

FIRST COMMITTEE MONITOR

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

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The views in this publication are not necessarily those of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom or the Reaching Critical Will programme.

Cover image: Jared Rodriguez / truthout.org

Reaching Critical Will is the disarmament programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the oldest women's peace organization in the world. Reaching Critical Will works on issues related to disarmament and arms control of many different weapon systems; militarism and military spending; and gendered aspects of the impact of weapons and of disarmament processes.

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

On www.reachingcriticalwill.org you can find:

- A calendar of events for this First Committee;
- All editions of the *First Committee Monitor*;
- Statements, documents, and analysis from meetings of the First Committee, Conference on Disarmament, nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Arms Trade Treaty, Programme of Action on small arms, and more;
- Research and analysis of critical issues related to disarmament and arms control; and
- News and information about civil society engagement on disarmament and arms control.

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Reaching Critical Will

EDITORIAL: SILENCE IS NOT AN OPTION

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

As the curtain opens once again on First Committee, we are once again faced with countless reminders of the urgency of our task ahead and of the obstacles that continue to prevent progress.

Over the past year, as many before it, we have been confronted with reports of the devastating impact of armed violence. The bombing of towns and cities around the world has killed thousands of civilians and destroyed vital infrastructure, leaving the living to struggle for survival. States can and must take action to prevent this from happening again and again.

Tensions between nuclear-armed states have risen, while the ongoing risks associated with their existence continue to plague the entire planet. Yet instead of engaging in negotiations to eliminate these weapons of terror that threaten us all, they continue to pour vast sums into their arsenals' upkeep and modernisation.

New technologies of death are being planned and developed, with fully autonomous weapons a grim, dehumanising spectre on the horizon. Meanwhile, the ubiquitous availability of small arms and light weapons persists, killing and injuring more people daily than any other weapon.

"Silence is not an option," said the Costa Rican president during the General Assembly high-level debate. We agree. First Committee provides a space for states, international organisations, and civil society to make some noise and pursue progressive, collective action to confront the challenges facing us all. We must use this space as best we can. States must decide to take action, rather than decide to be blocked by the traditional and predictable obstacles before us. States must have the courage of their convictions to see initiatives through even when they challenge the status quo and strain relationships.

Unfortunately, governments often use this forum to articulate decades-old positions and table resolutions that change little in substance or result from year to year. Reports on the implementation of these resolutions are issued each year, with contributions from states trending downwards. New perspectives or approaches are generally considered too difficult to incorporate, as precedent seems to trump progress in almost every respect. Civil society is denied an effective place in the Committee's work, relegated to delivering a block series of statements from the back

of the room one afternoon every year—a session that tends to be one of the least well-attended, as if it were considered optional by some.

This state of affairs does not reflect the intended role of the UN as a problem-solving forum for the international community. In many cases, it is a handful of countries that prevent effective change on either substance or process. The civil society organisations, coalitions, and campaigns participating most actively at First Committee have argued consistently that we can and must replace stalemate and watered-down outcomes with alternative outcomes that advance human security and social and economic justice.

Such alternatives can include developing a political commitment to prevent the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Negotiating a treaty to ban nuclear weapons, even if the nuclear-armed states refuse to participate. Developing a preventative prohibition against the development of fully autonomous weapons. Establishing more robust measures to stop the spread and reduce the production of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition.

These are but a few examples of avenues that states and other stakeholders should discuss and pursue. There are many more. A range of ideas are presented by civil society coalitions and campaigns in the *First Committee briefing book*, available from Reaching Critical Will online and in hardcopy during the Committee's meetings. The groups that have contributed to this book work on many different issues and weapon systems from a variety of perspectives, but they all share one thing in common: the desire for more effective, transparent, and inclusive diplomatic work at the United Nations. We believe that most delegates seek true progress and the enhancement of human security. We hope that our contributions will provide inspiration and alternatives as delegates engage in the important work ahead •

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FIRST COMMITTEE BRIEFING BOOK: EXTRACTS

To provide ideas and inspiration to delegates at First Committee, Reaching Critical Will has published a briefing book with background information and recommendations on some of this year's most pressing disarmament-related topics. The following are abbreviated recommendations from each chapter. The full briefing book can be downloaded from www.reachingcriticalwill.org.

Nuclear weapons

- At First Committee, delegates should: highlight the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons; welcome the outcomes from the Oslo and Nayarit conferences and the decision by Austria to host a third conference, and declare their intention to participate in this conference; call for the immediate start of negotiations for a new legal instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons as a step towards their complete elimination, even without the nuclear-armed states.

Armed drones

- At First Committee, all delegations should express humanitarian, moral, and legal concern over the growing use of armed drones inside and outside

armed conflicts and increased proliferation of armed drone technology; highlight the need for debate on the application of international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law, to the question of armed drones; and call for concrete measures on restricting the use of armed drones.

Fully autonomous weapons

- At First Committee, all delegations should acknowledge that fully autonomous weapons require urgent international action; express support for a renewed mandate to continue and expand Convention on Conventional Weapons deliberations on the topic in 2015, as well as seek gender diversity in such deliberations; and articulate other ways that fully autonomous weapons can be addressed at the international, regional, and national levels.

Explosive weapons in populated areas

- At First Committee, all delegations should endorse the UN Secretary-General's recommendation that the use in densely populated areas of explosive weapons with wide area effects should be avoided; set out their national policies and practices related to the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, including in response to requests from the UN Secretary-General for information; and indicate support for the development of an international commitment to prevent the use in populated areas of explosive weapons with wide area effects.

Landmines

- At First Committee, all delegations should emphasise the importance of the Mine Ban Treaty; condemn any use of antipersonnel mines and call for public investigation of allegations of use by states parties; express support for the "completion" goals of the Maputo Review Conference and name their own completion targets; and vote in favour of the resolution on the Mine Ban Treaty. States not party should report on progress made towards accession and stress their support for the humanitarian objectives of the Treaty.

Cluster munitions

- At First Committee, all delegations should condemn any use of cluster munitions. States parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions should emphasise that universalization of the Convention is essential to preventing any further harm from their use and report on their contribution to its implementation and universalization. States not party should report on progress made towards



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joining and stress their support for the humanitarian objectives of the Convention.

Depleted uranium weapons

- At First Committee, all delegations should vote in favour of the resolution on DU weapons and raise concerns over the use of DU weapons in their national and regional statements.

Incendiary weapons

- At First Committee, all delegations should publicly condemn Syria's use of incendiary weapons and urge the Syrian government to join the Convention on Conventional Weapons and its Protocol III on incendiary weapons; and express support for a review of the text of CCW Protocol III and for amendments to address more comprehensively the negative humanitarian impact of incendiary weapons.

Small arms and light weapons

- At First Committee, all delegations should commend ongoing work to implement the UNPoA and to explore synergies and complementarities between it, the Arms Trade Treaty, and the sustainable development goals process; support improvements to the omnibus SALW resolution; propose new SALW resolutions that address some of the UNPoA's gaps such as assistance to survivors, ammunition, SALW production, stockpile management, emerging technologies.

Arms Trade Treaty

- At First Committee, all delegations should support an ATT resolution that calls for strong and effective Treaty implementation; outline their intention to undertake strong implementation of the ATT's provisions as well as provide updates and examples of such steps already being taken; and participate

in and contribute to the substantive discussions taking place in side events and elsewhere.

Outer space

- At First Committee, all delegations should highlight the importance of preventing the weaponisation of outer space; condemn any anti-satellite tests and the development of weapons to be placed in orbit or to be used to target space-based assets; welcome the outcome of the latest GGE on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space and report on their implementation of measures recommended by the GGE and the COPUOS debris mitigation guidelines; and indicate support for the negotiation of a treaty preventing an arms race in outer space and for interim measures such as the International Code of Conduct on outer space activities.

Cyberpeace

- At First Committee, all delegations should express concern about the risk of cyber attacks and the militarisation of cyberspace; and indicate support for the current GGE to address Snowden's revelations in this regard and the development of concrete recommendations on preventing the development, deployment, and use of cyber weapons.

Gender and disarmament

- At First Committee, all delegations should welcome the inclusion of the provision on gender-based violence in the ATT and highlight the need for implementation of this criterion; welcome the increased attention to the participation of women in the BMS5 outcome document and highlight the need to ensure gender diversity in other disarmament discussions; and identify and discuss ways of strengthening the resolution on women and disarmament. •

CALENDAR OF SIDE EVENTS FOR THE WEEK OF 7–10 OCTOBER 2014

When	What	Where	Who
Tuesday, 7 October 13:15–14:30	The New Zealand disarmament lectures	Conference Building Conference Room 6	Permanent Mission of New Zealand to the UN
Friday, 10 October 13:15–14:30	<i>Article VI's "Effective Measures Relating to Nuclear Disarmament": Some International Legal Issues—A Discussion Paper</i>	ECOSOC Chamber	Permanent Mission of New Zealand to the UN

CHANGING THE RULES OF THE GAME

Daniel Mack | Instituto Sou da Paz

As a community working on disarmament and arms control issues at the international level, we need a strategic reassessment of our collective efforts for increased impact in the “real world”. Inertia is a powerful force. But for those working in the UN context, there is still hope. Given the UN’s nature and status, there are indeed efforts that can only be productively pushed therein.

Participation

Particularly in the area of “international security” the UN almost entirely marginalizes those with the strongest desire to seek change, including civil society. Compare the perfunctory NGO participation in First Committee debates with how civil society has been “allowed” to take part in international discussions on human rights or environmental issues. Civil society should seriously advocate for a level of participation in all arms control and disarmament processes compatible with its commitment, seriousness, and collective experience.

Decent participation can be as non-traumatic to the status quo as gaining a seat and plaque in the back of the room, having the possibility of speaking after all governments, UN agencies, and the ICRC have, as well as responding to each thematic cluster rather than all at once when many are no longer paying attention. Under no intention or illusion of soon gaining a “vote,” civil society should urgently demand a proper “voice”.

UN Security Council

In addition to an enhanced, permanent participation, advocates could turn with greater gusto toward demanding deeper UN reform. Two areas, in our opinion, scream out for change: the membership and modus operandi of the UN Security Council (UNSC) and the General Assembly default decision-making procedures. Changes therein could in turn significantly improve civil society’s prospects—in partnership with concerned governments—to foster UN instruments that could truly make a difference on the ground.

A broader, more representative, democratic, transparent UNSC, without unilateral veto power from the permanent five members and with the inclusion of additional countries, could be able to deliver more meaningful and incisive results into matters of human security as well as international security.¹ Arguably, however, membership expansion alone would not solve the situation, as an equal emphasis is needed on

overcoming lingering problems with the UNSC’s working methods. To achieve such momentous change, already being attempted by so many organizations and countries for so long, arms control and disarmament professionals could add their weight to these efforts, in a “whole of society” of advocates towards UNSC reform, joining forces with broader civil society in a truly global campaign for reform.

Consensus

Another way civil society could contribute to a renewed UN ability to deliver would be to engage in concerted efforts to change the way of doing business in the General Assembly regarding the abuse of consensus decision-making, as if it meant unanimity. “A handful of countries should no longer be allowed to hold back the rest of the international community in tackling some of the most dramatic problems of our age,” says a joint civil society statement to First Committee from 2013. “Diplomatic comfort and watered-down outcome documents must urgently be replaced by alternatives that can proudly be deemed ‘successful’ towards better impact on the ground. Governments and civil society alike should not continue to settle for less.”²

In this sense, perhaps enhanced attention to the “delivery system”, to use arms control terminology, could create better results than simply focusing on each specific disarmament theme or diplomatic process. In other words, civil society would need to “rock the boat” a bit in order to actually render the vessel seaworthy of the oceans it needs to navigate.

Notes

1. For information on the UNSC, see: <http://www.security-councilreport.org>. For some interesting views on the debate on UNSC reform, see: Rothwell, 2013 and Muggah, 2013. An argument as to how UNSC reform would further the “protection of civilians” is put forth by Conor Foley in http://pt.igarape.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/SP_04_To-Save-Succeeding-Generations_9th_aug.pdf.
2. The statement and list of NGOs that supported it is available at: http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/1com/1com13/statements/29Oct_NGO-ways-of-work.pdf. •

WOMEN AND DISARMAMENT: UN SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPORT AND WAYS FORWARD

Sofia Tuvestad | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Swedish Section (WILPF Sweden)

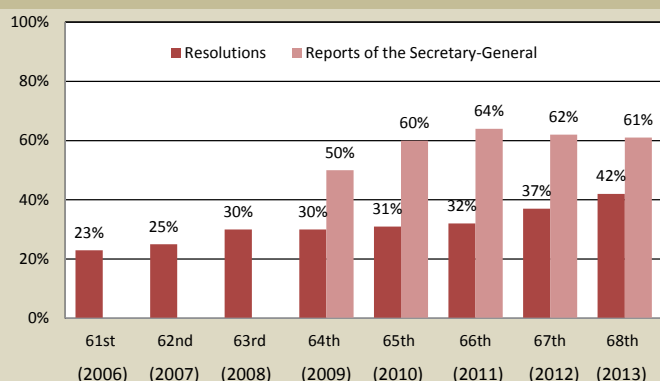
UNGA resolution 68/33, "Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control" urges UN member states and agencies as well as other relevant international organisations to promote women's participation in all decision-making on disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control. Following 68/33, states and UN entities were invited to provide summaries of their efforts to this effect, and the UN Secretary-General (UNSG) then compiled these into a report.

Replies have been submitted from the following governments: Argentina, Australia, Cuba, Denmark, Ecuador, Georgia, Iraq, Lebanon, Mexico, Panama, Philippines, Portugal, Switzerland, and Ukraine, a total of 14 states. (In the 2013 report, replies were submitted by Argentina, Australia, Colombia, Cuba, Jamaica, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, and Ukraine, a total of

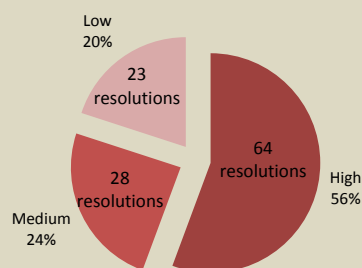
11 states.) In addition to government submissions, reports have been sent in by the following international organisations and agencies: the European Union; the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate; the United Nations Environment Programme; the Mine Action Service; the Office for Disarmament Affairs; as well as the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

The multilateral arms control and disarmament arena has traditionally lacked gender equality perspectives in its discussions and decision-making. As shown in the diagram below, First Committee still stands out as being comparably gender-blind with producing only four percent of all UNGA resolutions that reflected a gender perspective during the 2013 session. This number has, however, gone up in recent years, from six First Committee resolutions that included a gender perspective in 2011, to 10 in 2013.

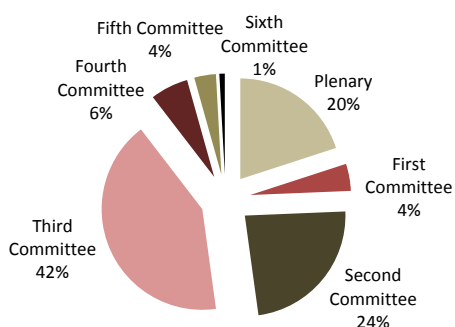
Integration of a gender perspective in the work of the General Assembly



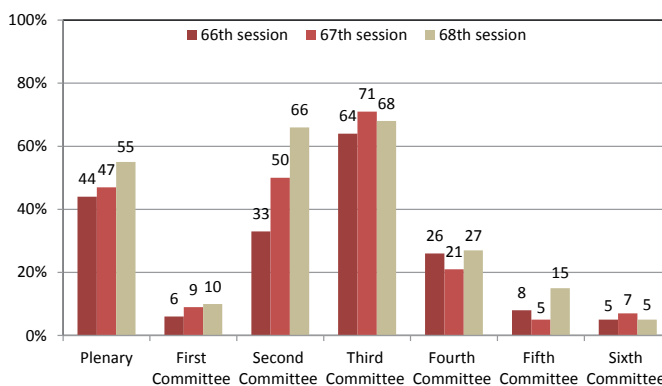
Trends in the share of General Assembly documents that include a gender perspective



Extent of focus on gender equality issues in General Assembly resolutions that include a gender perspective (68th session, 2013)



Origin of all General Assembly resolutions that reflect a gender perspective (68th session, 2013)



Trends in the share of resolutions that include a gender perspective, by Main Committee

Information based on the Report of the Secretary-General: Measures taken and progress achieved in follow up to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (A/69/182)



continued on next page

The last few years have seen some significant progress in general with regards to gender and disarmament—at least on paper. This includes the binding gender provisions in the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the adoption of Security Council resolutions 2117, 2106, and 2122 (2013), all of which express a growing recognition of the gendered impacts of the international arms trade. Another recent example is general recommendation #30 on Women, Peace and Security (2013) by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Committee highlights the gendered impact of international arms transfers and recommends all states parties to address this issue, including through the implementation of the ATT.

In light of these insights and commitments, all future efforts to promote gender-sensitive disarmament and prevention of armed violence must include the participation of women and others, including those in civil society. Not only is this a matter of the right to participate, it will also be key to ensure proper data collection, sustainability, and long-term results, not least at the local level.

The submissions in the 2014 UNSG report on women, disarmament and non-proliferation leave much room for improvement. Most submissions draw out political commitments or more general standpoints on gender equality, while providing less reporting on actual efforts. Still, there are some positive examples. The Philippines government, for example, reports on its collection of sex-disaggregated data, particularly on former combatants and their families, as well as beneficiaries of disarmament programmes, as a basis for planning, programming, and policy formulation. The Mine Action Service reports on its partnership with the Gender in Mine Action Programme, established in 2013, on baseline assessments and work with

Mine Action Service programmes to design gender mainstreaming strategies for Afghanistan and South Sudan.

The submission by the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (ODA), which adopted its Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan this year, includes efforts undertaken by regional centres. One example is a women-only training course on combating the illicit trafficking in firearms, ammunition, and explosives, organised by the UN Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean last year.

This year's First Committee briefing book, published and edited by Reaching Critical Will, introduces a number of recommendations to states for the promotion of gender equality in disarmament. WILPF calls on delegations to welcome the inclusion of gender provisions in the ATT and to highlight the need for implementation of the criterion on gender-based violence. Delegations at First Committee should also welcome the increased attention to the participation of women in the outcome document from the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider Implementation of the PoA (BMS5), as well as highlight the need to ensure gender diversity in other disarmament discussions, such as those on autonomous weapons. In addition to this, states should identify ways of strengthening the women and disarmament resolution for First Committee sessions ahead.

Finally, all states should submit substantial reports to next year's UNSG report on women, disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control. For future states parties to the ATT, this should include reporting on implementation of the ATT gender criterion. We can skip small talk, let's get right to the chase. •

ANTIPERSONNEL MINES: STATES EMBRACE A 10-YEAR COMPLETION CHALLENGE

Amelie Chayer and Tamar Gabelnick | International Campaign to Ban Landmines

The Third Review Conference of the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and on their Destruction (Mine Ban Treaty) successfully set the stage for continued movement toward a mine-free world. At the conference, held in Maputo from 30 June to 4 July 2014, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) challenged states parties to finish implementing their core treaty obligations within a maximum of ten years. Finishing the major work of the Treaty within a decade is entirely feasible, and the Completion Challenge is in keeping with the mine ban

community's history of pursuing bold and innovative goals.

States parties embraced this challenge through the Maputo+15 Declaration, committing "to intensify our efforts to complete our respective time-bound obligations with the urgency that the completion work requires" and aspiring to "meet these goals to the fullest extent possible by 2025." The Maputo Action Plan lays out steps to reach this goal, and new thematic committees steered by states parties will follow-up with individual states on compliance with and imple-



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mentation of the treaty, including a rigorous feedback loop on their progress reports.

In Maputo many states and other delegations publicly endorsed the concept of completing antipersonnel mine clearance and destruction of stockpiles within an ambitious timeframe, and committed to ensure sustainable assistance to survivors, their families and communities. In the lead-up to the Maputo conference, some expressed doubts about the possibility of “completing” victim assistance—but the ICBL made it clear that completion means having all the mechanisms and structures in place for victims to receive necessary support throughout their lives, including through broader frameworks such as those related to human rights, development, health, education, or labour.

The goal of seeing no new use of antipersonnel mines anywhere in the world within a decade would involve progress on universalization of the Treaty and the mine ban norm. In general, respect for the ban remains very high among both states parties and states

not party, and the ICBL is confident that the goal of no new use within ten years can be met. Any use of antipersonnel mines by anyone, anywhere, should receive quick and firm condemnation by all states parties until the norm is fully universalized.

The Maputo Conference reaffirmed states’ commitment to the principles that have made the Mine Ban Treaty shine as a model for other conventions, such as transparency, informality, partnership, and inclusion. The principle of landmine survivor participation in treaty fora was once again highlighted, with space provided for a series of statements by survivors during the high-level segment.

States will need to actively support those decisions in the coming years—to integrate the words of the Maputo+15 Declaration and Maputo Action Plan into their policies, work plans, and economic priorities. The real winners in the end will be people that are still living with the daily risk of landmines. The sooner we finish the job, the sooner they can live in safety. •



Prince Mired of Jordan with ICBL Ambassador Tun Channareth and delegates from Lao PDR and Jordan, at the Third Review Conference of the Mine Ban Treaty

ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE ARMS TRADE TREATY: ONLY THE BEGINNING!

Gabriella Irsten | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

On 25 December 2014 the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) will enter into force. This will mean that international arms transfers must comply with a set of provisions to reduce human suffering caused by irresponsible and unregulated trade.

This is a historic moment. However, the true test of the ATT's value will be its effective implementation. The treaty text contains many limitations and loopholes. Its scope is narrow, providing only for consideration of a limited number of weapons systems and transfer activities and does not explicitly provide for increased transparency in the international arms trade. The treaty also does not stop exporting countries from using their own weapons to engage in violence. Finally, the treaty text includes the term "overriding risk," which could allow states to proceed with a transfer despite there being a substantial risk of violations of humanitarian law or human rights when they consider other risks, e.g. political or economic ones, to be more significant.

Despite these weaknesses, a robust implementation of the ATT could operate as a preventative tool against conflict and human suffering and has great potential to link arms control to human rights.

It is the first international legally-binding treaty that recognizes the link between gender-based violence

(GBV) and the international arms trade. Article 7(4) obligates exporting state parties to take into account the risk of arms being used to commit or facilitate serious acts of GBV. In practise this means that the risk assessment and implementation of the treaty will have to adopt a gender analysis, which should help to understand the situation in the recipient country more accurately and ensure that all people affected are taken into consideration.

Despite the fact that the UN adopted gender mainstreaming as a key tool for achieving gender equality in 1997, mainstreaming gender in disarmament and arms policies has faced many challenges due to a lack of integration into its general framework. One reason for this is that most UN strategies on gender have focused only on women and only in special isolated fora away from the organization's everyday work. The ATT could therefore help change the discourse within the UN.

It will be up to state parties to set high standards in their risk assessment and implementation processes. If the treaty is not implemented in good faith, it could result in legitimizing the international arms trade as well as irresponsible transfers. The treaty's entry into force is therefore only a first step in the long process towards regulating the international arms trade. The hard work is yet to come! •



WILPF staff and members advocating for a strong gender-based violence provision at the ATT negotiations in July 2012



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ENDING THE USE OF EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS IN POPULATED AREAS

Article 36

The year 2014 has already provided another series of devastating examples of what happens when heavy explosive weapons are used in populated areas. The shelling and bombing of populated neighborhoods in Syria, Gaza, and Ukraine create the latest high-profile examples of a predictable pattern of harm. Preventing such harm requires an urgent response from states. This response should build on practical experience, and adopt a commitment to stop the use in populated areas of explosive weapons with wide area effects.

Recognise the problem

A first step in addressing a problem is to recognise it. It is encouraging that some 40 countries have explicitly acknowledged the problems posed by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. The First Committee provides an opportunity to strengthen that recognition and to build the group of states showing determination to prevent civilian harm.

Share practical experience

At expert meetings held at Chatham House last year and in Oslo this year, states have begun discussing their policies on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Examples from Afghanistan and Somalia, for instance, show that to protect civilians from harm states have adopted policies curbing the use of certain explosive weapons in populated areas. The UN Secretary-General, through the UN Office for

the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, is compiling relevant national practices and policies, and all states should contribute to this exercise.

Draw a political line

Recent years have seen repeated examples of the bombing and shelling of populated areas having an unacceptable impact on civilians. It is time for states to draw a line against the use in populated areas of weapons that put the civilian population at an unacceptable risk.

During First Committee, the International Network on Explosive Weapons is asking states to support work on a commitment to prevent use in populated areas of explosive weapons with wide area effects. Such a commitment would be compatible with existing international law, but would set a strong standard for civilian protection.

The last century saw a general movement away from the bombing and bombardment of cities and towns. Area bombardment, as practiced during World War II and afterwards in South East Asia for example, is no longer tolerated – and few would call for its return. A clear commitment by states to curb the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas would continue that movement towards stronger civilian protection in the future.

A fuller briefing on this subject can be found in the First Committee briefing book 2014. •





Permanent Mission of New Zealand to the United Nations
TE AKA AORERE

The New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations

Invites you to attend a High Level Discussion to mark the launch of

UNODA Occasional Paper No. 26: The New Zealand Lectures on Disarmament

Tuesday 7 October 2014

1.15pm – 2.30pm

In April 2014, the UN Secretary-General's High Representative for Disarmament visited New Zealand and delivered a series of lectures outlining her vision for the multilateral disarmament. To mark the publication of these lectures as a UNODA Occasional Paper New Zealand's Ambassador for Disarmament, H.E. Ms Dell Higgle, will moderate a discussion on the key themes from these lectures with the UN High Representative and a High Level Panel.

Speaker: **H.E. Ms Angela Kane**
UN High Representative for Disarmament

Panellists: **H.E. Mr Jorge Lomonaco Tonda**
Permanent Representative of Mexico to the UN, Geneva
H.E. Mr Desra Percaya
Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the UN, New York
H.E. Mr Courtenay Rattray
Chair, First Committee, UNGA 69
Permanent Representative of Jamaica, New York

A Copy of *The New Zealand Lectures on Disarmament* can be accessed at
<http://www.un.org/disarmament/publications/occasionalpapers/en/op26.pdf>

All are welcome to attend.

Please direct any enquiries to
Anthony Simpson, 917 837 2814
(anthony.simpson@mfat.govt.nz) or
Michael Dobson (michaeldobsonnz@gmail.com)

Venue:

Conference Room 6
Conference Building
United Nations Headquarters

COUNTDOWN TO VIENNA

Beatrice Fihn | International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

No one in the disarmament field can have missed the growing humanitarian discourse on nuclear weapons that has emerged over the last few years. With a reference to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from the use of nuclear weapons in the outcome document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference as a starting point, a proliferation of initiatives and events have focused on this since then.

A humanitarian framing of the nuclear weapons discourse has offered a new way forward. There are many reasons for why such framing has been effective, but one key element is that it provides an opportunity for civil society, international organisations, non-nuclear weapon states, and nuclear-armed states to play different roles in the work towards nuclear disarmament. Rather than requiring the consensus-based, forum-obsessed, and one-size fits all approach to nuclear weapons that has prevailed in the past, this approach has opened space for consideration of the most appropriate political and legal responses to nuclear weapons.

The humanitarian discourse around nuclear weapons will be a major driving force for progress in 2015, a crucial year for with an NPT Review Conference, the 70th anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, and a potential follow-up from Vienna as significant milestones.

It is therefore essential that all governments, international organisations, and civil society use the 2014 session of First Committee and the third conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons in Vienna in December to set the stage for achieving meaningful progress.

The Vienna conference will be an opportunity to present, listen, and react to new evidence about the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. Aside from looking at different aspects of what consequences we would face as an international community in the event of a nuclear detonation, it will also look further into what risks currently exist, response capacities, and what norms under existing international law pertain to the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons explosions.

But Vienna will also provide a unique opportunity for governments to clearly outline what they will do about the facts

presented at the Oslo, Nayarit, and Vienna conferences. Rather than focusing on what others should be doing, it will be a chance for governments to outline what effective measures they are going to take to achieve nuclear disarmament and fulfill their treaty obligations under article VI of the NPT.

For ICAN, a treaty banning nuclear weapons is the most feasible, logical, and effective way for governments to implement such obligations under current conditions, as such a treaty would outlaw and stigmatise nuclear weapons. A ban on nuclear weapons would not be in opposition to any existing initiatives, but rather would complement bilateral reductions, non-proliferation initiatives, and other measures. It would be a concrete and effective measure to implement article VI of the NPT, even if the nuclear-armed states choose not to participate.

Prohibiting nuclear weapons would support the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, assist in reducing the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines, undermine incentives for proliferation, and perhaps most importantly, strengthen an international norm against the use and possession of nuclear weapons.

As international conflicts and new emerging threats develop and tensions increase around the world, civil society organisations, international organisations, and governments must find the courage to finally put the threat of nuclear weapons behind us. The First Committee and the upcoming conference in Vienna will be an opportunity to commit to start negotiations on a treaty banning nuclear weapons in 2015. •



REFLECTION ON THE UNGA GENERAL DEBATE 2014

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

The theme of this year's high-level general debate was "delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda". With Ebola, poverty, inequality, and armed conflict raging in the background as governments negotiate a new set of sustainable development goals, the theme is overripe for action. Disarmament should be a key aspect of any transformative development agenda. Yet very few countries spoke about disarmament or arms control related topics. Perhaps this is because, as the UN Secretary-General remarked, "Disarmament is viewed as a distant dream, sabotaged by profiteers of perpetual warfare."

Nuclear weapons

Only 41 countries spoke about nuclear weapons this year—down from 65 last year. Yet momentum to outlaw and eliminate nuclear weapons has far from diminished outside of the General Assembly Hall. Mexico convened the second conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons in February 2014, and Austria is set to convene the third in December. Austria's foreign minister invited states to attend this meeting, noting that the desire to prevent the terrifying consequences of the use of nuclear weapons should unite the world. "As long as nuclear weapons exist, the risk of their use—on purpose or by accident—remains real," he warned. And of course nuclear weapons have humanitarian consequences even without being used. Costa Rica's president pointed out that maintaining and modernising nuclear weapons "requires immense economic and human resources that are necessary for responding to the key challenges of our time, such as achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals."

Arms trade

Paraguay's permanent representative noted that disarmament and arms control are key to ensuring sustainable economic and social development. Arms production and international arms trading absorbs vast resources and result in death and destruction the world over. Over 20 countries discussed the destabilising effect of irresponsible arms transfers; many of these welcomed the fact that the Arms Trade Treaty has now received the 50 ratifications necessary for its entry into force. The effective implementation of this Treaty could make it a useful preventative tool against armed violence and armed conflict.

By the numbers:
Disarmament: 27
Nuclear weapons: 41
Arms trade: 21
Explosive weapons: 16
Chemical weapons: 14
Small arms: 10

Explosive weapons

Strong tools are also needed to prevent human suffering from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. The shelling and bombing of populated neighborhoods in Syria, Gaza, and Ukraine created devastating humanitarian situations, killing civilians, destroying vital infrastructure, and leaving lasting psychological damage. More governments than ever raised this issue in the general debate, focusing mainly on the barrage against Gaza conducted by Israel earlier this year. Some called for concerted action to prevent this from happening again, with Costa Rica's president calling on states to "develop stricter rules and commitments to prohibit and restrict" the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

Conclusion

Developing new international treaties and political commitments on disarmament and arms control—and effectively implementing the ones we already have—will be essential in the achievement of a transformative development agenda. All countries must work in good faith to achieve the goals to which we all aspire: a nuclear weapons free world; the prevention of human suffering from explosive weapons, small arms, and other conventional arms; and diverting the least possible resources to armaments, as espoused in article 26 of the UN Charter. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' foreign minister spoke of international law as one of the "bulwarks against the type of naked aggression and unilateralism that have too often led our nations to the precipice of war." Upholding this law, and developing new law and norms where necessary, should be central to our efforts at this upcoming session of First Committee and beyond.

Reaching Critical Will, with the assistance of WILPF's PeaceWomen programme, tracked all references to disarmament and arms control at this year's UNGA general debate. The Disarmament Index is available at www.reachingcriticalwill.org. PeaceWomen maintains an index on gender and women, available at www.peacewomen.org. •



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Is pleased to invite you to a discussion with

Professor Treasa Dunworth
Faculty of Law, University of Auckland

author of

Article VI's "Effective Measures Relating to Nuclear Disarmament": Some International Legal Issues **A Discussion Paper**

**Friday 10 October 2014
1.15pm – 2.45pm**

ECOSOC Chamber

Commentators: **H.E Ms Dell Higgie (Chair)**
New Zealand Ambassador for Disarmament

H.E Mr Jorge Lomonaco Tonda
Permanent Representative of Mexico to the UN, Geneva

Mr Breifne O'Reilly
Director, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland

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:

Article 36
Instituto Sou da Paz
International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons
International Campaign to Ban Landmines
Reaching Critical Will of WILPF
WILPF Sweden

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