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Reaching Critical Will | A programme of the
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Reaching Critical Will

EDITORIAL: PROCESSES FOR PROGRESS

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

First Committee is often viewed as a forum for member states to exposit on every topic related to disarmament and international security and to table resolutions that change little in substance or in result from year to year. This year, however, it had before it several very important and concrete questions. In the end, all of the new initiatives were adopted with an overwhelming majority of support. In most cases, the dissenters were those who benefit most from the status quo and thus did not want to permit the establishment of new processes, particularly if their power to veto would not be guaranteed.

Through draft resolution A/C.1/67/L.46, the General Assembly would establish an open-ended working group (OEWG) on nuclear disarmament, which will meet for up to 15 days in Geneva in 2013 “to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons.”

The resolution was not supported by the nuclear weapon possessors, with France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States voting no and China, India, Israel, and Pakistan abstaining. The nuclear weapon states (NWS) of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) argued that an OEWG on nuclear disarmament will undermine the implementation of the NPT action plan adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

As Beatrice Fihn writes in the article on disarmament machinery in this edition of the *First Committee Monitor* (p. 4), “If an OEWG on nuclear disarmament threatens the implementation of the action plan, it will be because the nuclear weapon states chose to use it as an excuse not to implement it. Nothing prevents the nuclear weapon states to use the OEWG as a vehicle for discussing and accelerating their work around the actions related to disarmament, and thereby concluding its implementation by the 2015 Review Conference.”

Meanwhile, India and Pakistan, which are not party to the NPT, argued the OEWG would undermine the Conference on Disarmament (CD). However, the CD has not fulfilled its own mandate—to negotiate disarmament treaties—in more than fifteen years. Frustration is turning many governments towards action, as was evidenced by the broad support for the resolution not just on the OEWG on nuclear disarmament, but also those establishing a high-level meeting (HLM) on nuclear disarmament; an organizational meeting for an OEWG on the Fourth Special Session for Disarmament (SSOD IV); and a group of governmental experts (GGE) on aspects of a fissile materials treaty.

As the delegation of New Zealand asked during the thematic debate on disarmament machinery, “Can [the CD] really be allowed to live off some historic successes of long ago in order to justify its continued existence?”

The answer, clearly delivered at this year’s First Committee, is no.

Not only did most member states vote in favour of the OEWG, the HLM, the SSOD IV meeting, and the GGE, but they also expressed an increasing unwillingness to allow the impasse in the CD to prevent tangible progress on vital issues of peace and security. While the debate over the root cause of the stalemate in the CD is no closer to being resolved, many delegations have recognized that, as the New Zealand delegation said, “we have a situation whereby the mechanisms that should facilitate progress in the CD are in fact hindering it.”

Specifically, the abuse of the rule of consensus has, as 22 civil society organizations noted in a joint statement submitted to First Committee, ensured that no real negotiations are taking place; undermined the security of those that demand on the rule of law rather than rule of terror for their protection; and increased investments in military-industrial complexes.

But this situation is not unique to the CD. A fifth resolution with actionable consequences tabled at this year’s First Committee—A/C.1/67/L.11 on the arms trade treaty (ATT)—was met with reservations in response to its application of the rules of procedure (including the rule of consensus) from the failed ATT negotiations in July 2012 to a new negotiating conference in March 2013. In explanations of vote, some countries supporting the continuation of negotiations reiterated concerns with the potential for misuse of the consensus rule. The Mexican delegation argued that consensus must not be interpreted as the right of one or a few delegations to impede general agreement, while the delegation of Morocco said it must not be interpreted as tool of veto or as meaning unanimity. Such concerns were expressed by other delegations during the conventional weapons debate.

In July, operating under the rule of consensus meant that the ATT text was weakened to accommodate the concerns of a small minority, which were in the end still unprepared to accept the treaty. Operating under the same rules of procedure next March risks another failure, or a weak treaty. It must be the views of the majority of states that win out, not the few who seek to block, weaken, or delay an outcome.

The important message coming from the majority of member states and civil society at this year’s First Committee is that a handful of countries must no longer be allowed to hold back the rest of the international community in tackling some of the most dramatic problems of our age. Stalemates and watered-down outcomes must urgently be replaced by alternatives that can proudly be deemed “successful” for genuine human security and social and economic justice. Governments and civil society alike should not settle for less. •

DISARMAMENT MACHINERY

Beatrice Fihn | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Since 2005, when a group of six countries (Brazil, Canada, Kenya, Mexico, New Zealand, and Sweden) first made an attempt to circumvent the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) by initiating work through the General Assembly, the challenges of the existing disarmament machinery has been a hot topic on the First Committee agenda.

During the 2012 session of the First Committee, it was obvious that the patience with the existing fora has finally run out for the majority of delegations. For example, the delegation of New Zealand expressed its “enormous sense of frustration and disappointment at the ongoing dysfunction in the UN’s disarmament machinery” and the Canadian delegation argued that the CD’s past achievements “are rapidly fading from memory, to be replaced by ridicule and a lack of credibility.” The resolutions tabled and adopted during this session were thus aimed at establishing concrete mechanisms to move negotiations forward.

Open-ended working group

“Taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations”, A/C.1/67/L.46, tabled by Austria, Mexico, and Norway, sets up an open-ended working group (OEWG) to “develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons.” The resolution was adopted with a vote of 134-4-34.

All nuclear weapon states except China voted against the resolution. In addition, China and the other nuclear weapon possessing states abstained, as well as many NATO countries and a few Non-Aligned Movement countries—mostly from Central Asia and South and Southeast Asia—making it an interesting cross-regional group of non-supporters. However, that also means that the support for this resolution and the open-ended working group also comes from a diverse and large group of states.

With a few oral amendments, which mainly reaffirmed the importance of the CD, it received support from the overwhelming majority of delegations. Even those that consistently support the maintenance of the CD as the so-called “sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body” supported the resolution. In its explanation of vote (EOV), the Egyptian delegation argued that it voted in favour of the draft resolution “as a reflection of its strong commitment to the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, while hereby restating nonetheless its principled position on the multilateral disarmament machinery.” While voting in favour of the draft resolution, Iran also highlighted that the working group had no negotiating mandate and “does not substitute any part of multilateral disarmament machinery.”

The main opposition came from four nuclear weapon states, France, Russia, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States (US). France, the UK, and the US made a joint EOV in which they said they see “little value in this initiative to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations outside of the established fora” and preferred to move forward on multilateral disarmament negotiations through the agreed 64 point action plan adopted at the 2010 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference. In addition, the three nuclear weapon states warned that “organising a new process to discuss again the same issue may jeopardize the consensus we were able to achieve in 2010 and the momentum for the 2015 Review Conference.” Meanwhile, the Russian delegation said it is impractical to establish an OEWG to discuss questions that are already being looked at elsewhere. It argued that the creation of another forum with “dispersed goals and unclear authorities” only “creates the appearance of moving forward” and may “destabilize” existing machinery.

As the only P5 country that did not vote against the resolution, but rather abstained, China also raised similar concerns about the stability of the machinery and future implementation of the NPT action plan. The Chinese delegation stated that while it agreed with the “spirit and objective” of the resolution, establishing an OEWG may reduce or weaken the status and role of the existing mechanisms and become difficult to maintain the principle of consensus and participation of major countries. The other nuclear possessors, India, Israel, and Pakistan also abstained. The delegation of India argued that an OEWG outside the CD under General Assembly rules of procedures will “not lead to productive outcomes” while Pakistan worried the OEWG would undermine the CD.

Unfortunately, no nuclear possessing country suggest any alternative way of making concrete progress on the items on the CD’s agenda or in the 2010 action plan related to reductions of nuclear weapon arsenals, let alone the achievement of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Indeed, many non-nuclear weapon states countered the arguments made by the nuclear possessors. As the Norwegian representative stated in the thematic debate on the disarmament machinery, “it is all the more striking that neither the CD nor the UNDC [UN Disarmament Commission] have so far been able to capitalize” on the goals set by the 2010 NPT action plan. He highlighted that the purpose of the OEWG is simply “to create a venue for free and transparent discussions on how to achieve our common objective,” including implementing the 2010 NPT action plan. Others, such as New Zealand, argued that the issue of nuclear disarmament was “too important a

topic to be allowed entirely to be shelved while the CD discusses its procedural issues.”

Group of governmental experts

The other significant resolution trying to break status quo was “Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices” (A/C.1/67/L.41/Rev.1), submitted by Canada. It sets up a group of governmental experts (GGE) consisting of 25 member states to make recommendations on possible aspects which can contribute to “but not negotiate” a treaty banning fissile materials for weapons purposes. The GGE will operate by consensus and will meet in Geneva for two sessions of two weeks each in 2014 and 2015, and report back to the First Committee in October 2015.

The resolution was adopted with a vote of 149-1-20. As expected, Pakistan voted against the resolution, and 20 countries, mainly from the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) chose to abstain. Also Israel, China, and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) abstained. The four nuclear weapon states that voted against L.46, France, Russia, the UK, and the US, voted in favour of this resolution and did not seem to think that taking the issue of a fissile materials treaty outside the CD would have any harmful effects on the CD, the disarmament machinery, or the implementation of the 2010 NPT action plan.

A separate vote on operational paragraph (OP) 3, the paragraph that sets up the GGE, received three no votes and 22 abstentions. Iran and Syria joined Pakistan in voting against this paragraph. In addition to the 20 countries abstaining on the whole resolution, Russia and Cuba also abstained on the paragraph on the GGE.

Pakistan, who has opposed the annual resolution on fissile materials since 2010, argued that the proposal of a GGE was “ill advised” and added “no value” to the process or the substance of a future treaty, but would instead only undermine the CD. The Pakistani representative argued that it voted against the resolution and OP 3 since changing the format will not change the external political environment, which is the real roadblock to FMCT negotiations.

In their EOVs, both Egypt and China stated that they abstained on the entire resolution since it did not specify that the CD is the only place where negotiations of an FMCT can take place. Iran explained that it believed it was too premature to single out one issue of the CD agenda, and therefore voted against OP 3.

Russia argued it did not believe that a GGE would contribute to solving the issue that has complicated negotiations of a fissile material, and therefore abstained on OP 3 while supporting the rest of the resolution. Cuba also abstained on this paragraph since it is “a non-inclusive step” on a topic that is of interest to the whole international community, and raised concerns around initiatives aimed at creating exclusive groups of experts on disarmament.

High-level meeting

The third resolution that contained a concrete action related to disarmament machinery was “High-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament”, (A/C.1/67/L.19), submitted by the NAM. The resolution convenes a one-day high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament on 26 September 2013. The resolution was adopted with 165-0-5, with France, Israel, the UK, the US, and Ukraine abstaining. France, the UK, and the US questioned the value of holding such a high-level meeting and wondered how it would further the goals of implementing the 2010 NPT action plan. Both the UK and the French delegations also regretted that this meeting would not deal with non-proliferation, as they believed the two topics needed to be treated in a balanced matter. The US agreed and also highlighted the additional cost of such a meeting, and argued that it might have a negative budgetary impact on other initiatives.

Other resolutions

In addition to these three new developments, two annual resolutions regarding the disarmament machinery were adopted. “The Report of the Conference on Disarmament” (A/C.1/67/L.33) and “The Report of the Disarmament Commission” (A/C.1/67/L.5), were adopted without a vote and contained no significant changes from previous years.

The biennial resolution on “Open-ended Working Group on the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament” (A/C.1/67/L.58) was also adopted through a vote of 171-0-4, with France, Israel, the UK, and the US as only abstaining countries. The three nuclear weapon states explained their abstention by referring to the arguments put forward in 2010, which complained of unnecessary budgetary resources and that there was no need to “pre-judge” the outcome of the 2010 high-level meeting on the role of the disarmament machinery. Apparently these countries are still eagerly awaiting results from the Secretary-General’s Advisory Board before considering next steps.

Analysis

The different reactions to these three new developments—the OEWG, the GGE and the HLM—show the clear division of priorities between countries. All nuclear possessing states seem increasingly uninterested in any real progress on nuclear disarmament and instead use rhetorical threats that the 2010 NPT action plan might not be implemented if any such new initiatives are carried out. This is despite the fact that they themselves have committed to implement all disarmament-related actions of the 2010 agreement.

It is disappointing to see that the action plan is used as the only potential vehicle for progress on nuclear disarmament, because not only is it vague in this respect, but it also does not provide for any concrete multilateral nuclear disarmament process. It was a welcomed

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document in 2010, as it encourages the nuclear weapon states to take further steps towards the implementation of article VI of the NPT. However, the nuclear weapon states are already failing to implement it fully (see Reaching Critical Will's monitoring report on implementing the 2010 NPT action plan).

While a GGE on a treaty banning fissile materials might be a positive development and possibly can make a contribution to the implementation of one of the 64 actions in the action plan, it will not be able to report back to the General Assembly until October 2015. This is going to be after the 2015 NPT Review Conference, where the action plan should be fully implemented and the next steps towards nuclear disarmament should be agreed upon.

Just like the 13 steps from 2000, the action plan was never intended to be a long-term goal; it's a list of concrete steps that the nuclear weapon states have agreed to take. If an OEWG on nuclear disarmament threatens the implementation of the action plan, it will be because the nuclear weapon states chose to use it

as an excuse not to implement it. Nothing prevents the nuclear weapon states to use the OEWG as a vehicle for discussing and accelerating their work around the actions related to disarmament, and thereby concluding its implementation by the 2015 Review Conference.

In the end, the nuclear weapon states are solely responsible for implementing their commitments. An OEWG with a quite vague mandate can in no reasonable way be used as an excuse for failing to comply with such commitments.

Before concluding this report, Reaching Critical Will would like to acknowledge an important part of the disarmament machinery, the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). We believe it is of the highest importance to maintain the institute's independent role as a research institute focusing on disarmament. UNIDIR is a valuable and functioning yet underutilized part of the machinery. Member states should consider mechanisms that would strengthen UNIDIR's contribution to disarmament and security not those that would weaken its ties to the disarmament machinery. •

NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

The majority of delegations at this year's First Committee joined the chorus of rising voices saying "we have waited long enough" for nuclear disarmament. Since 1945, the international community has demanded disarmament but has seen both horizontal and vertical proliferation. The nuclear weapon states (NWS) agreed to get eliminate their arsenals when they ratified the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and most nuclear weapon possessors outside the of the NPT say they are committed to nuclear disarmament, yet no significant progress has been made—despite the 2010 NPT action plan, despite high-level endorsement of nuclear disarmament, and despite increasing concern about nuclear risks and threats.

This growing recognition that nuclear disarmament can no longer be left up to the nuclear weapon possessors alone is further emboldened by the general sense of their failure to comply with their disarmament obligations. It is in this spirit that overwhelming majority of member states endorsed the New Agenda Coalition (NAC)'s "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments" (A/C.1/67/L.13). The draft resolution was adopted with a vote of 156-7-4 and, like last year, only nuclear weapon possessors opposed it. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), France, India, Israel, Russian Federation, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States (US) voted no, while China and Pakistan abstained along with Micronesia and Bhutan.

The only change to the voting pattern this year was Russia, which switched from abstention to rejection. The Russian delegation explained that it is upset with the "trend" in "reinterpreting" the 2010 NPT action plan. It argued that such reinterpretations lead to the imposition of "unacceptable obligations" on the NWS, which is "destructive for dialogue on future issues of reducing nuclear arsenals and strengthening NPT regime."

France, the UK, and the US agreed that the resolution "focuses too much on disarmament," introduces "new" concepts, and undermines the NPT action plan. The Chinese delegation likewise said it abstained because the resolution "exceeded the content" of the action plan. The French delegation also complained that the text does not give sufficient priority to negotiation of a fissile materials cut-off treaty (FMCT) or mention the "challenge represented by Iran".

As they did last year, the nuclear weapon possessors are missing the point. The NAC was founded in order to promote nuclear disarmament and its First Committee resolution is intended to facilitate the implementation of the nuclear disarmament obligations contained in the 2010 document. The resolution does not "reinterpret" the outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, it simply highlights and encourages implementation of particular aspects. As the NAC argued last year in response to such complaints by the NWS, "this does not mean that we are less committed to the plan's oth-



er elements, but there are other resolutions that deal with those elements.”

In a separate vote, operative paragraph (OP) 11 was adopted by a vote of 155-4-6. The paragraph calls on NPT states parties to “spare no effort to achieve the universality of the treaty” and urges India, Israel, and Pakistan to join as non-nuclear weapon states. Similar to last year, India, Israel, Pakistan, and the US voted against this paragraph. DPRK switched from voting no to abstaining, joining Bhutan, France, Germany, Russia, and the UK. The increase in abstentions on this paragraph are alarming, since all states parties of the NPT are obligated to promote the Treaty’s universality.

India and Pakistan explained that they voted against OP11 and abstained or voted against the resolution as a whole because of this call to join the NPT. The said its rejection of the text is because it gives an inaccurate description of nuclearization on Korean peninsula.

Japan’s “United action towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons,” A/C.1/67/L.49, was adopted by a vote of 157-1-12. The DPRK voted against the resolution because preambular paragraph (PP) 16 contains references to UN Security Council resolutions on the DPRK’s two nuclear tests. As for the other nuclear weapon possessors, France, Russia, the UK, and US voted in favour of the resolution (though France noted it would like more recognition for the efforts of NWS), while China, India, Israel, and Pakistan abstained. Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, Iran, Mauritius, Myanmar, Nicaragua, and Syria also abstained.

Separate votes were held on OP2, OP8, OP9, and OP16. DPRK, India, and Israel voted no on OP2, while Bhutan, Mauritius, and Pakistan abstained. The paragraph calls on all states to join the NPT as non-nuclear weapon states. India and Pakistan said they rejected the call to join the NPT.

DPRK voted against OP8, which urges states to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), while India, Iran, Mauritius, and Syria abstained. Israel said it voted in favour of this paragraph because it supports the CTBT, but rejects language elsewhere in the resolution linking the NPT and the CTBT.

China and Pakistan voted no on OP9, which calls for negotiation of an FMCT and urges all nuclear weapon possessors to declare moratoria on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. China said OP9’s call for a moratorium “will not help promote early start of FMCT negotiations” while Pakistan said it does not support the call for the immediate commencement of FMCT negotiations.

DPRK, Ecuador, India, Iran, Israel, Mauritius, Russia, and Syria abstained on this paragraph. India argued that since it supports FMCT negotiations, the question of a moratorium “does not arise”. Ecuador argued the paragraph should have linked FMCT negotiations to the Conference on Disarmament (CD). While Brazil voted in favour of OP9, it complained about its failure

to say the FMCT should serve both disarmament and non-proliferation objectives.

DPRK voted no on OP16, which calls for the universalization of IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreements (CSA) and encourages states to conclude additional protocols. Argentina, Brazil, India, Iran, Israel, Mauritius, Pakistan, and Zimbabwe abstained. Brazil pointed out the additional protocol is voluntary, while India argued that CSAs are applicable only to states that are party to the NPT.

Malaysia’s resolution A/C.1/67/L.9, “Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*,” underlines the unanimous conclusion of the ICJ and calls for immediate negotiation of a nuclear weapons convention. It was adopted with a vote of 123-24-24, which is similar to previous years. Only Japan and Sweden explained their votes. Japan said it abstained because step by step progress is needed before embarking on negotiations to eliminate nuclear weapons. Sweden voted in favour of the resolution but emphasized that the reference to the model nuclear weapons convention in PP15 should not prejudice any future negotiations.

NAM’s resolution “Nuclear disarmament,” A/C.1/67/L.50, was adopted with a vote of 111-43-20. A separate vote was held on OP16, which calls for FMCT negotiations. Pakistan voted against this paragraph, while Armenia, Belarus, France, Israel, Russia, UK, and Uzbekistan abstained.

Pakistan said it abstained on the resolution as a whole because of “unnecessary references” to the NPT action plan and voted against OP16, noting that it is “ironic that a resolution on nuclear disarmament chooses only to reflect the non-proliferation aspects of such negotiations.” India also abstained on the resolution because its references to the NPT. DPRK also found such references “uncomfortable” but voted in favour because it agrees that nuclear disarmament is the highest priority. Japan said it shares the goal of nuclear disarmament but supports a step-by-step approach.

Other nuclear weapon-related resolutions

India’s “Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons,” A/C.1/67/L.25, was adopted by a vote of 110-47-10. The only explanation of vote was given by Brazil, which noted that while it voted in favour, a ban on the use of nuclear weapons weapons is insufficient on its own.

India’s “Reducing nuclear danger,” A/C.1/67/L.27, was adopted with a vote of 108-48-13. Brazil explained that it voted in favour because it believes nuclear doctrines must be revealed to reduce risk of use of nuclear weapons, but argued measures such as de-alerting or de-targeting, while relevant, cannot substitute elimination of nuclear weapons.

The De-alerting Groups, “Decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems,” A/C.1/67/L.28,

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was adopted with a vote of 145-4-19. France, Russia, UK, and US voted against the resolution, while DPRK and Israel abstained, along with a few of the states that are part of nuclear sharing or security arrangements.

Russia said it voted against L.28 because it is “unacceptable to take out of context and selectively use certain provisions from a compromise package” such as the 13 practical steps adopted in 2000 and the plan of action from 2010. The Russian delegation also asserted that this selective approach, and the “shift” to considering nuclear weapons in relation to international humanitarian law (IHL) is “counterproductive” because it “contradicts” the NPT and decisions from the review conferences. Russia described L.28 as a “useless initiative,” arguing that further reducing operational status of nuclear weapons “does not solve anything from a practical point of view.”

France, the UK, and the US, in a joint explanation of vote, were slightly less hostile to L.28, though they rejected its “basic premise ... that the current level of readiness of nuclear weapons increases the risk of the unintentional or accidental use.” They argued that

their systems’ alert levels are “maintained at a level consonant with our national security requirement and our obligations to our allies” and are “no longer targeted against any state.” Furthermore, they asserted, “while alert levels can and have been lowered in response to an improved international security climate,” the resolution’s “presumption that lowered alert levels will automatically and in all cases lead to heightened international security” is not so simple.

India voted in favour of the resolution, noting that it supports the text “given the common objectives and congruence” between this resolution and its own “Reducing nuclear danger,” though it noted that some of the sponsors of L.28 voted against L.27. Iran also voted in favour but stressed that reduction in operational status cannot substitute for elimination.

A separate vote was held on PP8, which references the 2010 NPT Review Conference. DPRK, Russia, UK, and US voted against that paragraph, while France, India, Israel, and Pakistan abstained, among others. India and DPRK noted they are not bound by the NPT Review Conference outcome. •

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

Beatrice Fihn | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

During the 2012 session of the First Committee, the discussions around nuclear proliferation continued to be split in two camps, those that view progress on non-proliferation as a condition for disarmament and those that believe the two are mutually reinforcing. Many western countries voiced concerns around Iran, Syria, and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), while several countries from the Non-Aligned Movement highlighted the lack of progress on disarmament as an obstacle to progress on non-proliferation. In addition, most Middle Eastern states continued to express frustration over Israel’s nuclear programme as an obstacle to a WMD-free zone in the region.

The First Committee took action on four resolutions relevant to nuclear proliferation this year.

A/C.1/67/L.2, “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East,” submitted by Egypt and focusing mainly on Israel, was adopted by a vote of 158-5-5. Separate votes were held on preambular paragraphs (PP) 5 and 6, which call for universal adherence to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Those paragraphs were both adopted with a vote of 159-3-2.

The voting result on the resolution as a whole was similar to last year, with the same countries (Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, and the United States) voting against it and Australia, Cameroon, India, Ethiopia, and Panama abstaining. The only country that changed its position was Côte d’Ivoire, which ab-

stained in 2011 but voted in favour of the 2012 version, which contained only technical changes. On the separate votes on PP 5 and 6, the DPRK, India, and Israel voted no, while Pakistan and Bhutan abstained.

Most of the western countries providing explanations of votes (EOVs) argued that the resolution fails to address the full scope of proliferation issues in the region and highlighted proliferation challenges in Iran and Syria. Both Iran and Syria used their EOVs to reject these concerns. India voted against and Pakistan abstained in separate votes on PP 5 and 6 because of references to the NPT.

The annual resolution on “Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction” (A/C.1/67/L.26) was adopted without a vote. While supporting the resolution, the delegation of Iran argued that the reference to the Nuclear Security Summit meant that Iran disassociated itself with those paragraphs. Also supporting the resolution, Pakistan expressed a wish that the language in the resolution should convey “a more objective reality” and raised concerns that this resolution could become an excuse for policies of discrimination against certain countries.

The biennial resolution “Preventing the acquisition by terrorists of radioactive sources” (A/C.1/67/L.39), which included no substantive updates from its 2010 version, was adopted without a vote and without any additional comments from delegations.



Finally, “Preventing and combating illicit brokering activities” (A/C.1/67/L.24), which deals with both small arms and weapons of mass destruction (WMD), was adopted with a vote of 174-1-3, with DPRK voting against and Iran, Zambia, and Zimbabwe abstaining. In 2010, both Zambia and Zimbabwe voted yes to this resolution but neither provided an explanation of why they voted differently this year.

Separate votes on PP12 and PP12bis were called, which contained references to the Nuclear Security Summit and “existing efforts” to prevent illicit trade in nuclear materials. These paragraphs were adopted with a vote of 167-1-4 and 167-1-3, with DPRK as only no vote; Iran, Zambia, and Zimbabwe abstaining on both; and Syria abstaining on PP12.

In its EOV, Iran argued that “illicit” brokering of WMDs implies that there exists “licit” brokering of such material, which is not the case since the international legal instruments on nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons outlaw trade and brokering of these weapons. In addition, Iran explained that it abstained on PP12 and PP12bis because they implicitly recognize “non-transparent and exclusive export control regimes that were established outside of the UN “and only serve political objectives of certain States.” While supporting the resolution, the delegation of Ecuador likewise noted that it was concerned that proliferation issues, which are of universal interest, continue to be addressed in exclusive fora such as the Nuclear Security Summit. •

NUCLEAR WEAPON AND WMD FREE ZONES

Eloise Watson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

This year, First Committee adopted without a vote three of five resolutions directly concerning nuclear weapon free zones (NWFZs). A/C.1/67/L.2 calls for the establishment of a Middle Eastern NWFZ (MENWFZ). In explaining the position of his delegation, the Iranian delegate repeated his country’s “grave concern” over Israel’s un-safeguarded nuclear facilities and its non-adherence to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which he cited is the reason for which “no progress has been made so far” in creating a MENWFZ. Iran called for the exertion of “strong pressure on the [Israeli] regime” at the 2012 Conference on establishing a MENWFZ regarding its accession to the NPT and the subjection of its nuclear facilities to the system of international inspection.

As in previous years, Israel’s delegation joined consensus on this resolution notwithstanding its “ongoing reservations” with references to the IAEA general conference resolution. The Israeli delegation reiterated its commitment “to the vision of the Middle East developing eventually in a zone free of WMD and ballistic missiles,” though it stressed that this issue can only be addressed within the regional context but that no forum for regional dialogue presently exists.

The resolution on “Mongolia’s International security and nuclear-weapon-free status” (A/C.1/67/L.40) was also adopted without a vote, with India conveying its respect and support for the choice made by Mongolia regarding its new status.

The third resolution adopted without a vote was A/C.1/67/L.55, entitled “African Nuclear Weapons-Free-Zone Treaty.” The Indian delegation indicated its support, as did Spain. However, as in previous years, Spain also attested that the Treaty does not contain any guarantees that Spain hasn’t already given. Justifying why it would not sign the relevant protocols, Spain

argued that it has already “taken necessary measures going beyond obligations in this Treaty,” and that operative paragraph 5 of the resolution should be changed.

Draft resolution A/C.1/67/L.4/Rev.1, “Treaty on a nuclear-weapon-free-zone in Central Asia,” was adopted by a vote of 131-3-35. France, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States (US), the three delegations to vote against the resolution, jointly expressed concern over “several outstanding issues, including Article XII [of the new Treaty].” As in 2010, when this resolution was last tabled, they indicated that the resolution of such issues would influence further progress toward their ratification of the Treaty’s protocol. Nevertheless, they underscored their readiness to continue consulting with the five Central Asian states (C5) in order to arrive at a satisfactory outcome. A joint explanation of vote (EOV) by Japan and Sweden welcomed the readiness of the C5 to continue these consultations.

Garnering widespread support in this year’s First Committee was draft resolution A/C.1/67/L.45 on a “Nuclear-weapon-free Southern Hemisphere and adjacent areas,” which was adopted by a vote of 165-4-2. The only delegations to vote “no” were those of France, Russia, the UK, and the US. The opposition of these states was based on their previous concerns with the resolution; in a joint statement, France, the UK, and the US expressed discontent with the resolution’s ambiguity, questioning whether “the real goal of this draft is in fact the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone covering the high seas.” They also highlighted that the introduction of several changes to the text “take us further away from our ability to support this resolution.” By contrast, Pakistan voted in favor of the resolution for the first time, extolling the efforts of the sponsors to revisit the content of the resolution “and reflect the realities in South Asia.” •

NUCLEAR TESTING

Eloise Watson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

The annual draft resolution on the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (A/C.1/67/L.43), which recognizes the important role played by the Treaty in achieving disarmament and non-proliferation and stresses the imperative of signature and ratification of the treaty by all states, was adopted with a vote of 166-1-3. Like last year, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) voted no, while India, Mauritius, and Syria abstained.

The representative of the DPRK asserted that his country voted against the resolution because of its references to UN Security Council resolutions 1718 and 1874 in operational paragraph (OP) 5. This paragraph emphasizes the importance of the implementation of these resolutions, which were imposed following the two DPRK nuclear tests. DPRK's delegate censured the "irresponsible" reaction of the UN Security Council to these tests (which he claimed were "self-defensive measures"), such as the Council turning a blind eye to the nuclear threats of the United States. Iran, though voting in favor of the resolution, was equally averse to OP5; it wanted to "disassociate with OP5 because of the language of the text and the way that it has been drafted." The Iranian delegate further elaborated that "there is no need" for the draft resolution to reference the work of other organs in the UN since the resolution "was done in a completely different context."

Israel largely reiterated its 2011 explanation of vote,

stating that although it votes in favor of the resolution, it does not support the language in several paragraphs, including OP1, which underscores the urgency of ratification of the CTBT without conditions. Israel also opposed preamble paragraph (PP) 6, which notes that the 2010 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference reaffirmed the vital importance of the CTBT's entry into force. In clarifying the reasoning behind its opposition to PP6, Israel argued that the CTBT and NPT are not linked and that an attempt to make such a linkage may damage security prospects in the Middle East.

Pakistan's delegation gave a similar explanation for its 2012 vote to the explanation it gave last year. Though voting in favor, it noted that it is not bound by the decisions or recommendations of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. It also underlined that promoting further signature of the Treaty will depend on the decision of erstwhile powers to ratify it. Meanwhile, Cuba's delegate explained that her country supports the resolution because it supports an end to all nuclear testing, including subcritical testing. However, she also argued that aspects of the resolution "drift away" and detract from the technical nature it should have. Cuba's delegation expressed hope that, in the future, the sponsors of A/C.1/67/L.43 would maintain a focus on relevant matters tied to the CTBT and "avoid the inclusion of polemical matters, focusing instead on need for consensus on this topic." •

MISSILES AND ANTI-MISSILE SYSTEMS

Aarushi Prakash and Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Missiles were addressed through two draft resolutions at this year's First Committee. Draft decision A/C.1/67/L.7, "Missiles," was adopted without a vote or comment. The decision simply places the issue on the agenda for the sixty-eighth session. Draft resolution A/C.1/67/L.23, "The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation," was adopted with a vote of 151-2-21. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and Iran voted against the resolution.

The DPRK asserted that it is "hypocritical and absurd" for the Republic of Korea to table this resolution, because it "is engaged in missile proliferation under the patronage of the United States."

Iran's delegation focused on what it sees as shortcomings in the Hague Code of Conduct (HCOC), including its lack of disarmament perspective. The Iranian delegate noted that the Code does not address vertical proliferation of missiles and acknowledges the possession of ballistic missiles by a few states while discourag-

ing others from obtaining them. In their explanations of vote, the delegation of Cuba agreed that its lack of attention to vertical proliferation is a significant deficiency. Cuba's delegate argued that the design, development, tests and deployment of missiles should be included in the Code.

Iran also noted the Code's failure to include other types of missiles, including cruise missiles. Cuba, Egypt, and Syria likewise criticized the narrow scope of the Code.

Iran also complained that the Code does not define ballistic missiles, leaving the interpretation up to its members. Furthermore, it fails to distinguish between ballistic missile programmes and space launch vehicle programmes, which means the latter "are also subject to arbitrary unilateral interpretation." Iran and Cuba also complained that the HCOC does not address the need for cooperation in the area of peaceful uses of related technology.



Iran also criticized the method through which the Code was drafted and adopted, which happened outside the UN “in a selective, unbalanced and incomprehensive manner.” Cuba, Egypt, Pakistan, and Syria agreed. The Egyptian delegation described the Code as being developed in a “discriminatory manner,” which resulted in it being “neither balanced in its approach nor comprehensive in its scope.”

The Russian delegation, which supported the resolution, expressed concern that some states in the Code “want to bring it to a new level and want to bring in new states parties that are actually undertaking activities that do not serve to positively develop the situation.” Thus, the Russian delegate warned that “inappropriate political steps run counter to spirit of the HCOC and could undermine efforts to make this important forum universal.”

Brazil, which is not an HCOC member, voted in favour of the resolution because it respects that 134 countries have subscribed to the Code as a practical measure against missile proliferation. However, the Brazilian delegation noted that construction of an effective international order is based on international law and legally-binding commitments; thus the HCOC should evolve through negotiations into a legal instrument.

Pakistan complained that the Code does not address its regional security concerns. The Indian delegation likewise noted that the proliferation of ballistic missiles in its region has adversely impacted its security, which is exacerbated due to the lack of “global legal regime governing the possession and use of missiles and the development and modernisation of advanced weapon systems.” Calling for an “inclusive, sustainable and comprehensive” approach to the issue, India neverthe-

less indicated that it is willing to study the HCOC in the context of assurances that HCOC membership does not entail restrictions on testing and deployment of ballistic missiles on national security grounds and use of space launch vehicles would remain unaffected by the HCOC guideline on ‘exercising maximum restraint’ on such activities.”

Throughout the month, several delegations expressed their support for the HCOC and the Missile Technology Control Regime and voiced concerns with proliferation of missile technology. For the most part, however, delivery systems received little attention at First Committee, as is typically the case despite their importance for non-proliferation and disarmament measures.

Anti-missile systems

There were no resolutions related to anti-missile systems at First Committee. The issue received some attention during relevant thematic debates. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) expressed concern over the deployment of strategic missile defense systems, noting that potential consequences could lead to an arms race and further modernization of missile systems. The NAM also further reiterated that abrogation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty has brought new challenges to strategic stability and the work to prevent an arms race in outer space. China’s delegation called for abandoning the development of ABM systems that undermine global strategic balance, while Belarus and Russia criticized plans to deploy “unilateral” ABM systems. The delegation of Pakistan identified the need for a universal and non-discriminatory agreement on the development, deployment, and proliferation of anti-ballistic missile ABM systems. •

OUTER SPACE

Beatrice Fihn | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Despite some new initiatives, such as the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) in outer space and the draft international code of conduct on outer space activities, the discussion on outer space throughout the 2012 session of the First Committee was very similar to previous years. As last year, almost all speakers emphasized the need to prevent an arms race in outer space, but were divided on how to achieve this goal. Some countries continued to discuss the benefits of a legally-binding instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space, while others preferred non-binding measures, such as TCBMs and codes of conduct.

During the last week of the First Committee, member states took action on the only resolution related to

outer space, A/C.1/67/L.3, “Prevention of an arms race in outer space”. The resolution recognizes the need for a legally-binding treaty to prevent an arms race in outer space and calls for the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to establish a working group of this topic. It included only technical updates from last year and was adopted through a vote, with 169 countries voting in favour, zero votes against, and only two countries abstaining, the United States and Israel.

There were no explanations of vote, but the US noted earlier in the thematic debate that it would only be willing to consider space arms control proposals and concepts if they are “equitable, effectively verifiable, and enhance the national security of the United States and our allies”. •

NEGATIVE SECURITY ASSURANCES

Aarushi Prakash | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Negative security assurances (NSAs) continued to receive attention during this year's First Committee as a priority for many non-nuclear weapon states, which called for the immediate development of a universal, unconditional, and legally-binding instrument on security assurances to all non-nuclear weapon states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Draft resolution A/C.1/67/L.52, "Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nu-

clear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons" was adopted with a vote of 113-0-57. Only the delegation of Japan issued an explanation of vote, indicating that it voted in favour because "deepening substantive discussions on ways to increase the effectiveness of NSAs is essential for the realization of a world free of nuclear weapons." However, Japan cautioned that the resolution should not prejudice discussions on this topic in the Conference on Disarmament. •

BIOLOGICAL AND CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Irene Pugnali | NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security

During the last days of First Committee, action was taken on the draft resolutions related to biological and chemical weapons.

Resolution A/C.1/67/L.44, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction," was adopted without a vote. As the delegation of Poland had previously explained, the text of the resolution was designed to highlight the two major challenges the international community is facing concerning the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC): the complete and prompt destruction of remaining chemical weapons stockpiles, which provoked increasing concerns among countries in the aftermath of the unmet deadline; and the preparatory work states parties to the Convention have been doing with a view to the Third Review Conference of the CWC.

Although though the text met with consensus, the delegation of Iran expressed disappointment while explaining its vote, arguing that the resolution should have reflected in a more accurate manner the non-compliance of major possessor states parties with the final extended deadline.

In addition, A/C.1/67/L.29, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction," was also adopted without a vote. Tabled by Hungary, the resolution encompasses all the major aspects related to the Seventh Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), this draft resolution. However, the Iranian delegation expressed its dissatisfaction with the content of the draft text, complaining about its alleged "selective approach" in reflecting the Final Declaration of the Review Conference. In particular, the Iranian delegate underscored that its proposals regarding international cooperation

and assistance should have received broader attention, especially considering that this aspect is of utmost importance for developing states.

In addition to these two resolutions, a third one related to biological and chemical weapons has been adopted. Resolution A/C.1/67/L.15, entitled "Measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol," was tabled by the Non-Aligned Movement. L.15 obtained 166 favorable votes, 4 abstentions, and no oppositions. This resolution briefly urges states to comply with principles enshrined in the "Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare" and, for those still maintaining reservations to it, to withdraw them in the shortest time possible.

Throughout the month, states drew attention on a number of issues related to both the biological and the chemical weapons Conventions. As far as the CWC is concerned, the failure of the total destruction of chemical weapons caused mixed reactions among delegations: many recognized the good results that have been reached by the international community as a whole, but, others underlined with deep concern the possibility that this failure may affect the credibility of the Convention. Along with this, widespread concern was expressed regarding the admission by the Syrian government about the possession of chemical weapons: for some states, this underscored the importance of reaching global adherence to and full implementation of the CWC.

Some states also highlighted concerns about the challenge posed by the possible re-emergence of chemical weapons. Indeed, the objective of the total destruction of chemical weapons, the fundamental pillar of the CWC, is linked with efforts for preventing the re-emergence of the chemical threat, as argued by some delegations. For some of them, furthermore, this would mean being ready to work even harder in or-

der to make sure the CWC would be able to keep pace with progress in science and technology. In addition to this, positive remarks have been devoted to the organization supporting the international efforts in the struggle against chemical weapons, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, OPCW. Several delegations showed appreciation for the work the OPCW has been carrying out during these years for the well functioning of the Convention.

Finally, concerning the biological field, the broad satisfaction demonstrated for the outcomes of the Seventh Review Conference of the States Parties to the BTWC went hand-in-hand with a similarly broad acknowledgement of the necessity to achieve the goal of the universalization and full implementation of the Convention as soon as possible. If it is undeniable that

the Implementation Support Unit and confidence-building measures have been playing a pivotal role in advancing on the path of the elimination of biological weapons, it is also true that a legally-binding protocol is likely to become the most effective tool in the future to ensure a world free from biological threats, as stressed by many delegations. By now, the spirit of “ambitious realism” that the President of the Seventh Review Conference desired to share and spread among countries has brought about a fruitful result: the new database for enhancing assistance and cooperation, the sponsorship program for supporting the participation of developing states parties, the Final Declaration, and the intersessional work program established at the Review Conference all gained appreciation by states participating at in this First Committee session. •

DEPLETED URANIUM

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Despite the significant lack of debate on depleted uranium (DU), which is a radioactive by-product from uranium enrichment, First Committee did take action on a draft resolution tabled by the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

The resolution, A/C.1/67/L.16, “Effects of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium,” is described by the International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons as the “most far reaching resolution to date on DU weapons.” The text invites states that have used armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium in armed conflicts to provide information about the location of the areas of use and the amounts used. It also requests the UN Secretary-General to encourage relevant international organizations to “update and complete, as appropriate, their studies and research on the effects of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium on human health and the environment.”

The resolution contained one update from its 2010 version. It includes a new preambular paragraph on the report of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which “affirms that major scientific uncertainties persist regarding the long-term environmental impacts of depleted uranium, particularly with respect to long-term groundwater contamination, and calls for a precautionary approach to the use of depleted uranium.” This report was published by the UNEP after its fieldwork on DU affected sites in the Balkans.

L.16 was adopted with a vote of 138-4-28. France, Israel, the United Kingdom, and the United States voted against the resolution, as they did in 2010. The abstentions came from Albania, Andorra, Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia,

Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Micronesia, Monaco, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, South Sudan, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, and Ukraine.

In their joint explanation of vote, France, the UK, and the US argued that the effects of DU munitions have been “thoroughly investigated” by international organizations and that none of them have “documented long-term environmental or health effects attributable to use of these munitions.” Furthermore, they criticized the new preambular paragraph on the UNEP report for being selective. They indicated that the report concluded that measurements taken at DU sites “showed that, even in areas with widespread depleted uranium contamination, the overall levels of radioactivity were low and within acceptable standards, with no immediate dangers from either particle based or waterbourne toxicity.” Overall, they argued, given the “lack of tangible evidence” they “do not recognise the presupposed potential risk to health and the environment and therefore do not support UN resolutions that presuppose Depleted Uranium is harmful.”

Other delegations were more nuanced in their position on the matter. Germany and Netherlands, which also highlighted concerns with the “selective” quoting from the UNEP report, continued to vote in favour of the resolution. The Netherlands, however, would have preferred the resolution to refer to the “possible consequences” rather than “potential harmful effects” of DU weapons.

Meanwhile, the delegation of Japan recognized that despite the numerous studies on the subject, “no internationally definitive conclusion has been drawn.” Thus, the Japanese delegation called upon the relevant

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international organizations “to conduct successive on-site studies and further information gathering including the latest scientific findings,” and to “pay due attention to the opinions and activities of the interested NGOs in this field, and to provide their views on the effects that the use of depleted uranium munitions may or can cause on the human body as well as the environment.” Likewise, during the thematic debate on conventional weapons, the Norwegian delegation

had argued, “While no clear conclusions can be drawn and further research is needed we feel that these concerns warrant our serious attention. To be on the safe side restraint should be performed concerning the use of depleted uranium in ammunition and armour.” The Belgian delegation emphasized that it has banned DU on the basis of the precautionary principle and offered to assist any member states interested in developing legislation in this area. •

ARMS TRADE TREATY

Katherine Prizeman | Global Action to Prevent War

One of the most anticipated items on the First Committee agenda this year, the resolution entitled “The arms trade treaty” (A/C.1/67/L.11), was adopted on the whole with a vote of 157-0-18, approving a new round of ATT negotiations for March 2013. The resolution, which was tabled by the original “co-authors” group of Argentina, Australia, Costa Rica, Finland, Japan, Kenya, and the United Kingdom, was co-sponsored by more than 100 delegations.

As the July 2012 Diplomatic Conference ended without adoption of a consensus treaty setting common international standards for the transfer of conventional arms, the fate of future negotiations has rested on the formulation of a General Assembly resolution detailing a way forward. Although no delegations voted against the resolution and all have expressed some degree of support for continuing the ATT process next year, there remains contention over the status of the President’s draft treaty text from 26 July 2012 as well as the rules of procedure. As such, a separate vote was requested on operational paragraph (OP) 2, which describes the rules of procedure for the “final” 18–28 March 2013 Negotiating Conference as “utilizing the modalities, applied *mutatis mutandis*, under which the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty of 2 to 27 July 2012 operated.” The result was 153-1-18 with the delegation of Iran representing the dissenter. Likewise, a separate vote was also conducted on OP3, which designates the President’s 26 July text as “the basis for future work on the Arms Trade Treaty.” The result of this vote was 148-1-22 with Iran again representing the vote against retaining the paragraph.

Many delegations chose to offer explanations of vote (EOV) on the ATT resolution. Expressions of support were widespread as the representatives of Morocco, Norway, and Nigeria called on member states to support the resolution and remain committed to the continuation of negotiations. Nevertheless, discontent over some specifics within the President’s draft text was expressed by the Nigerian delegation, which underscored the need to more adequately address diversion and ambiguities in the Treaty’s scope. In addition,

the delegation of Indonesia noted its abstention to OP2 and OP3 as the draft text “does not reflect its views and those of many other member states,” in particular the issue of territorial integrity.

Several delegations expressed their opposition to treating the President’s text as the sole basis for negotiations, including Belarus, Egypt, Iran, Ecuador, Cuba, Venezuela, Pakistan, and Syria. The representative of Egypt called the draft “a work in progress,” while the delegation of Belarus stated that the document would prejudice the results of the work of the upcoming March conference. Likewise, the representative of Iran offered an EOV on his delegation’s vote against OP3 noting that the draft text is “vague and full of loopholes” that also provides for far too much subjectivity in application of assessment criteria. In particular, Iran noted that the parameters explicitly allow arms-exporting states to export as many arms as they want to any country or region if in their view it can “contribute to peace and security”. Likewise, he complained that the current draft text gives too much preference to the commercial interests of exporting states than the security of importing states or others in the region.

With regards to the rules of procedure, as laid forth in OP2, delegations expressed their support for consensus, although some offered more detailed caveats. The Mexican delegation reiterated its well-known concern over allowing consensus to be interpreted as the right of one or a few delegations to impede general agreement. Similarly, the representative of Morocco supported consensus as “an effective tool” so long as it is not abused or interpreted as veto power or unanimity. The issue of “negotiation” versus “elaboration” was also raised by the Iranian delegation insofar as the delegate noted that the March Conference must be a consensus-based negotiation based on the views of all member states. Other delegations, including Egypt and India, also warned against placing artificial deadlines or timelines on negotiations.

While the ATT resolution has been adopted and a pathway forward has been identified in the March Conference to finish work on common international

standards for the transfer in conventional arms, there clearly remains significant disagreement over the substance of the future treaty text on many issues from scope to criteria to enforcement mechanisms. There is clear disagreement over the status of the President's draft text as the single basis for negotiations as some states continue to express their dissatisfaction with its contents. Moreover, the threat of consensus being used as veto power is just as prominent now as it was in July 2012 such that delegations must be prepared to find alternative pathways to adoption of an ATT if the process indeed fails again in March. As noted by the representative of New Zealand, whether or not the July Conference is identified as a "failure" is not as important as the fact that it was not a success.

The completion of an ATT is an important goal for the international community and it is welcome news that the First Committee has reached consensus on a pathway forward, but the process must move forward from July 2012 and not backwards if it is to have any real impact. If a significantly weakened text is brought about due to over-compromising on important components of the Treaty text, then the value added of the instrument will be in severe doubt. Loopholes that undermine transparency, effectiveness, and humanitarian interests must be closed and the creation of more loopholes must not be allowed. Therefore, a watering down of the existing draft text will need more than the forcing of a majority vote, but rather it will require a strengthening process. •

SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Katherine Prizeman | Global Action to Prevent War

The final week of discussions at this year's First Committee featured reiteration of support for the "successful" outcome of the second Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the illicit trade in small arms (UNPoA) as well as action taken on two small arms and light weapons (SALW)-related resolutions.

Important points on the UNPoA were raised during the last part of the thematic debate on the conventional weapons cluster. The delegation of New Zealand rightly noted the importance of sharpening monitoring of both implementation and assistance of the UNPoA as well as enhancing coordination with other relevant international processes such as the future arms trade treaty (ATT). Moreover, the representative of Australia noted with pleasure the references to armed violence and the role of women in combatting illicit SALW trade in the outcome document of the Review Conference.

However, some delegations criticized the introduction of "new" concepts to the UNPoA. Others focused on the special responsibility of producer states to curb the illicit trade in SALWs. The delegations of India and Pakistan reiterated the importance of focusing on "existing commitments" and maintaining consensus throughout the process, respectively, while the representative of the Philippines called on producer states to assume their special responsibility in curbing such trade.

The annual resolutions "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them" (A/C.1/67/L.21) and "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects" (A/C.1/67/L.48) were both adopted without a vote, as was the case last year. The representative of South Africa introduced resolution L.48 on the il-

licit trade in SALWs on behalf of co-sponsors Colombia and Japan, noting revision to preambular paragraph 4 that reads, "Mindful of the implementation of the outcomes of the follow-up meetings of the UN Programme of Action," in light of informal consultations held throughout this First Committee session. The resolution remains relatively unchanged this year with only technical updates as they pertain to the outcomes of the August 2012 Review Conference for the UNPoA. Many delegations expressed general support for the resolution in their explanation of votes (EOV), noting the importance of combatting the illicit trade in SALW through the UNPoA, although the representative of Canada also called for a clear recognition of the "legitimate ownership and trade in arms."

Although this year's First Committee is now complete, the UNPoA must continue to be re-evaluated and assessed on a regular basis with regards to its implementation and relevance for combatting, preventing, and eradicating the illicit trade in SALWs. Despite the lack of "new" resolutions on this topic, SALWs remain a primary focus of many member states as their illicit trade and use continue to wreak havoc on diverse global regions. Therefore, reviewing implementation of the UNPoA through the follow-up meetings as laid forth in the outcome document of the second Review Conference is a necessity. Nevertheless, comprehensively evaluating the impact of UNPoA benchmarks requires more than reaffirming support for the instrument itself. Member states and civil society alike must play an active role in evaluating how the UNPoA has contributed, and can contribute more effectively, to a reduction in SALW-related violence through eradicating illicit trade in such weapons. •

CLUSTER MUNITIONS AND LANDMINES

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

Both of these weapon systems received robust attention during the conventional weapons debate at this year's First Committee.

Antipersonnel mines

Throughout this year's First Committee debates, at least 25 states parties to the Mine Ban Treaty (MBT) reiterated the goal of the complete elimination of antipersonnel mines (APMs) and outlined efforts made to this end at the national level. A number of them referred to the importance of fully implementing the Cartagena Action Plan, which includes detailed commitments on all aspects of mine action. Six groups of states also expressed their views, noting the human cost of APM use and their impact on socio-economic development.

During the final days of the First Committee discussions, Austria noted the "crucial role" of the MBT in strengthening the protection of civilians under international humanitarian law (IHL), including through its provisions on victim assistance. Australia expressed satisfaction that the MBT "continues to go from strength to strength" and reported disbursing so far \$90 million out of its \$100 million mine action funding pledge for 2010-2014. Finland, a new state party to the MBT, said it had started to destroy its stockpile of APMs and would complete destruction by the end of 2015, slightly ahead of its mandatory deadline. Ireland stated its full support for the universalization and implementation of the Treaty. The Philippines called on states to look into possible synergies between the MBT, Cluster on Cluster Munitions (CCM), and Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), especially in the provision of assistance to victims. Slovakia referred to its contribution to mine clearance, especially in areas where its expertise adds value to the international community's fight against landmines. Spain pledged to continue supporting victim assistance.

India, a state not party, stated its commitment to the "eventual" elimination of APMs. In an unprecedented development, Myanmar noted the damages caused by APMs and cluster munitions and stressed that clearance and victim assistance were "very appropriate approaches" for addressing their consequences.

The International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) celebrated its 20th anniversary with an evening debate on lessons learned and future perspectives, held on the margins of the First Committee and co-organized by Human Rights Watch (bit.ly/T3oYqS). In its statement submitted in writing to the First Committee, the ICBL noted that putting a final end to APMs can be achieved within years as opposed to decades.

Resolution A/C.1/67/L.8 on the "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines

and on Their Destruction," co-sponsored by Albania, Cambodia, and Slovenia, was adopted on 5 November 2012 with a vote of 159-0-19, very close to last year's vote. Fifteen non-signatories voted in favor of the resolution, thus clearly expressing support for the humanitarian aims of the MBT (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, China, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Micronesia, Mongolia, Morocco, Oman, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and the UAE). The resolution invites all states to join the MBT and stresses the importance of the full implementation of the treaty and Cartagena Action Plan. It only included technical updates to last year's version.

Several abstainers, including Cuba, DPRK, Egypt, India, Iran, and Pakistan claimed that APMs still serve a legitimate self-defense purpose. Many of them nonetheless recognized the long-term toll that landmines claim on civilian populations and mentioned some form of support for the aim of addressing suffering caused by landmines.

The Twelfth Meeting of States Parties (MSP) to the MBT will take place from 3-7 December 2012 in Geneva. Slovenia announced that its MSP Presidency would be marked by further improvements in the implementation of the treaty, including through the promotion of regional cooperation and the exploration of synergies with other instruments of IHL.

Cluster munitions

During the final days of the First Committee discussions, Austria noted the preventive impact of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and emphasized that it sets a norm for the recognition of the rights of victims. Australia and Portugal called on all states to join the CCM, the former noting that membership and implementation "make a tangible impact" in turning around the devastating socio-economic consequences of the weapon. As co-coordinator of the CCM's working group on clearance, Ireland mentioned it would develop and present ideas to speed up efforts to end the suffering caused by contamination from cluster munitions. New Zealand welcomed the excellent results being achieved by the CCM, noted the strong norm being developed against the weapon, and reiterated its availability to support states in creating national implementation legislation. Slovenia urged states to effectively address the issue of the financing of cluster munition production and expressed hope that major producers and possessors of cluster munitions would join the CCM. Spain mentioned its consistent support to disarmament initiatives related to this weapon. Slovakia and the United States, on their end, regretted the failure to agree on a protocol on cluster munitions in the framework of the CCW.

In its statement submitted to the First Committee on 1 November 2012, the Cluster Munition Coalition wel-

comed the statements of concern over cluster munition use by Syrian forces made in the past weeks by Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Qatar, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States, as well as Japan's statement of concern over any use by any actor. During the previous days, Syria had exercised its right of reply, criticizing various states that it said are funding the production of cluster munitions, but it had not confirmed or denied use.

At least 22 states stressed the importance of the full implementation and universalization of the CCM, and six groups of states recognized the impact of cluster munitions on civilians. Numerous states hailed the contribution of civil society in alerting the interna-

tional community to the humanitarian impact of conventional weapons and working jointly with states to adopt and implement solutions. Among them, New Zealand recalled the pioneering approach that led to the adoption of the MBT and then CCM, which had at its core the protection of people and was marked by the leadership of civil society. Echoing many other statements, New Zealand recommended that similar objectives guide and inspire states as they tackle other challenges on conventional weapons.

Like last year, no resolution on cluster munitions was tabled. States and other stakeholders including the International Committee of the Red Cross, UN agencies, and civil society will meet in Zambia from 10-13 September 2013 for the Fourth Meeting of States Parties. •

OTHER CONVENTIONAL WEAPON ISSUES

Katherine Prizeman | Global Action to Prevent War

During the final meetings of this First Committee, delegations took action on several resolutions related to conventional weapons issues in addition to those pertaining to small arms and light weapons (SALW) and the arms trade treaty (ATT).

The annual resolution entitled "Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects" (CCW) (A/C.1/67/L.12) was adopted, as has been the custom, without a vote. This year's resolution, sponsored by Sweden, highlights the commitments reached at the Fourth Review Conference, including a plan to promote universalization, action to enhance implementation of the compliance mechanism for the Convention and its Protocols, and the continuation of a relevant Sponsorship Programme. The delegations of Syria and Libya, both of which are not parties to the CCW, offered explanations of vote (EOV). The delegation of Libya noted that once it has adopted a new constitution and established a parliament, the Libyan government will "reconsider all the previous positions of Libya" regarding some of these instruments. The representative of Syria stated in his EOV that although his delegation joined consensus, the references in the new operational paragraph (OP) 6, which specifically welcomes the commitments of the High Contracting Parties from the Fourth Review Conference, does not represent any commitment in the future from non-states parties.

Other conventional arms resolutions also adopted without a vote were the bi-annual resolutions "Information on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms" (A/C.1/67/L.36) and "Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament mea-

asures" (A/C.1/67/L.37). This year's resolution on confidence-building measures (CBMs) "takes note of the conclusions" from the Secretary-General's report on implementation of this resolution, in particular CBMs adopted in regional, sub-regional, or bilateral contexts derived from national reports. The bi-annual resolution on practical disarmament measures, first tabled in 1996, was introduced by Ambassador Hoffman of Germany, who noted that the resolution seeks "to combine a wide variety of aspects from confidence-building measures to peace-keeping with an attempt to get tangible results within a foreseeable time-frame," underscoring in particular the role of the Group of Interested States (GIS). Ambassador Hoffman also noted in his remarks that small arms control, specifically stockpile management, marking and tracing, and implementation of the UN Programme of Action on small arms (UNPoA), has become the main focus of work for the GIS.

The annual resolution "Conventional arms control at the regional and sub-regional level" (A/C.1/67/L.53) remains unchanged this year and was adopted as a whole with a vote of 166-1-2 with the delegation of India as the only dissenter and Bhutan and Russia representing the abstentions. The Russian delegation offered an EOV noting that although it recognizes the importance of regional arms control, the reference to the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) is unacceptable as it is a "relic of the Cold War" and is "not a model for regional security." A vote was also taken on OP2, which calls on the Conference on Disarmament (CD) "to consider the formulation of principles that can serve as a framework for regional agreements on conventional arms control," resulting in 132 in favor, 1 against, and 36 abstentions. As was the case last year, the delegation of India offered an EOV reiterating

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its position against the resolution noting that the CD's mandate is to negotiate treaties with global application, whereas the Disarmament Commission should and has adopted recommendations on regional disarmament. The Mexican delegation noted its abstention on OP2, explaining that, given the CD's paralysis, this body is not capable of taking on a new mandates such as conventional arms control, and that this issue falls under the purview of the Disarmament Commission.

The annual resolution on "Transparency in armaments" (A/C.1/67/L.22), sponsored by the Netherlands, was adopted with a vote of 149-0-26 and calls for the convening of the next session of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) to review the UN Register on Conventional Arms in the second half of 2013. Although the GGE was originally scheduled to be held this year, the representative of the Netherlands noted the

importance of convening it after the ATT is expected to be adopted in March 2013, in order to consider the implications of that Treaty for the Register. An EOV was offered in support of the resolution by the delegation of Morocco. However, the representatives of Syria and the Arab Group stated that the resolution does not adequately take into account the specific situation of the Middle East. Moreover, the Arab Group representative called for transparency measures to cover all types of weapons, including nuclear weapons, advanced technology with military application, and other weapons of mass destruction.

On the whole, there was little surprise surrounding the voting on conventional weapons resolutions and no new resolutions were presented, although the issues at hand remain critical to international peace and security. •

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND SECURITY

Rohie Drammeh and Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Information technology and security was discussed by some member states during the debate on other disarmament measures on 1 November 2012. During this debate, the Arab Group expressed its concern "at the potential for the use of information and communications technologies against the interests of States in political, military, economic and scientific spheres." The Non-Aligned Movement noted that these technologies "can potentially be used for purposes that are inconsistent with the objectives of maintaining international stability and security and may adversely affect the integrity of the infrastructure of States to the detriment of their security in both civil and military fields." China's delegation likewise highlighted the risk of abuse of information and telecommunication technologies, "especially the scenario of using information space as a new battlefield by some countries." India's delegation voiced concern about the misuse of technologies for "criminal or hostile purposes".

Thus, the Chinese delegation argued, "Only through mutually beneficial cooperation in the spirit of sharing weal and woe, can we achieve information security of each and every country and collective security of the international community." In this context, the Arab Group, China, Russia, and the United States noted the work of the group of governmental experts (GGE) on this issue. The US delegation explained that the consensus report from the related GGE in 2010 "included two very important recommendations: further dialogue to discuss norms to reduce collective risk and protect critical national and international infrastructure, and the development of confidence-building measures to reduce the risk of misperception." The current GGE,

noted the US, is focusing on these areas.

China noted that "despite divergences on some specific issues, all experts agreed that such challenges can only be addressed through international cooperation." The Arab Group and India both highlighted the importance of cooperation and the Indian delegation specified a need for the "development of norms and putting in place appropriate mechanisms for ensuring security of our networks without compromising transparency and the free flow of information."

China's delegation also highlighted its draft International Code of Conduct for Information Security that it submitted to the General Assembly along with Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan in 2011. Explaining that these countries held informal consultations on the margins of this year's First Committee, the Chinese delegation clarified that the Code is a political, voluntary document and that the objective is to start a step-by-step process to formulate rules for information security.

However, the US delegation argued that the draft Code undermines the fact that "existing international law serves as the appropriate framework applicable to activity in cyberspace in a variety of contexts, including in connection with hostilities." It argued that the draft Code "appears to propose replacing existing international law that governs uses of force and relations among states in armed conflict with new, unclear, and ill-defined rules and concepts."

The US delegation further explained that the draft Code seeks to establish international justification for government control over the Internet and seeks to "legitimize the view that the right to freedom of expression can be limited by national laws and cultural pro-

clivities, thereby undermining that right as described in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.” The US warned that such attempts risks creating instability and urged states instead to promote initiatives that preserve and enhance the security and integrity of information technologies while also maintaining respect for human rights, among other things.

Similarly, in a joint statement, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Mongolia, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Uruguay argued, “The same universal human rights that individuals enjoy ‘offline’—such as freedom of expression, including the freedom to seek and impart information, freedom of assembly and association—must also be upheld and protected online.” They welcomed the resolution at the Human Rights Council earlier this year that af-

firmed this basic principle and noted that it was adopted by consensus, giving it universal backing.

They delivered this statement before draft resolution A/C.1/67/L.30 on “Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security” was adopted without a vote. The text contains only one amendment from its previous version. The Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) that was requested in the resolution in 2011 has been established and so the updated resolution welcomes the commencement of the work of the GGE and “authorizes the Group ... to continue to study existing and potential threats in the sphere of information security and possible cooperative measures to address them, including norms, rules or principles of responsible behaviour of States and confidence-building measures with regard to information space.” It also requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly a report on the results of the GGE study next year. •

REGIONAL DISARMAMENT AND SECURITY

Aarushi Prakash | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Regional disarmament and security received attention during the final week of First Committee with actions being taken on several draft resolutions and decisions. Furthermore, during the thematic debate on regional disarmament, several states or groups highlighted the importance of regional disarmament, arms control, and confidence-building measures for both regional and international security.

The delegation of Azerbaijan noted that regional disarmament security “play a vital role in establishing peace in conflict situations,” and that “unresolved conflicts in many instances become a source of concentration of uncontrolled arms as well as provide fertile ground for transnational organized crime and other illegal activities.” Ambassador Enrique Román-Morey of Peru, speaking on behalf of the Union of South American States (UNASUR), reiterated UNASUR’s commitment to its mechanism of confidence and security building measures in the region, which includes transparency on military expenditure, early notifications of military deployment or exercises, and more. UNASUR also reiterated its commitment to “fostering a culture of peace and promoting education for peace among the countries of the region.” UNASUR also welcomed efforts of the Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Algeria and Malta discussed some issues related security in the Mediterranean region. The Non-Aligned Movement, the Arab Group, Iran, and Kuwait highlighted nuclear weapon free zones, particularly the

development of such a zone in the Middle East, as contributing to regional security.

The US delegation addressed its interest in the Middle East zone as well, and discussed its contributions to strengthening regional security in Europe, in particularly the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty. The US intervention noted, “Years of experience in Europe and elsewhere have affirmed that disarmament initiatives at the global and regional levels are mutually reinforcing.” It explained that “effective global norms and instruments are implemented at regional, sub-regional and national levels” while “efforts at the sub-regional and regional levels can build momentum towards disarmament initiatives at the global level.”

This year, First Committee adopted all of the nine draft resolutions and decisions related to regional issues without a vote. See edition No.4 of the First Committee Monitor for descriptions of each of these texts.

A/C.1/67/L.10, “Maintenance of international security — good-neighbourliness, stability and development in South-Eastern Europe”, A/C.1/67/L.14, “United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament,” and A/C.1/67/L.32, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific,” A/C.1/67/L.47, “Regional disarmament,” and A/C.1/67/L.51, “Confidence building measures in the regional and subregional context,” were all adopted without a vote or any comments from member states.

Algeria introduced draft resolution A/C.1/67/L.6, “Strengthening of security and cooperation in the

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Mediterranean region,” which was adopted without a vote. During the thematic debate, the delegation of Malta reiterated its belief “that security in the Mediterranean is closely linked to European security as well as to international peace and security.” However, the Iranian delegation explained that it did not take part in the action on L.6 because it does not factually reflected the continued crisis in the occupied territories of Palestine and Israel’s blockade against aid through Mediterranean.

A/C.1/67/L.38, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean,” and A/C.1/67/L.57, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa,” and A/C.1/67/L.59, “Regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations

Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa,” were also adopted without vote. The Iranian delegation provided a joint explanation of position for all three texts, stating that it joined consensus “based on the understanding that all measures, references and concepts” contained in those texts “are applicable only to the countries in the concerned regions.” Furthermore, Iran disassociated itself from all references in these drafts to ammunition, explosives, armed violence, and resolutions of the UN Security Council, including UNSCR 1325, and noted that these references “should not set a precedent for their inclusion” in future First Committee resolutions or in outcome documents of other related fora, including meetings of the UN Programme of Action on small arms. •

DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

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

On Friday, 2 November, First Committee adopted without a vote draft resolution A/C.1/67/L.20, “Relationship between disarmament and development”. The resolution stresses the importance of the “symbiotic relationship” between disarmament and development, and urges member states to rethink their expenditure priorities in order to put an end to the exaggerated sums of money directed into militarism instead of development.

Reiterating their explanations of vote from last year, France and the United Kingdom noted that while they joined the consensus, they believe there is a more nuanced relationship between disarmament and development than is expressed in the resolution. They argued there is no “automatic link” between these two concepts but rather a “complex relationship,” as evidenced by the growing military expenditure of the fastest developing countries. The unequal and illogic repartition of resources needs more nuance as well, according to them, as “defence investments are also necessary to develop peacekeeping, improve response to natural disasters ... and, under certain conditions, favour stability”. The US delegation disassociated itself from action on this resolution, arguing that disarmament and development are two very important but distinct matters. The US delegation also argued that its government does not consider itself as being “bound” by the 1987 final document of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development.

Notwithstanding these positions from three of the biggest military spenders and exporters of weapons, many delegations throughout the 2012 session of First Committee expressed concern about the huge amount of money still dedicated to militarism at the expense

of development. Indeed, the delegation of Qatar 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.”

Almost every country that mentioned development in their statements on various disarmament issues mentioned the gap between those resources allocated for weapons and for development. In its comments on “other disarmament measures” on 1 November, the Arab Group expressed concern about increasing global military expenditure, “a substantial part of which could otherwise be spent to promote development and eliminate poverty and disease, particularly in the developing countries.” During the conventional weapons debate, the delegation of Kazakhstan argued that military spending should be diverted to investments and development of all countries, especially those experiencing conflict and armed violence. It argued that such “constructive channeling of funds would accelerate the capacity to attain the Millennium Development Goals, and promote sustainable development and human advancement.” In this vein, 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.

Some delegations highlighted in particular spending on nuclear weapons. The Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) concurred with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s article criticizing new investments in modernizing nuclear weapons, which “continue to reflect paradigms which are hard to explain twenty years after the end of the Cold War.” UNASUR thus joined Ban’s call on nuclear weapon possessors to cut spend-

ing on nuclear weapons and invest instead in socioeconomic development. Similarly, the delegation of Kuwait called for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction “in order to direct the financial resources towards economic, social, humanitarian and political development.”

Throughout the month, delegations also identified several threats to development posed directly by weapons, such as the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons (SALW), antipersonnel landmines, and cluster munitions. Most delegations agreed that easy access to SALW has devastating worldwide consequences in humanitarian, economic, social, and political terms, and is an obstacle to development as well as a potential source of conflict. As the Nicaraguan delegation pointed out, 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.

Some member states also linked nuclear weapons to development, expressing renewed concern with the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons.

Some delegations reminded the First Committee of the existence of several key documents about the rela-

tionship between disarmament and development. Costa Rica and Lebanon highlighted article 26 of the UN Charter, which urges states to invest as few human and financial resources as possible in militarism. The Non-Aligned Movement echoed this call in its statement during the conventional weapons debate. Meanwhile, the Arab Group and the delegations of Benin and Cuba highlighted the final document of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development (1987), in which the General Assembly already urged states to devote greater resources to economic and social development while keeping military expenditure low. Several delegations also supported the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s article, “The World is Over-Armed and peace is Under-Funded”.

The increasing recognition of the connections between disarmament and development is encouraging. The next challenge for First Committee and UN member states will be to promote implementation of the various resolutions and documents in order to achieve tangible progress. As noted by the delegation of Qatar, intentions expressed by some countries to reduce military spending are not enough. Such commitments “must be translated into reality”.

Ray Acheson, Reaching Critical Will of WILPF, contributed with reporting to this article. •

WOMEN, DISARMAMENT, NON-PROLIFERATION, AND ARMS CONTROL

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

On 6 November, First Committee adopted without a vote the draft resolution on women, disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control. The resolution, A/C.1/67/L.35/Rev.1, was tabled by Trinidad and Tobago and co-sponsored by 64 other countries. Unfortunately, the text had to go through multiple rounds of intense informal consultations in order to be met with consensus

L.35/Rev.1 urges member states, relevant regional and subregional organizations, the UN, and specialized agencies to promote “equal opportunities for the representation of women in all decision-making processes with regard to matters related to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, in particular as it relates to the prevention and reduction of armed violence and armed conflict.”

The resolution also welcomes the efforts of the UN to accord high priority to the women, peace, and security (WPS) agenda and takes note of the role of UN Women in promoting the implementation of relevant resolutions. It urges states “to support and strengthen the effective participation of women in organizations in the field of disarmament at the local, national, re-

gional and subregional levels” and also calls on them to “empower women, including through capacity building efforts, as appropriate, to participate in the design and implementation of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control efforts”. It further requests the UN to assist states in promoting the role of women as above. Finally, the resolution requests the Secretary-General seek member state views on “ways and means of promoting the role of women in disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control” and to report back to the next General Assembly session.

Most of the discussion on this draft text went on in informal consultations rather than during the thematic discussions. The only explanation of position on L.35/Rev.1 was delivered by the Iranian delegation, which clarified that it will implement this resolution “inasmuch as it is in line with our constitution, laws and regulations, as well as administrative procedures.”

While the updates make the resolution more robust and comprehensive, the draft is oddly worded in some respects: it calls on states alone to “empower” women, and then only “as appropriate”. It does not contain an explicit reference to UN Security Council resolution

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1325 (2000), which is the foundational UN resolution for the WPS agenda.

Furthermore, L.35/Rev.1 does not reflect on the gender dimensions of disarmament and the arms trade. These dimensions are widely recognized as consisting of connections between socialized understandings of masculinity and the use and proliferation of weapons, as well as recognition that women are differently and particularly affected by armed gender-based violence. Indeed as Iceland's delegation argued the conventional weapons debate, a gender-sensitive approach is necessary to address the relationship between the

arms trade and gender-based violence. The Icelandic delegate noted that in the course of arms trade treaty (ATT) negotiations, a few delegations expressed difficulties with the term "gender-based violence". She urged them to let go of their opposition to using this well-established and vital term, noting that this form of violence is a cross-cutting issue that demands strong language in treaty on the arms trade.

Overall, however, the resolution is greatly improved from its 2010 version and will serve as a valuable tool for promoting the equitable and effective role of women in disarmament issues. •

DISARMAMENT EDUCATION

Rohie Drammeh | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

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This year marks the ten year anniversary of the Secretary-General's study on disarmament and non-proliferation education. During this year's First Committee, a few delegations strongly advocated for the implementation of the recommendations of this study and agreed on the importance of passing on knowledge and information to the next generation. The Committee also adopted three relevant resolutions in the final days of its session.

The High Representative of Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Angela Kane, mentioned the report of the Secretary-General in her opening statement of First Committee and said that according to the report the purpose of education in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation is for the empowerment of citizens so that they in turn can make their own contributions to the cause. 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 our greatest challenges today in the disarmament and non-proliferation areas "are complacency and ignorance on the part of otherwise well-educated citizens, as well as among their elected officials."

To this end, Japan has taken on the mission of passing on its knowledge and its experiences 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 forum brought together

diplomats, teachers, researchers, and members of civil society to share their experiences and compile best practices and develop partnerships to advance disarmament and non-proliferation education. The hibakusha (survivors of the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki) were also a part of the forum. It is imperative that we do not forget that the hibakusha are still giving their testimonies in the hope of a nuclear weapon free world where none are subject to the threat of nuclear weapons. They do this to educate young people but also to remind us that we must not forget this history as can be repeated.

An insufficient number of delegations gave due attention to the issue of disarmament and non-proliferation education in their statements, but the Committee did take action on three related resolutions. Resolution A/C.1/67/L.34, "United Nations study on non-proliferation and disarmament education," encourages implementation of the UN study's recommendations and highlights some opportunities to do so. A/C.1/67/L.42, "United Nations Disarmament Information Programme," emphasizes the importance of the Programme for enhancing participation of member states in relevant fora and assisting them in complying with relevant treaties. A/C.1/67/L.56, "United Nations disarmament fellowship, training and advisory services," notes the programme's contribution to development awareness and understanding of disarmament issues among its fellows. All three resolutions were adopted without a vote, as they were in previous years. •



Reaching Critical Will

CIVIL SOCIETY PRESENTATIONS

Due to delays in the UN's work caused by Hurricane Sandy, civil society organizations were unable to deliver oral presentations to First Committee this year. However, several NGOs did submit written statements, which are available at www.reachingcriticalwill.org. Here are a few extracts from those presentations:

Disarmament machinery and the rule of consensus

As many member states have pointed out during this Committee's meetings, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) has just ended yet another year without any substantive work. The Disarmament Commission flounders. The arms trade treaty negotiations held in July failed to reach agreement even on a significantly watered-down text. Even where agreement has been reached, such as the small arms review conference in September, the contents are weak or perfunctory—especially considering the non-legally-binding nature of the Programme of Action.

What is the common denominator at all of these fora and processes? The abuse of consensus.

Preventing a humanitarian catastrophe

Let us take a few moments to remind you of some uncomfortable truths: Today, more than 19,000 nuclear weapons are stationed at an estimated 111 locations across the globe. Two thousand are kept on hair-trigger alert. Many hundreds are deliverable by submarines that patrol our oceans at all times. Hundreds more are mounted on intercontinental ballistic missiles, ready to fly at a moment's notice. Thousands of "extras" are being held in reserve. Every one poses a direct and constant threat to people everywhere. Every one is a humanitarian catastrophe waiting to happen.

... A ban on the world's worst weapons is long overdue, and must be the next big negotiating objective of the international community.

Outer space security

It is incumbent upon the international community to ensure that current use and access to outer space do not compromise the ability of present and future generations to benefit from this domain.

... In this regard, we applaud several initiatives aimed at codifying transparency and confidence-building measures for space activities... [but] We are greatly concerned that discussions related to space weaponization and the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) have yet to gain sufficient traction.

Cluster munitions

We believe that every country in the world can join and should join the Convention [on Cluster Munitions]. It is a question of political will and placing a priority on the protection of civilians over out-dated weapons.

... The Convention on Cluster Munitions stands as the sole international standard on cluster munitions. It is a comprehensive ban, and as such, is preventing

untold harm to civilians. We call on all states to join this life-saving convention.

Arms trade treaty

The Arms Trade Treaty must clearly and unambiguously prevent arms transfers that fuel conflict, poverty and human rights abusers. It is positive that there is now a draft treaty text from July 26th and it should be the basis for further negotiations. But this text must be strengthened and improved in order for the treaty to meet the humanitarian purpose, which drives our collective work.

Therefore, we welcome the new ATT resolution establishing the final UN Conference on the ATT in March 2013. However, given that the July 2012 DipCon was unable to produce agreement by consensus any decision to hold a follow-up conference on the same basis runs the risk of repeating this failure.

Small arms and light weapons

All year long, important efforts are taken worldwide to cope with the challenge posed by armed violence; the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and ammunition; and to respond to the needs of victims.

... We thank the many States which tried very hard to include in the [UNPoA Review Conference] document language on ammunition, parts and components, arms embargoes, gender, ISACS, MANPADS, SALW as a component of the conventional arms register, a multi-donor facility, border controls, stockpile management, and armed violence—all of which could have made the document stronger and implementation of the PoA more effective; but once again, consensus knocked off States' efforts to make the document more effective.

Landmines

This year marks fifteen years since the adoption of the Mine Ban Treaty and twenty years since the creation of the international campaign. The treaty has proven to be a shining example of humanitarian disarmament, and the process leading to it created a powerful model of citizen diplomacy.

... In today's world, any use of antipersonnel mines is unacceptable and must be strongly condemned. We need to finish the job we started twenty years ago to put a final end to these weapons. This can and should be achieved within years and not decades.

Explosive weapons

Explosive weapons use blast and fragmentation to kill and injure people in the area where they detonate, as well as to damage objects, buildings and infrastructure. When used in populated areas they tend to cause high levels of harm to individuals and communities.

... As a community of states, international organisations and civil society, we need to take action together to curb the suffering and long term damage caused by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. •

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).

Contributing organizations and programmes to this edition:

Cluster Munition Coalition

Global Action to Prevent War

International Campaign to Ban Landmines

NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security

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Reaching Critical Will