical nuclear tests, of which there is documentation. In this light, he asserted that the CTBT "may, after all, not be comprehensive enough."

However, most delegations stressed the indispensable role of the CTBT, with particular reference to its critical capacity for preventing weapons modernization. For example, Ambassador U Maung Wa, on behalf of the Association of South East Asian States (ASEAN), reaffirmed the Treaty as a vital device that prohibits the modernization of nuclear weapons. In the same vein, Mr. Mafiroane Motanyane of Lesotho hailed the CTBT as a "landmark instrument," adding that when there is no nuclear testing there is no need to manufacture or modernize nuclear weapons.

Vociferous in their advocacy for the Treaty, most delegates stressed their desire to achieve universal adherence to the CTBT and expedite its entry into force. In

this regard, all representatives who spoke on the CTBT urged the remaining non-ratified states, particularly the Annex II states, to ratify the Treaty without delay. Representatives also praised the most recent ratifications of the CTBT by Indonesia, Ghana, and Guinea, among others.

A wide array of states also sought to demonstrate their commitment to the CTBT by articulating how they are supporting the Preparatory Committee of the CTBT Organization (CTBTO). Rose Gottemoeller of the United States, for example, noted that the US has provided "over \$40 million in extra-budgetary contributions to the CTBTO" and that CTBT ratification "remains a top priority" for the country. Indonesia's delegation stated that it is continuing to "promote concrete collaboration between CTBTO and the ASEAN Secretariat with a view to utilizing the [CTBT] verification mechanism through the SEANWFZ Treaty." Turkey referred to its hosting of a joint regional conference with the CTBTO in 2011 aiming to raise broader awareness and deeper understanding of the cardinal importance of the CTBT.

The value in maintaining a moratorium on nuclear explosive testing was also emphasized by several delegates, Ambassador Octavio Errázuriz of Chile on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), chief among them. However, others (including the delegate of Columbia) warned that moratoria are not enough. Australia's delegation rightly argued that the current moratorium against nuclear tests is "incredibly fragile," warning "we at any moment could easily slide back into a time of nuclear tests and improvement." •

NEGATIVE SECURITY ASSURANCES

Aarushi Prakash | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Many governments continue to afford priority to the development of legally-binding negative security assurances (NSAs), which would constitute a guarantee from nuclear weapon possessors that they will not attack non-nuclear weapon states with nuclear weapons. Among others, the Non-Aligned Movement highlighted the importance of establishing legally-binding NSAs as an interim measure to the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Bangladesh's delegation recognized that nuclear weapon free zones can help provide NSAs to some states through relevant protocols, but that it is not necessarily feasible to set up such zones in some regions, including South Asia.

The Ukrainian delegation argued that NSAs "for states that abandoned their nuclear stockpiles and

made other relevant strategic concessions should be moulded into an internationally binding legal instrument." It suggested this be done in an international conference held under the UN auspices. The Iraqi delegation agreed that NSAs are a "just and legitimate demand for non nuclear countries that voluntarily abandoned military nuclear choices by joining the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT)."

The delegation of India reaffirmed its policy of not using nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states and its readiness "to convert these undertakings into multilateral legal arrangements." The Chinese delegation reiterated its proposal for nuclear weapon states to make an unconditional commitments to NSAs and to conclude a legally-binding international instrument in this regard. •

MISSILES AND ANTI-MISSILE SYSTEMS

Aarushi Prakash | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

A limited number of countries spoke about missiles and anti-missile systems in the first week. The Hague Code of Conduct (HCOC) and Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) were frequently referenced in the statements addressing missile issues. However, as the UN High Representative of Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Angela Kane, noted, there are no multilateral disarmament treaties addressing nuclear weapon delivery systems, missile defence, or space weapons.

Missiles

The European Union reiterated how proliferation of missiles with the potential to deliver weapons of mass destruction are a threat to international peace and security, as underlined in UN Security Council resolutions 1540, 1887, and 1977. The EU expressed concern with the ongoing missile programmes in Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

The Republic of Korea also criticized the DPRK's long-range missile launch in April of this year, stating that it was a clear violation of UN Security Council resolution 1874, which prohibits any launch using ballistic missile technology.

The EU indicated its support for the MTCR and the HCOC. The Republic of Korea, as the Chair of the HCOC in the years of 2012–2013, encouraged delegations' full support and co-sponsorship in tabling the resolution on HCOC. Austria's delegation spoke in length about the HCOC, as it has served as the Immediate Central Contact and Executive Secretariat of the Code since its inception. The Austrian ambassador expressed his government's satisfaction with the HCOC, as it had served as a unique multilateral confidence building and transparency instrument in the field of ballistic missile systems. He called on the First Committee to adopt the biannual HCOC resolution. Austria also encouraged further engagement by UN member states in dealing with the issue of missile proliferation in the future.

The EU proposed starting consultations on a treaty-banning short and intermediate range ground-to-ground ballistic missiles capable of delivering WMD remains valid.

Meanwhile, the Non-Aligned Movement stressed the importance of the sovereign rights and security concerns of all states at regional and global levels in any approach to the issue of missiles. The NAM emphasized the need to keep the issue of missiles in all its aspects on the agenda of the General Assembly. At the same time, it stressed the importance of contribution of peaceful uses of space technologies, including space launch vehicle technologies to human advancement.

Anti-missile systems

Mr. Mikhail Ulyanov of the Russian Federation argued that "strategic stability is affected by tectonic shifts ensuing from hasty implementation of unilateral plans to develop a global ballistic missile defense (BMD) system." China's Ambassador Wu Haitao agreed that the development of missile "defence" undermines global strategic balance and stability should be abandoned.

"In essence," Mr. Ulyanov argued, "this is an attempt to ensure one's own security at the expense of security of others in contravention of fundamental principles of European and international security." He warned, "Not all states are aware of pernicious consequences of such steps yet, but there is actually a trend, which may soon ruin any hope for disarmament."

Mr. Ulyanov suggested that governments need to "take into account the global nature of missile proliferation challenges and addresses them jointly," arguing that missile "defence" could be acceptable under "certain conditions". He explained that such conditions include ensuring that the systems are "proportionate to real rather than supposed threats and should not lead to even greater imbalance in international relations." •

OUTER SPACE

Beatrice Fihn | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Despite the long-standing deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament, 2012 has seen some progress on the topic of outer space. In particular, a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) convened for one week in July in New York to discuss transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs). In addition, the European Union presented its code of conduct for outer space activities to the international community in Vienna in June, and intends carry out consultations during 2013 on this document.

As in previous years, references to space during the general debate focused on either the need for legally

binding treaties or on voluntary confidence-building measures. The United Nations High Representative of Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Angela Kane, noted that there is still a lack of multilateral treaties addressing the issue of space weapons.

Brazil's ambassador stated that while there is a need for promoting trust and confidence on outer space activities, "there persists serious resistance or indifference with regard to the urgency of adopting legally-binding frameworks on this issue." Ambassador Viotti argued it should be possible to aim for more than political, voluntary-based commitments, as such arrangements "do

not fulfill the need for clear obligations binding States' behavior, when we all know that militarization of outer space is already taking place." She emphasized that her country remains fully committed to the promotion of negotiations of a legally-binding instrument that prevents the weaponisation of outer space.

While noting its concerns over the possible development of weapons in outer space, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) pointed out that though there have been some new initiatives recently, a "universal, non-discriminatory, and comprehensive approach" is important. NAM stressed that it believes any proposal or initiative on outer space should be pursued within the United Nations "and any possible decision thereon should be made by consensus."

Both Russia and China highlighted their draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space (PPWT) and called for negotiations on this

topic in the CD to start as soon as possible. Russia called on all states to actively contribute to substantive discussions and China called for early negotiations on the draft. Both delegations welcomed the GGE on TCBMs and argued that it and the PPWT are complementary in nature. Russia noted that it does not rule out the possibility of making some TCBMs legally-binding in the future. India's delegation also believed that "universal and non-discriminatory" TCBMs could play a useful complementary role, though emphasized that they cannot substitute legally-binding instruments in this field.

The EU drew attention to its recent initiative, an International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities, and argued it is "a political framework, which is absolutely compatible and complementary with other existing initiatives". However, it did not outline any concrete details on the coming process. •

BIOLOGICAL AND CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Irene Pugnali | NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security

The general debate at the First Committee proceeds several important events on the topic of biological and chemical weapons. In particular, the Meeting of Experts on the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) held in July in Geneva and the High-Level Meeting on the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) on 1 October were important for the implementation of these two treaties. Another significant event was the public acknowledgement by the Syrian government of the possession of chemical weapons, which created in the international community serious concerns, which at First Committee was highlighted by several western countries such as France, Norway, United Kingdom, and United States.

On the one hand, many delegations welcomed the achievements the international community has obtained in the past years. At the same time, several statements reminded all stakeholders that the path for a complete success and for full satisfaction regarding biological and chemical disarmament is long and further steps have to be undertaken since serious threats still remain. This was exemplified by highlighting loopholes and challenges, old and new, related to both the BTWC and the CWC. Several states underlined that, in spite of the increasing number of countries joining the CWC and the BTWC, universal adherence to both treaties still remains a pivotal objective of which every state party to the conventions should be aware.

Another major theme for discussion for both the chemical and biological fields is the implementation of the treaties. The delegations of Turkey, Kazakhstan, Thailand, among others, recognized the BTWC and the CWC as irreplaceable tools for an effective non-proliferation regime. China's ambassador stated that imple-

menting the existing international legal instruments in good faith "steadily pushes forward disarmament process in the field of chemical and biological weapons." Especially regarding CWC, the United Kingdom welcomed the destruction of 75% of the world's declared stockpile of chemical weapons.

However, as highlighted by the Indonesian delegation, the fact that the April 2012 deadline for chemical weapons destruction was not met by some state parties, this might be seen as non-compliance of those states parties, which could "endanger the credibility and integrity of the Convention."

The goal of the total destruction of existing chemical stockpiles as the most tangible way of certifying the full implementation of the Convention was upheld by several countries, such as Cuba, Portugal, and Thailand. Concerning the BTWC, the matter of implementing the Convention goes hand-in-hand with the crucial issue of strengthening the treaty. For some states, this means in particular finding a solution to the loopholes of the Convention, most notably the lack of a reliable, efficient, and mandatory verification regime. This was emphasized by both Cuba and Brazil. In particular, the former suggested the "adoption of a legally-binding Protocol that closes off the loopholes this instrument still has," while the latter underlined that "the strengthening of Confidence Building Measures cannot replace the existence of an effective verification regime based on a Protocol to the BWC."

Great attention has also been devoted to conferences related to the two conventions. Several delegations welcomed the achievements obtained at the Seventh Review Conference on the BTWC that took place from 5–22 December 2011 and the agenda for the next in-

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tersessional period that was established during that occasion. India's delegation also noted with satisfaction that the Meeting of Experts that took place in July 2012 in Geneva "focused on international cooperation and assistance, national implementation as well as review of scientific and technological developments of relevance to the Convention."

Furthermore, other delegations renewed their positive attitude towards the upcoming Third Review Conference on the CWC, which will take place in April 2013 in The Hague. This event "provides an excellent opportunity to further strengthen the Convention," as stressed by Norway.

Many delegations also underscored the pivotal importance they attach to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and to its work. In particular, Montenegro announced that, together with the OPCW, it organized a "Thirteenth Annual Workshop to Coordinate Assistance and Protection under Article X of the Chemical Weapons Convention" taking place in Montenegro from 10–12 October 2012 to "review relevant OPCW activities during the last year, exchange ideas regarding challenges relating to the implementation of Article X, and discuss issues related to the preparedness of the OPCW to respond to a chemical weapons incident." •

ARMS TRADE TREATY

Katherine Prizeman | Global Action to Prevent War

One of the most anticipated items on the First Committee agenda this session is the future of the arms trade treaty (ATT) negotiations. As the July 2012 Diplomatic Conference ended without adoption of a consensus treaty, many delegations have come to this session of the First Committee hoping for a mandate to continue negotiations in 2013. 62 delegations, nearly every delegation that took the floor, referenced the ATT during this week's general debate. They either expressed support for an additional Diplomatic Conference, underscored the importance of adopting universal conventional arms trade regulations and lamented the inconclusiveness of the July Conference, or reiterated the necessity of transparency and non-discrimination in the negotiation of the future ATT.

Despite the varying views on how to move the process forward, most countries seem agreed that the process must capitalize on the momentum of July's negotiations. Nevertheless, as several delegations emphasized, building on the progress made requires improvement and strengthening of the draft treaty text and not merely maintenance of the status quo or, worse, a weakening of the text. As Ambassador Higgie of New Zealand noted, robust support for continuing the ATT process is crucial to the human and humanitarian dimensions of security.

The general debate underscored the nuances in state positions regarding how the July negotiations were viewed. It also gave states an opportunity to make specific suggestions on text that delegations can seek to address in future negotiations. Furthermore, the interventions also highlighted states' positions on how and under what circumstances negotiations should move forward.

Some delegations noted July as a "failure," including the Chair of the Committee, Ambassador Percaya of Indonesia, who called the "recent failure" of the ATT disappointing, and the representative of Cameroon,

who noted that "the failure of the ATT makes things harder" in the context of international security concerns. The Ambassador of Costa Rica called the lack of consensus "a blow to peace and human rights."

Other delegations chose to focus more explicitly on the progress made in July and appealed to delegations to "continue to push ahead," as suggested by the representative of Malaysia. Ambassador Adamson of the UK asserted, "I want to make absolutely clear that the Conference did not end in failure. To say it did ignores the huge progress that has been made towards our ultimate aim." However, there was generally a sense of deep disappointment over the inability to reach consensus in July, although this disappointment was somewhat tempered by hope for future negotiations.

Despite varying views on whether or not July was ultimately a "failure," the vast majority of delegations expressed support for continuing the process through continued deliberations to adopt a treaty in "the near future". Some chose to underscore specific items that remain contentious, including issues of scope, criteria, and parameters, as well as inclusion of specific principles. For example, the representatives of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Colombia, and Peru all called for inclusion of munitions in the scope of a future treaty. The representative of Colombia also appealed to states for a comprehensive list of activities to be covered, including brokering, financing, export, and import. The representative of South Africa warned against becoming "side-tracked" by extraneous issues such as production and possession.

Discussion also arose related to the principles and criteria to be included in the ATT. The representatives of the Africa Group and the Non-Aligned Movement underscored that there must be "no undue restriction in the way of the sovereign right of states for self-defence," while the Association of Southeast Asian States highlighted that any ATT must ensure the rights of

self-defence and territorial integrity. The Arab Group outlined specific guidelines related to parameters of a future ATT, noting, “Any criteria developed by the treaty to regulate arms exports must also be based on clear legal instruments.” It is clear that such reiteration of positions illustrates that many issues remained unresolved from July and will require further debate before adoption of a treaty.

In terms of the pathway forward, such a decision is expected to be taken in the coming weeks. The “co-authors” group of the original 2007 General Assembly resolution on the ATT, composed of Argentina, Australia, Costa Rica, Kenya, Japan, and the UK, announced their intention to submit a resolution at this session of the First Committee seeking a mandate for an additional negotiating conference in early 2013. Ambassador Adamson noted that the draft resolution sets the timing for “a short, final, consensus-based conference to finalize the work of the treaty.” The EU, France, Guatemala, Switzerland, Spain, Turkey, Portugal, and the US all supported a final conference in 2013 with negotiations based on the President’s draft text.

However, other delegations chose to refer more loosely to the future ATT process. The representative

of India said no treaty “should be rushed through” by an imposed timeline.

While support for continuing negotiations of the ATT was broad, the rules of procedure remain contested. The representatives of Mexico and Norway rightly underscored the deadlock caused by the consensus rule in July. As the Ambassador of Norway noted, “We have seen the consensus format watering down or paralyzing important disarmament processes time and again.” Likewise, the Mexican delegation urged that delegations do not allow a small number of states to impede the entire process because of their own “political or economic considerations”. Holding hostage an entire process due to the demands of a few states is simply unacceptable and interpreting consensus as de facto veto power will seriously undermine, if not prevent, adoption of a robust ATT that seeks to have a concrete humanitarian impact. As the First Committee continues to debate the future of the ATT process, the requirement of consensus must continue to be debated such that a new conference does not yield the same unsatisfying and disappointing result that came in July. •

SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Katherine Prizeman | Global Action to Prevent War

Discussion during the first week of general debate on small arms and light weapons (SALW) focused almost exclusively on the outcome of the Second Review Conference (RevCon) on the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in small arms and light weapons (UNPoA). The majority of delegations praised the “successful” outcome document that was adopted by consensus at the conclusion of the two-week conference in August–September of this year, though some highlighted some of the deficiencies of the outcome.

In addition to praising the work of Ambassador Joy Ogwu of Nigeria as President of the Conference, many delegations, including the Chair of First Committee, Ambassador Percaya of Indonesia, noted that full implementation of the UNPoA requires strengthening international assistance and cooperation to effectively and comprehensively eradicate illicit trade in SALW. The representatives of the Africa Group, the UAE, and Brazil also underscored the importance of international cooperation and assistance for full implementation of the UNPoA at the national, regional, and global levels.

Several delegations also highlighted the many links between illicit trade in SALW and complementary security and development concerns, including armed violence and human rights abuses. The Swiss delegation welcomed the discussions at the RevCon related to the linkage between development and armed violence,

which will contribute to the “continuing relevance of these instruments and to the strengthening of their implementation.” Moreover, the delegation of Argentina underscored the importance of incorporating a gender and age perspective in the implementation of the UNPoA.

Despite a majority of states hailing the outcome of the RevCon as a success, several delegations noted their disappointment at the inability to address the illicit trade in SALW “in all its aspects” and that the outcome document failed to incorporate the concerns of all states. The Ambassador of Peru noted that his delegation “remains baffled” by the opposition of some delegations, even with awareness that the UNPoA is not legally-binding, to discussing “new” issues not explicitly referred to in the 2001 UNPoA document. In this same vein, the representative of the Arab Group stated that any “additional issues and concepts are just proposals subject to further consensus.” This central debate—how to balance reiteration and re-commitment to the “old” language of UNPoA with infusion of “new” forward-looking language that addresses challenges related to national implementation—is absolutely crucial to future success. Finding this balance is imperative if the UNPoA is to continue and even strengthen its relevance to ending the scourge of illicit trade in SALW.

During last week’s debate, Ambassador Román-Morey of Peru also regretted the lack of a stronger refer-

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ence to diversion, while the representative of Senegal called the outcome document “lackluster” and limited in its success as it does not take into account individual concerns, notably munitions. The representatives of Argentina, Colombia, France, and Guatemala agreed that the document “did not go far enough” in identifying various individual items not included in the document such as ammunition, parts and components, explosives, references to armed violence, MANPADS, and transfers to non-state actors.

While the Ambassador of Costa Rica was correct when he stated that the outcome document does not include everything but constitutes an important advance, the fact that the document was not as robust as it could have been is based, in part, on the stringent consensus rule. As noted by the representative of Nor-

way, the outcome was indeed “watered down” because of this provision, as many issues of concern for various delegations were forced out of the document. Undoubtedly, while the UNPoA enjoys universal adoption and remains the only global framework of practical measures for combating illicit trade in SALW and its dire humanitarian consequences, full implementation of its measures requires due attention to shifting, additional, and revamped themes and priorities that reference but do not necessarily duplicate the framework adopted in 2001. A simple reiteration or relisting of the measures provided for in the original document is not sufficient. If gaps and challenges are to be effectively identified over the course of the next six-year review cycle, it is necessary to address “new” priorities in the context of a continuously changing security environment. •

CLUSTER MUNITIONS AND LANDMINES

Allison Boehm | International Network on Explosive Weapons

During the general debate of First Committee the issues of cluster munitions, antipersonnel landmines, and explosive remnants of war featured prominently as issues of urgent humanitarian concern.

Cluster munitions

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) recognized the adverse humanitarian effects of cluster munitions. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Community of Latin America and Caribbean States (CELAC) stated their support for efforts to reduce the suffering caused by cluster munitions. Lebanon called on the international community to urge Israel to complete deliveries of maps that indicate where cluster munitions are located on Lebanese territory.

A number of countries including Colombia, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Montenegro, Nicaragua, Norway, Portugal, Qatar, South Africa, and Spain spoke out in support of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), noting its entry into force on 1 August 2010 and the significant progress in implementation and universalization made over its first two years. Peru noted its accession to the treaty on 26 September 2012, bringing the number of states party to the treaty to seventy-seven.

New Zealand’s delegation said the CCM “is having the humanitarian and normative impact sought by the architects of the Oslo process.” Ambassador Higge also emphasized that as one of the CCM’s Coordinators for National Implementation, New Zealand is closely involved in efforts to assist with the development of implementing legislation for the Convention, “whether through the model implementing legislation” developed by New Zealand or, “via other national precedents.” She stated that her government looks forward to carrying this issue forward, as well as that of the Convention’s universalization, at the Fourth Meeting of States Parties next September. Portugal’s delega-

tion stated that it has been tasked along with Ghana to coordinate the universalization of the Convention and said it will do its utmost to fulfill this commitment.

ASEAN noted the important work done at the Third Meeting of States Parties (3MSP) in Oslo, Norway held from 11–14 September 2012. Norway’s ambassador said his government was pleased to host the 3MPS and that close to 120 states participated in the discussions. Lao PDR also noted the successful outcome of the 3MSP in Oslo and welcomed the offer from Zambia to hold the Fourth MSP.

The Norwegian delegation stated, “The Mine Ban Convention (MBT) and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) demonstrate that it is possible to negotiate multilateral instruments that have an immediate humanitarian effect on the ground and that strengthen the protection of civilians.” Norway considers the CCM to be a highly effective international instrument and has observed that since the Convention was negotiated it has been successful in stigmatizing cluster munitions. Norway called on all states to join the CCM and the common effort to “enhance the protection of civilians and strengthen international humanitarian law.”

Antipersonnel landmines

On the issue of antipersonnel landmines and the Mine Ban Treaty (MBT), states parties Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cambodia, Colombia, Nicaragua, Norway, Montenegro, Qatar, Serbia, Spain, and Turkey all expressed their strong support for the treaty’s universalization and implementation. Australia mentioned its \$100 million Mine Action Strategy.

States parties and non-states parties alike commented on the need for more progress in humanitarian demining. The NAM expressed concern “about the explosive remnants of the Second World War, particularly in the form of landmines which continue to cause human

and material damage and obstruct development plans in some Non-Aligned Countries” and called on the “states primarily responsible, for defrayal of the costs of clearance and compensation for any losses caused by mines-laid.”

Non-state party China noted that the government has been dedicated to humanitarian demining efforts and that China has, “provided humanitarian demining and victim assistances to over 40 developing countries which are affected by mines and cluster munitions.”

CELAC and Nicaragua both highlighted the achievement of a Mine-free Central America. CELAC also recognized the assistance of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and stressed the importance of “cooperation for demining and assistance to victims.”

ASEAN noted that the Mine Ban Treaty has been ratified and acceded to by 160 countries. ASEAN welcomed the Eleventh Meeting of the States Parties

(11MSP) held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia from 28 November to 2 December 2011, and noted that ASEAN looks forward to the Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties (12MSP) to be held from 3 to 7 December 2012 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Finally, Cambodia expressed its commitment to the promotion of international cooperation on demining action and putting an end to the sufferings and casualties caused by antipersonnel mines, the “silent and indiscriminate killers.” As the President of the 11MSP to the Convention, and on behalf of Albania and Slovenia, Cambodia will table the traditional draft resolution on “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and on Their Destruction.” Cambodia expressed its hope that this draft would, as in previous years, receive strong support from state and non-state parties to the convention. •

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND SECURITY

Rohie Drammeh | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

As First Committee began, many delegations expressed concern over tensions in cyberspace and expressed a need for rules and principles of responsible behaviour by states in the field of information technology. The delegation of Belarus, among others, stressed the need for comprehensive consideration of these issues, as they have not yet been addressed by any legal documents on a global level.

The Australian delegation stated that as gains are made in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation, the world faces a situation where new challenges are posed to the international community. Thus Australia expressed the need for measures to further develop trust and confidence between states in cyberspace, in order to enhance international security. Ambassador Quinlan argued that such needs will only increase with the dependence on information and communications technologies.

Many other delegations similarly called for the development of laws and norms on information technology for the sake of international security. In their statements, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and Indonesia called upon governments to further promote the consideration of existing and potential threats in the field of information security, as well as possible strategies that can be used to address the threats within the field.

The delegation of Brazil argued that legal commitments are necessary for “preserving the security of global information and telecommunications systems.” This view was shared by the Chinese delegation, which stated that the threats to information security have become a challenge to the international community and that it is high time to formulate international rules

within the field. China argued that such rules would encourage countries to work together against common threats to information security, and would ensure that information technologies are only used for the purposes of social and economic development with the goal of maintaining international peace and security.

Australia stated that the new Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, which first met for two weeks this August in New York, presents an opportunity to build consensus on norms, rules, and principles of responsible behaviour by states.

It was evident that many states also want to engage in dialogue on how information and communication technologies relate to the protection of national and international security. Indonesia’s delegation stated that the international community must find possibilities to elaborate common terms and definitions relevant to past discussions in the GGE. Belarus suggested that there might be a way of settling this problem by developing a treaty within the UN. Belarus expressed its expectation that the GGE will submit a report with recommendations for further steps that need to be taken by the international community when it concludes its work.

Aside from the GGE, other concrete steps have also been taken. China, together with Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan submitted a draft International Code of Conduct for Information Security to the 66th session of the UN General Assembly. China announced that in order to enhance the understanding of this proposed Code of Conduct, informal consultations will be organized on the margins of this First Committee. •

DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Marie-Capucine Goube | NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security

During the first week of general debate, a great number of countries incorporated the notion of development into their analysis of disarmament issues.

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) reiterated its position on the “symbiotic relationship between disarmament and development” and the important role of security in this connection. Some delegations highlighted specific threats to development posed by weapons. Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba from Mexico pointed to the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons (SALW) as one such threat. He explained that the easy access to SALW has devastating worldwide consequences in humanitarian, economic, social, and political terms, and is an obstacle to development. The Peruvian delegation underlined the notorious destabilizing effects on developing countries when those weapons end up in the wrong hands, while the representative of Benin argued that the effects of SALW are hobbling Africa’s ability to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Meanwhile, the delegation of Sudan argued that there is a clear link between root causes of conflicts, lack of development, and proliferation of weapons. For example, in the conflict in Darfur, the lack of development, coupled with drought and desertification, has fueled rivalries regarding water sources, which leads people to acquire SALW. This in turn causes more problems since proliferation of SALW also become related to cross-border crime, terrorism, drug trafficking. As the Nicaraguan delegation pointed out, such social violence and forced displacement interrupts development of health systems and education and causes a decline in economic activity, which causes a diversion from human and financial resources and results in massive damages to social structure, as well as social development.

In this vein, many speakers lamented that global military expenditure is increasing and resources are being diverted from development programmes. Ms. Angela Kane, United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, stated that the world sees greater effort put into perfecting weaponry rather than to refine the instruments of peace. The Brazilian Ambassador commended the UN Secretary-General’s recent article entitled “The World is Over-Armed and Peace is Under Funded,” in which he points out “that massive military spending and new investments in modernizing nuclear weapons—estimated at 4.6 billion dollars every day, at least—continue to reflect paradigms which are hard to explain in a post-Cold War world.”

The Nicaraguan delegation highlighted the fact that global military expenditure has grown by 50% in the last ten years and judged it “unjustifiable” that in today’s world millions don’t have food to eat but governments still spend even more money to develop and test weapons than they do on life and human beings.

The delegation of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) observed that expenditure on armaments has “sky-rocketed” while humans are struggling in “extreme poverty”. Mr. Khitchadeth of Lao PDR stressed the “need for strong political will and collective efforts to overcome these difficult impasses and to reemphasize the multilateral approach to achieving the ultimate goal of disarmament, non-proliferation and arm control.”

The delegations of Costa Rica and Lebanon drew attention to article 26 of the UN Charter, which urges states to reorient as many resources possible as possible away from military spending. Ambassador Eduardo Ulibarri of Costa Rica argued that resources should instead be allocated towards investment in development and in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The representative of Benin reminded First Committee that the General Assembly, in the final document of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development (1987), also urged states to devote greater resources to economic and social development while keeping military expenditure low. The existence of these documents, coupled with the annual General Assembly resolution on this topic, provide a good basis for action on this subject. However, as noted by the Mr. Khaled Al Kabi of Qatar, intentions expressed by some countries to reduce military spending are not enough. Such commitments “must be translated into reality”. He underlined the fact that the benefactors of this situation are the arms manufacturing companies, while “the biggest victims remain peace and security throughout the world.”

In order to improve the situation and reduce this mismatch, the representative of Qatar argued that building a world of peace and security is contingent on providing the UN with the necessary financial resources to carry out its functions. Similarly, the Cuban delegation proposed that “at least” half of the current military expenditure be re-allocated to social and economic development through a fund administered by the UN.

Last year’s First Committee resolution on disarmament and development called for countries to constantly make the link between disarmament and development, especially when a lack of development can be a potential source of conflict. It is clear that progress has been made in that regard, and that more and more member states realize that disarmament has to be viewed as a step towards globally sustainable peace and security, and that disarmament should be addressed from various angles, including from a development perspective. Costa Rica encouraged the First Committee delegates to “work together, with optimism and commitment, in our efforts to respond to the threats that we face on the basis of multilateralism and in respect for human lives.” •

The International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons (ICBUW) and IKV Pax Christi

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DISARMAMENT MACHINERY

Beatrice Fihn | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

With now sixteen years since real negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the state of the disarmament machinery was a hot topic in the general debate. With almost all speakers discussing the deadlock, it is evident that patience with the machinery is running thin. However, views on what the problem is, and more so, what to do about it, still varies.

The frustration was palpable. Kenya's delegation complained that "there is no doubt the body conducts its deliberations as if it were in a vacuum. Sitting in its sessions can be quite a surreal experience." Nigeria's ambassador noted "For close to two decades, the annual sessions of the CD have been barren and devoid of any satisfactory outcomes. Clearly, this is not a situation that should be allowed to go on indefinitely."

The United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Angela Kane shared delegations' frustration over the continued deadlock. She concluded that the disarmament machinery "will regain its momentum and will continue to advance disarmament norms when Member States recognize that there is in fact a harmony between national interests and the general interest."

Many delegations continued to voice support for the CD and its role as the "sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament," arguing that the problem was not the machinery in itself. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) believes that the main difficulty of the machinery is in the lack of political will by some states to achieve actual progress, while China, Russia, and Kenya believe the CD's external political environment and security concerns are the problem.

Senegal's delegation noted that the problems stem from antagonism of a political nature, but recognized that current working methods are not able to resolve it. Spain's representative argued that the rule of consensus "was created to include all sensibilities in the decision-making process; but to use it as a virtual right of veto is equivalent to falsify its nature." Ukraine and France, on the other hand, pointed out how essential the rule of consensus is to them.

Delegates proposed several different ways to move forward. Aside from calling for "more political will", the NAM, the Arab League, Cuba, Algeria, Brazil, Iraq, Nicaragua, and Indonesia called for the establishment of a Fourth Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD-IV) to re-assess the entire UN disarmament machinery.

Several countries focused on intermediate proposals to improve the situation, such as revitalization, greater engagement of civil society, and expansion of membership. Most speakers encouraged continued discussion on revitalization of the CD or the disarmament machinery as a whole. Switzerland's delegation noted that the deadlock gradually undermines the forum's standing

and legitimacy, "a situation that is increasingly untenable," and called for follow-up of last year's resolution on "Revitalizing the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations" (A/RES/66/66). The European Union, ASEAN, Serbia, Thailand, Portugal, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Nigeria, and Montenegro supported expanding membership.

However, some countries suggested taking action outside the CD. The US, the EU, Japan, and France emphasized that negotiations of a fissile materials (cut-off) treaty is the next essential step, and that the CD was the venue where such negotiations should take place. However, Ms. Gottemoeller of the US noted that "our patience on this issue is not infinite and we will push for what is in the best interest of global security." The EU considered the blockage of the CD "unacceptable" and noted argued that the international community needs to "reflect on options and, if necessary, identify other ways to ensure progress." Japan believed it is necessary for the First Committee to examine ways to overcome the impasse.

"We are close to losing patience," said New Zealand's ambassador. "[W]here an obstacle blocks our path, if it cannot be removed, it is necessary to detour around it."

Austria's delegation announced that, together with Mexico and Norway, it is working on a draft resolution that will establish an open-ended working group in Geneva for three weeks in 2013. Ambassador Strohal explained that the working group aims to "develop concrete proposals to take forward multilateral negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons". Both Norway and Mexico echoed this and argued that the UN member states and the General Assembly have an obligation to take responsibility for delivering results.

But just as states displayed a wide range of levels of frustration, they expressed a similar spectrum of resistance to circumventing the CD.

Russia's delegation "fundamentally" disagreed with any attempts to reforming experiments as "they risk breaking down existing structures," but without guarantee that they would help build new and more efficient structures. China's delegation stated that it is important to "safeguard the authority of the multilateral disarmament machinery" and argued that abandoning the CD is not the right way to solve the problem, as it would not ensure the participation of all major countries. India and Belarus said that FMCT negotiations should take place within the CD, and Brazil's ambassador rejected any ultimatum to the CD. Cuba's delegation raised concerns about "ideas of some to put aside the CD and resort to alternative negotiation processes [...] which would entail a dangerous step backwards."

While calling for revitalization, Belarus believed that disarmament negotiations must be pursued within the UN. Argentina argued that it considers it possible to revitalize the disarmament machinery and therefore not necessary to conduct negotiations processes outside the CD at the same time. Mongolia believed the CD was the best place for conducting multilateral negotiations, but called for innovative and creative approaches to solving the deadlock.

Delegations did not just criticize the CD for its deadlock; several also addressed other parts of the machinery. As the Chair of the 2012 UN Disarmament Commission, Peruvian Ambassador Enrique Román-Morey stated, he did everything he could to lift the Commission out of its morass. He regretted that no recommendations had been agreed, but noted that in the CD,

“the situation is even more desperate”. He argued that Peru was open to evaluating all proposals to come up with solutions to this “absurd stalemate”.

First Committee also got its share of complaints. As the South African delegation pointed out, “the significant level of overlap, duplication and contradiction among the various First Committee resolutions on priority disarmament issues, as well as the continued divergence reflected in the votes on these resolutions, reflect the ongoing challenges facing the international community.” And as Angela Kane noted, last year “the deliberations on nuclear disarmament resolutions featured an abundance of red lines, and a scarcity of green lights.” She argued, “the real challenge facing this Committee is to discover or create new opportunities for progress across the full range of challenges we are facing.” •

DISARMAMENT EDUCATION

Rohie Drammeh | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

In her opening statement Ms. Angela Kane, the United Nations High Representative on Disarmament Affairs, reminded delegations that this year marks the tenth anniversary of the Secretary-General’s first report on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education. She continued by saying that according to the report, “the purpose of education in these fields is to empower citizens to make their own contributions to the achievement of concrete disarmament and non-proliferation measures.”

The general understanding of disarmament and non-proliferation must be deepened among a wide-range of people regardless of where they are in the world or of how old they are. It is especially important to educate the younger population, as they are the leaders of tomorrow and, in the words of Ms. Kane, “future generations may well inherit some of these challenges.” To this end, Japan has taken on the mission of passing on its knowledge and its experience from the US atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the next generation. In August this year Japan, together with the United Nations University, organized “The Global Forum on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education” in Nagasaki. The statement from the Kyrgyz delegation expressed appreciation for Japan’s work in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation education.

The role of education and training as tools to promote disarmament and non-proliferation is a vital, yet often neglected issue. The Kyrgyz delegation argued that one of the greatest challenges today in the disarmament and non-proliferation field is “complacency and ignorance on the part of otherwise well-educated citizens, as well as among their elected officials.” However, while the low level of knowledge is regrettable, it is understandable because of the general lack of op-

portunity to study the subject. Today, when there is a vital need for new thinking about disarmament and non-proliferation matters, few students in high school have the curriculum that exposes the students to the issues of weapons proliferation and strategies for their control. The possibility of university and graduate training within the field is also not satisfactory. In other words there are few venues available for the training of the future leaders in the subject. In this regard, the 34 recommendations of the UN Expert Group on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education elaborated in 2002 are particularly relevant. The Kyrgyz delegation welcomed the inclusion in the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty’s 2010 Review Conference Final Document of Action 22, which calls on all states to implement the recommendations of the UN study on disarmament and non-proliferation education. •

HIROSHIMA NAGASAKI DOWNLOAD MEMORIES FROM THE AMERICAS



SIDE EVENT: CREATING THE CONDITIONS AND BUILDING THE FRAMEWORK FOR A NUCLEAR WEAPONS FREE WORLD

Eloise Watson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Hosted by the Permanent Mission of Germany to the UN, a Middle Powers Initiative (MPI) roundtable explored the conditions and framework required for advancing a nuclear weapons free world. The event was an opportunity to discuss the draft of a briefing paper for the Berlin Meeting of the MPI Framework Forum, to be held in 21–22 February 2013. As Senator Douglas Roche (MPI Chair Emeritus) explained, this Forum is based on a reference in the Outcome Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference that affirmed the need for all states to “establish the necessary framework to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons.” H.E. Mr. Miguel Berger (Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the UN) and Ms. Angela Kane (UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs) offered opening remarks, followed by Dr. John Burroughs (Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy), who summarized his briefing paper on this topic. Dr. W. Pal Sidhu (Centre on International Cooperation) concluded the discussion, looking at the question of conditions for a nuclear weapon free world from a different angle.

In her address, Ms. Kane spoke forthrightly about the dangers of insisting on preconditions for disarmament. One problem with such an approach, she argued, is that conditions are open-ended and therefore, to demand that this “cascade of conditions” be satisfied before disarmament is “possible” is to postpone disarmament indefinitely. Kane also highlighted another associated implication of the preconditions approach: it “might prove contagious” as non-nuclear weapon states could resort to similar tactics to justify their resistance to implementing their own non-proliferation commitments.

In his succinct overview of the briefing paper, Dr. Burroughs also emphasized the risks of focusing too heavily on conditions. He refuted the conditions considered by the P5 to be necessary for a nuclear weapons free world (including resolution of regional disputes and a step-by-step approach), explaining that their satisfaction is important but not a prerequisite for undertaking a comprehensive approach. According to Dr. Burroughs, instead of allowing this preoccupation with conditions to “delay or derail disarmament,” there is a need to clarify what disarmament processes must encompass; distinguishing the necessary characteristics of a nuclear weapons free world (for example, that the ban be universally verifiable or irreversible) is one way to do this.

Dr. Sidhu commended the draft paper, particularly for its important section on the instruments and architecture needed for achieving global zero. He suggested, however, that equal emphasis be given to the conditions for sustaining global zero. Ensuring the continuity of a nuclear weapons free world is reliant on several conditions, including the establishment of structures that manage power relations on all levels, and the strengthening and/or establishment of robust institutions to prevent conflict outbreak.

The Q&A session allowed Dr. Burroughs time to further elucidate the merits of a “comprehensive approach” versus those of a “step-by-step” approach. As he explained, the latter is vulnerable to geopolitical tensions and disruptive events like war, and is “a recipe for the [disarmament] process stretching out,” continually held hostage by one or more intransigent states. •

SIDE EVENT: NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT: ITS ROLE IN THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

Eloise Watson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

It requires no great perspicacity to appreciate that the Conference on Disarmament (CD) is in a state of paralysis, having experienced a prolonged lack of results for the last fifteen years. Indeed, an abundance of commentary centred on this subject during the first week of this year’s First Committee. Perhaps more difficult to ascertain, however, are the reasons behind the CD’s persistent impasse, and the best options for repairing or moving beyond the CD. Such issues were discussed during a side event organized by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) at which Ambassador Sergio Duarte, Mr. Tim Caughley

(UNIDIR), and Ms. Ray Acheson (Reaching Critical Will) spoke.

Mr. Caughley gave some insightful opening remarks, covering what he described as “the politics behind the CD’s barren recent history”. In his opinion, gridlock in the CD ensues partly as a result of the oscillating debate over which issue is the ‘ripest’ for negotiation or most deserving of the CD’s attention. He also laid out several divergent opinions held by CD members concerning the Conference. For example, as he explained, there are those who believe wholeheartedly in the CD’s continued utility and importance and in the need

to “just be patient,” while others see no short-term prospects of overcoming the deadlock, and so would like the CD to agree on a scene-setting course of action.

Mr. Caughley moved on to question the meaning of “consensus”—the way in which the CD operates—and its impact on CD progress. As he explained, consensus in the CD often equates to the use of veto, resulting in the indefinite blocking of decisions. He therefore called for the interpretation of consensus in the CD “in its normal manner,” that is, that each member exercise a level of responsibility informed by the likely impact of the decision on the state’s security, “rather than by some unfettered freedom to exercise a veto.” A final point related to his belief that the requirement to agree on a programme of work annually has overloaded the CD’s purpose, unnecessarily complicating its mission and rendering more difficult the task of agreeing mandates.

In her account of the blockage in the CD, Ms. Acheson also focused on the dangers of the consensus rule. She explained that the strict application of consensus as unanimity has undermined and stymied any real progress in the CD, since consensus has effectively become the equivalent of a veto used by states on issues upon which they don’t want to move forward. Ms. Acheson rebuffed the argument made by many non-nuclear weapon states that the consensus rule is a way of protecting the national security interests of all states and not simply the most powerful ones, underlining that nuclear weapon possessors are in fact the only states yielding the consensus rule as a veto within the

CD. As she summarised, “consensus has become less a tool for encouraging creative compromises and more an instrument for demanding unanimity, usually resulting in lowest common denominator agreements.” She affirmed that the CD is equally beleaguered by a lack of political will, which is manifest in several ways.

Ms. Acheson also drew the audience’s attention to Austria’s recent proposal of an open-ended working group on nuclear disarmament that will meet for up to three weeks in Geneva. She commended this suggestion, which would provide for more robust multilateral action than the CD could since more than just the 65 CD members are able to participate.

Audience members made few refutations or responses during the Q&A session, somewhat surprising given the contentious subject matter of the discussion. The German and Mexican delegations agreed that the rule of consensus has become a problem for achieving robust results—or any results at all—across the UN machinery. Dr. John Burroughs (Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy) commented on the requisite level of state participation for disarmament treaties. He questioned whether nuclear weapon possessors need to be signed on from the outset and how broad the number of states involved need be, highlighting that treaties like the Non-Proliferation Treaty and Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention were negotiated by a small group of states. Mr. Caughley agreed, adding that while wide participation of states is always preferable, “if the ideal is incapable of being delivered upon, what are we left with?” •

SIDE EVENT: ABOLITION 2000 STRATEGY SESSION TO ACHIEVE A NUCLEAR WEAPONS CONVENTION

Rohie Drammeh and Aarushi Prakash | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Abolition 2000 is a network of civil society organizations committed to nuclear disarmament. The Abolition 2000 Working Group for a Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC) was established in 1996 to promote consideration and negotiations for an NWC, which would prohibit the development, production, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use and the threat of use, of nuclear weapons and provide for their elimination. The main goal is to achieve an NWC through cooperation-building between initiatives and campaigns in order to work towards a nuclear weapon free world.

On 11 October 2012, Abolition 2000 organized a side event filled with guest speakers, which was divided up into two sessions.

The first session was on current campaigns and initiatives for an NWC. The first speaker was H.E. Byrganym Aitimova, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to the United Nations. Ambassador Aitimova explained how Kazakhstan’s commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-

proliferation stems from the extensive suffering caused by nuclear tests and explosions in Semipalatinsk. After the country achieved independence, the nuclear test site was shut down and medical research labs replaced the former Soviet nuclear research labs. The Semipalatinsk test site was closed down on 29 August and therefore Kazakhstan has declared that as the annual International Day against Nuclear Tests. Unfortunately, this day has not been recognized by the P5. Ambassador Aitimova wanted Kazakhstan to be an example of a country that has suffered the consequences of nuclear testing and explosions, but now has renounced all such activities within the country. However, a question was raised from the participants on how Kazakhstan can promote nuclear disarmament and still have a nuclear fuel bank in the country. The Ambassador answered that the nuclear fuel bank project still is subject to discussion, though Kazakhstan is the second largest producer of uranium in the world.

continued on next page

Mr. Randy Rydell of the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs spoke of how we should be happy with what has been achieved in the field of nuclear disarmament so far, even though there is still work to be done. He also pointed out that the legal status of nuclear weapons under humanitarian law is still unclear. He highlighted some difficulties that civil society faces, such as the declining number of rallies, lack of unity, ignorance of public education, and that fewer young people have interest in this issue. He believed there is a need for public educational campaigns to get more people involved.

Mr. Bill Kidd, a member of the Scottish Parliament and the co-President of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, said that the civil society participation in the room showed how the issue will not disappear anytime soon and that the issue of a nuclear weapons free world lies in the interest of many. He pointed out that the United Kingdom's nuclear weapons arsenal is stored in Scotland, something that many Scottish people don't appreciate. He highlighted that a majority of the Scottish population wants the nuclear weapons to be removed within the next two years, and for Scotland to become a nuclear weapons free zone. Mr. Kidd believed that the key towards achieving a nuclear weapons convention is cooperation between and across national borders, but it is naturally also important to promote the idea of cooperation within nations as well.

Ms. Jackie Cabasso spoke on behalf of Mayors for Peace, an organization that strives to raise international public awareness about the need to abolish nuclear weapons. Mayors for Peace has a 2020 Vision Campaign that aims to establish a nuclear weapons free world by the year 2020. Their message is "eliminate the nuclear threat," and in this regard they lobby governments, send delegations to the United Nations, form partnerships with national and international associations, and strive to raise awareness around the world about the pressing need for nuclear disarmament.

The general idea at the closing of this session was that a nuclear weapons free world is not an impossible vision. Nuclear disarmament is not an issue only few people care about, it is a critical issue with the support by many. It was concluded that an NWC is possible with the cooperation and dialogue among states and the United Nations.

The second session had three speakers address strategies for achieving a nuclear weapons convention. The first speaker, H.E. Eduardo Ulibarri, Ambassador of Costa Rica to the United Nations, elaborated on some lessons learnt over the years regarding the issue. He emphasized that opportunities should be grabbed when they appear, arguing that one such opportunity was in 1996, when the CTBT was approved and opened for signature, the ICJ delivered an advisory opinion on nuclear weapons, and Costa Rica decided to join efforts

with civil society in drafting a model Nuclear Weapons Convention. He emphasized that an NWC is a priority for Costa Rica's foreign policy. Unfortunately, this opportunity in 1996 did not lead to any major achievement in this regard.

Ambassador Ulibarri believed that issue of nuclear weapons should always be approached through a humanitarian lens and that the process for banning these weapons must keep on moving. He emphasized on the need for engaging with civil society in order to develop a universal consciousness around nuclear weapons. Ambassador Ulibarri, supporting immediate commencement of negotiations on an NWC, noted that it might be worth exploring the possibility of starting negotiations through a group of like-minded countries or through the General Assembly. While recognizing that such approaches might not have the participation of all key actors, it has the possibility to move the issue forward.

Global Security Institute's Jonathan Granoff spoke about how the debate on nuclear weapons often takes place in national security terms, where the military always advocates "benefits" while the diplomats keep stressing the "risks" of nuclear weapons. He argued that such framing of the debate allows the military resort to the the argument that nuclear weapon are "necessary for unforeseeable threats in the future," but without elaborating how nuclear weapons could be used in today's intertwined global environment.

Mr. Granoff further argued that nuclear weapons have to be understood as a global extra-terrestrial threat and one should avoid buying into the military's idea that nuclear weapons breed security in the state while acting as a major deterrence to wars. He concluded that the elimination of nuclear weapons through global governance is possible, if we change the framework so that it favours human security and the global good instead of the military.

John Burroughs, from the Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy and Nuclear Abolition Forum, underlined the basic idea of the Forum, which is to encourage debate and dialogue on nuclear abolition. He stressed that Nuclear Abolition Forum is open to all points of view with increasing participation of people who are ready to move forward. Dr. Burroughs added that we are 15 years beyond the ICJ advisory opinion and now its time to take the discussion further.

At the end of the session, representing the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), Susi Snyder gave an overview of the campaign and the current resources available for tackling the issue of abolishing nuclear weapons. She briefly mentioned the Oslo meeting in 2013 on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons as a way of increasing momentum towards a ban on nuclear weapons. •



CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR THE WEEK OF 15–19 OCTOBER 2012

When	What	Where	Who
Monday, 15 October 13:15-14:45	Fifty Years After the Cuban Missile Crisis: Next Steps on Nuclear Disarmament and Nonproliferation	Conference Room 1 North Lawn Building	Arms Control Association
Wednesday, 17 October 10:00-13:00	The importance and possibilities of establishing a WMD Free Zone in the Middle East	Church Center 777 UN Plaza Hardin Room, 11th Floor	NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security
Wednesday, 17 October 13:15-14:45	Finishing the job: delivering a bulletproof arms trade treaty	Conference Room E North Lawn Building	Permanent Mission of Trinidad and Tobago to the UN; Permanent Mission of Mexico to the UN; ICRC; Oxfam; Saferworld
Wednesday, 17 October 13:15-14:45	De-alerting	Conference Room A North Lawn Building	Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN
Thursday, 18 October 13:15-14:45	Accountability for nuclear disarmament	Conference Room 1 North Lawn Building	Project Ploughshares, the Simons Foundation, Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy
Thursday, 18 October 13:15-14:45	The future of space security: framing the development of TCBMs in multilateral fora	Conference Room A North Lawn Building	UN Institute for Disarmament Research
Thursday, 18 October 18:00-21:00	Event on depleted uranium issues	Church Center 777 UN Plaza, 10th Floor	International Campaign to Ban Uranium Weapons
Friday, 19 October 13:15-14:30	Hiroshima Nagasaki Download: Memories from the Americas - learning from others	Conference Room A North Lawn Building	UN Office for Disarmament Affairs

Finishing the Job: Delivering a Bullet-Proof Arms Trade Treaty

Invitation to Event and Panel Discussion

Wednesday October 17th, 1:15pm - 2:30pm
Conference Room E, NLB, United Nations
Light lunch will be provided

Panelists:

Ambassador Eden Charles, Permanent Mission to the UN, Trinidad and Tobago
Dr. Roberto Dondisch, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mexico
Nathalie Weizman, International Committee of the Red Cross
Roy Isbister, Saferworld
Deepayan Basu Ray, Oxfam International

FIRST COMMITTEE MONITOR

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

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Global Action to Prevent War

International Network on Explosive Weapons

NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security

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