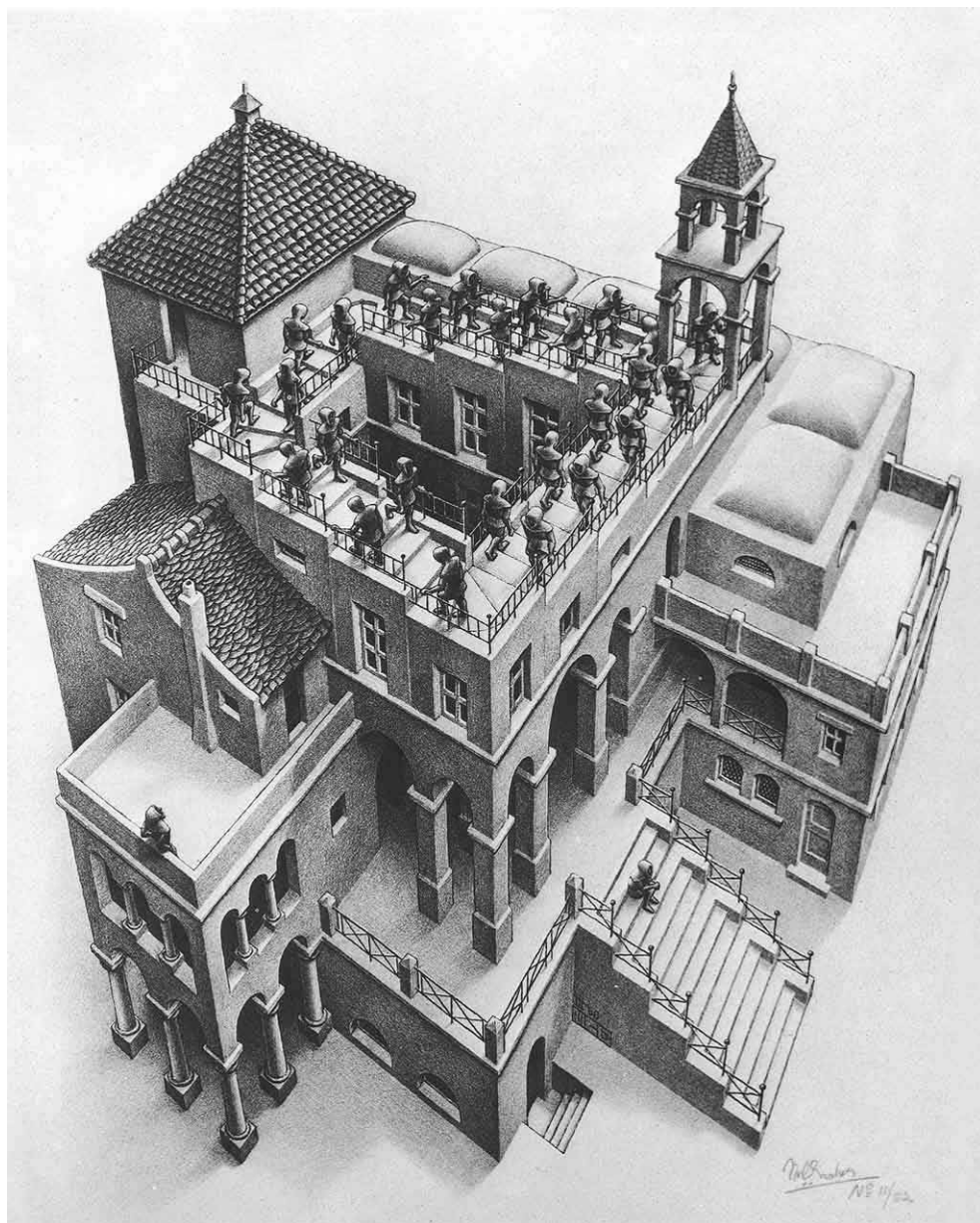


# FIRST COMMITTEE MONITOR

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

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- 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: THE COST OF “CONSENSUS”

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

As another First Committee concludes its work, the Arole—and abuse—of consensus has once again been brought to the fore. Delegations will no doubt be reflecting on the value of consensus, the costs involved in seeking it, and what it actually means. Some may be asking themselves whether it means compromising in good faith or rather exercising a veto when you can't get your way.

The General Assembly does not officially operate on the basis of consensus-as-unanimity. Yet member states often seek to achieve it on their resolutions, even at the cost of watering them down.

The final resolution to be adopted at this year's First Committee addressed women, disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control. Updating the text to reflect a growing concern about the gendered impact of weapons and the importance of gender diversity in disarmament discussions, the resolution's co-sponsors sought consensus in order to secure unanimous support for these vital considerations. Yet despite making concessions to those who had been seeking to weaken the resolution, including by removing a reference to gender-based violence (GBV) in an operative paragraph, consensus was not achieved.

A recorded vote was called on a separate, preambular paragraph referencing the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). On this question 139 states accepted the paragraph and 24 abstained. This paragraph encouraged ATT states parties to fully implement all provisions of the Treaty, including the one on preventing armed GBV. Several of those that abstained argued that the ATT is not a “consensus treaty”.

When the ATT was negotiated, under the rule of consensus, some of the largest arms exporters and importers tried (sometimes successfully) to weaken its provisions. Some states worked actively to prevent any provision on GBV. And some tried to prevent the Treaty's adoption altogether. The rule of consensus meant that the countries pushing for a strong treaty made several compromises in order to bring more skeptical states on board. The final text contains substantial limitations and loopholes, creating the risk that some states might seek to use the Treaty to legitimise rather than stigmatise irresponsible transfers. Clearly this would not constitute proper interpretation or implementation of the spirit or the letter of the Treaty.

At the time, the Liberian representative said the UN had become a victim of its own rules of procedure. Indeed, “consensus” at the UN is often more a barrier

to commitment than the engine of its development. Too often it means capitulation to the lowest-common denominator, failing to meet the UN's high calling to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.” As civil society groups addressing First Committee argued in 2013, the rule of consensus, when treated as unanimity, undermines the security of the majority and runs counter to a basic principle of the UN—the sovereign equality of states—by allowing the interests of a small number of hold-outs to trump the interests of all the others.

Whether the objective is preventing GBV, regulating the international arms trade, ending the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, or banning nuclear weapons, states that seek progress must not allow a recalcitrant minority to block their path. Consensus as a process through which general agreement is sought and compromises are made is a key part of diplomacy. Indeed it is a key part of our everyday human interactions. But consensus must not mean that every state has a veto they can wield in order to ensure that they do not have to change their policies or practices or be measured against strong international standards.

We have heard the nuclear-armed states say that the conditions are not right for nuclear disarmament and we must wait until they feel safe enough to begin negotiations. Meanwhile the rest of us live under the threat of use of these weapons of mass destruction. We have heard from arms importers that regulations on arms transfers potentially violate their right to self-defence or sovereignty, and from arms exporters that regulations on certain items are too complicated or that potential risks of violations to international law have to be “overriding”. Meanwhile people are dying from the use of small arms and heavy weapons around the world. We have heard from some that use explosive weapons in populated areas that existing laws are adequate. Meanwhile 80–90% of those killed by this bombing and bombardment of towns and cities are civilians.

But we have also heard, from the majority of states and publics, that prohibiting nuclear weapons, regulating the arms trade, and putting an end to the bombing of towns and cities will enhance their security. These voices represent the real consensus: the overwhelming majority seeking effective change. As the group of NGOs said in 2013, the world needs “an approach to disarmament that is driven by the needs and rights of people most affected by armed violence, not by the discretion of states and others most responsible for it.” •

# NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Mia Gandenberger | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

The action on draft resolutions addressing nuclear disarmament was reflective of the debate on nuclear weapons during this year's First Committee. While the majority of UN member states are clearly frustrated with the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament, the nuclear-armed states and those that include nuclear weapons in their security doctrines seem reluctant to accept the demand for action arising from the debate around the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

Ireland very eloquently summarized states' record on implementing disarmament obligations in its statement on 21 October 2014, concluding that it is "so poor" that questions "must soon be asked about the seriousness of our collective commitment to Article VI, to the NPT [Non-Proliferation Treaty] and to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons." Meanwhile, nuclear-armed states continue to insist on the step-by-step approach and express their concern at all so-called parallel processes. Even though some of them, such as France, United Kingdom, and United States, seem to recognize the "increased energy around the nuclear disarmament debate," they also seem to believe it would be better employed "if channeled towards existing processes, helping to tackle blockages and making progress in the practical, step-by-step approach."

Yet, the momentum around the debate on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons continues to grow, with 175 states expressing their deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons on 20 October 2014. Even if some of those states still struggle to give due consideration the security concerns of the great majority of the UN member states, 155 states did conclude that it "is in the interest of the very survival of humanity that nuclear weapons are never used again, under any circumstances."

For these states, the third conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons taking place from 8–9 December in Vienna, Austria, will provide the opportunity to continue the debate on nuclear weapons and possibly allow for innovative ideas to achieve the world free of nuclear weapons everyone claims to want.

## Action on resolutions

Resolution A/C.1/69/L.2/Rev.1, "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East," was adopted as a

whole by a vote of 151-4-20, and separate votes on preambular paragraph (PP) 5 (166-2-6) and PP6 (167-2-5). Canada, Israel, Micronesia, and the United States voted against the resolution as a whole, while India and Israel voted no on both PPs. In their explanation of vote, both India and Pakistan referred to objection to calls for them to join the NPT. The United States thought the resolution did not "the fundamental tests of fairness and balance."

Resolution A/C.1/69/L.12/Rev.1, "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments," was adopted as a whole by a vote of 166-7-5, with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, France, India, Israel, Russia, United Kingdom, and United States voting against the resolution. PP24, emphasizing the importance of the 2015 NPT Review Conference, was adopted by a vote of 163-3-3, with India, Israel, and United States voting no and France, United Kingdom, and Pakistan abstaining from the vote. OP9, stressing the fundamental role of the NPT, and OP11, referring to the recommendations of the 2010 NPT Action Plan dealing with the Conference on Disarmament, were adopted by votes of 163-4-3 and 163-3-4 respectively, with India, Israel, United States, and Pakistan voting against the former and Israel, Russia, and United States voting against the latter.

In their joint explanation of vote, France, United Kingdom, and United States expressed their disappointment that the resolution focuses "almost exclusively on the nuclear disarmament agenda." Furthermore, they regretted that the notion of "the notion of a step-by-step approach to disarmament has almost disappeared," and expressed their concern about "the increased focus on parallel processes." The Netherlands speaking on behalf of a group of states, expressed the group's disappointment with the inclusion of a reference to resolution 68/32 and the decisions contained therein. The high-level meeting in 2018, in particular, could "could serve to lay a foundation for an alternative pathway that could potentially damage the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty." Both Pakistan and India referred to their positions on the NPT in their explanations of vote. India additionally stressed the need for the discussions on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons to be inclusive and not harm the non-proliferation regime or the "established disarmament machinery".

Resolution A/C.1/69/L.23 on the "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice



on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons” was adopted by a vote of 109-24-18. Japan, abstaining from the vote, does not think a nuclear weapons convention is “ripe for negotiation,” though it expressed its support for the ICJ opinion. Pakistan again stressed its position on the NPT, but agreed with the remaining text of the resolution. For Sweden the commencement of negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention is not the only available option for achieving nuclear disarmament. It therefore will “continue to engage in negotiations in good faith on effective measures towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.”

Resolution A/C.1/69/L.36, “United action towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons,” was adopted as a whole by a vote of 163-1-14, with the DPRK voting against. OP3 referencing the NPT was adopted by a vote of 164-3-6, with the DPRK, India, and Israel voting no. OP11 calling for the commencement on a fissile material treaty on the basis of CD/1299 as well as a moratorium on fissile material production was adopted by 166-2-4, with China and Pakistan voting against and the DPRK, India, Iran, and Israel abstaining. OP17 on the zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction was adopted with 148 voting in favor, and 22 abstaining. OP20 stressing the importance of the International Atomic Energy Agency’s Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements and their model Additional Protocol was adopted by 165-0-5, with Argentina, Brazil, India, Israel, and Pakistan abstaining.

The Arab Group as a whole abstained from OP17, arguing that it is incomplete. India stressed its position on the NPT and said that the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements were only applicable to non-nuclear weapons states under the Treaty, and that “the question of a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons does not arise.” Therefore, it abstained on OP11 and OP20, but voted against OP3. Similarly, Pakistan referred to its position on the NPT and opposition to the commencement of negotiations on a fissile materials treaty. Hence, it abstained on the resolution as a whole as well as OP 3 and OP20, but voted against OP20. China explained that a moratorium on fissile material production as referred to in OP11 would be difficult to define and verify, as well as counterproductive to promote. Therefore it voted against OP11 and abstained on the resolution as a whole. Brazil highlighted the voluntary nature of the Additional Protocol in its explanation of vote. France expressed the wish to see the NPT Action Plan referred to in a balanced manner and regretted the lack of reference to the work of the Group of Governmental Experts in OP11. Iran disagreed with

PP6 that reaffirms the mutual reinforcement of the promotion nuclear disarmament and the enhancement of international peace and security. Furthermore it thought OP17 to be incomplete.

Resolution A/C.1/69/L.44, “Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament,” was adopted by a vote of 135-24-18. In their joint explanation of vote France, United Kingdom, and United States regretted that their views expressed during the High-Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament on 26 September 2013 were not reflected in the resolution, and that the meeting itself did not address non-proliferation as well. According to the three countries, the only reference to the NPT in the resolution was “insufficient, incidental and unbalanced.” They did not agree with the call for negotiation of “an instrument that is not mentioned as such in the 2010 Action Plan” and expressed concern that the scheduled meeting in 2018 could risk weakening commitment among states to securing a successful outcome of the 2015 Review Conference. Therefore, France, United Kingdom, and United States voted no on L.44. China, though voting in favour of the resolution, stressed that the principles of maintaining global strategic balance should be considered and the countries with the largest arsenals should lead on nuclear disarmament. Then once the conditions are ripe, others could join.

The Netherlands, speaking on behalf of a group of countries voting against the resolution, regretted the limited reference to the NPT and said that not all proposals discussed during the meeting on 26 September 2013 were reflected in the resolution. Furthermore, the group highlighted the reference to only one of the four core issues of the Conference on Disarmament. While raising the same issues, Spain and eight other countries chose to abstain rather than vote against the resolution.

Ireland, speaking on behalf of seven countries voting in favor of the resolution, stressed that the L.44 is “entirely consistent with, and supportive of” the NPT as well as the 2010 NPT Action Plan. Therefore, any nuclear disarmament effort should consider the important ongoing discussion regarding the humanitarian consequences of any nuclear weapons detonation, which L.44 acknowledges. The seven countries would welcome “any set of effective measures to achieve the objective of complete nuclear disarmament, regardless of how such measures might be elaborated.”

Action on resolutions not covered here can be reviewed on our website under: <http://reachingcriticalwill.org/disarmament-fora/unga/2014/resolutions>. •

# BIOLOGICAL AND CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Sampson Oppedisano | NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security

Before First Committee closed, delegates adopted both resolutions addressing the two categories of prohibited weapons of mass destruction (WMD). A/C.1/69/L.6, "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction," as well as A/C.1/69/L.17, "Measures to Prevent Terrorists from Acquiring Weapon of Mass Destruction," were both adopted without a vote.

During this year's First Committee, states continued to vocalize their outstanding concerns related to biological and chemical weapons.

Citing the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)'s fact-finding mission, states expressed their disappointment in the Syrian government's alleged use of chemical weapons. Many countries expressed their disappointment over the evidence to this end and continued to support the OPCW mission's efforts. Claiming a blatant violation to international humanitarian law, the delegation of Canada expressed its ongoing desire to refer the situation to the International Criminal Court.

On biological weapons, many states and groups suggested that while progress has made through the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, a key challenge to its implementation is lack of a verification protocol.

First Committee also adopted without a vote A/C.1/69/L.17, "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction". Some states have voiced concern that non-state actors are seeking to acquire WMD, though many others seem skeptical about the urgency of this issue. Some also have voiced concerns that the focus on terrorism detracts attention from the possession of WMD by states. Pakistan voiced its support for the resolution; however, it also stated that while the 1540 Committee and the Nuclear Security Summit process play important roles, they are no excuse for "pursuing a policy of discrimination against 'selected' countries." The delegation also praised the Chemical Weapons Convention but pointed out that as long as the disarmament of chemical weapons moves at a slow pace, the potential for such weapons to end up in the hands of non-state actors remains a distinct possibility.

The delegation of Iran also raised concerns with the Nuclear Security Summits, disassociating itself from the paragraphs in the resolution making reference to them. Iran agreed that "international cooperation aimed at strengthening the security physical protection of its nuclear materials and facilities contributes to preventing terrorists from acquiring nuclear weapons," and argued that the International Atomic Energy Agency is the most appropriate place for addressing this issue. •



# AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS AND ARMED DRONES

Mia Gandenberger | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

The issue of autonomous weapon systems received increased attention compared to last year, with more than twenty states raising the issue and most of them stressing the need for further discussion on the legal, ethical, moral, and further implications of these weapons. The need to comply with international humanitarian and human rights law was stressed by many delegations, such as those of the African Group, European Union, Non-Aligned Movement, Cuba, India, Ireland, Netherlands, Pakistan, South Africa, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Some, such as the Netherlands, Pakistan, Sweden, Switzerland, and the ICRC, highlighted the importance of human involvement in life-and-death decisions.

The non-governmental statement by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots on Tuesday, 28 October 2014 eloquently rounded up this year's First Committee debate on autonomous weapon systems. It highlighted a grave concern with the notion of "permitting a machine to select and take a human life," arguing that many agree that "this is a step too far that crosses a line that should never be crossed" and would be "an affront to human dignity".

Next week from 13–14 November 2014, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) will convene its annual Meeting of the High Contracting Parties. Among other things, it will discuss if and how to extend the mandate for continued deliberations on lethal autonomous weapons systems. The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots is calling for the establishment of a formal group of governmental experts to continue the work through expanded discussions as well as more open and inclusive meetings, bringing in women experts and experts from more nations. While the Campaign welcomed the discussions in the context of the CCW, it also noted there is "an important role for the Human Rights Council to play on this emerging international issue of concern."

Unlike autonomous weapon systems, unmanned aerial vehicles or armed drones did not receive great attention during this year's First Committee, with only Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ireland, and Pakistan specifically raising the matter. Those speaking on the matter stressed the importance of respecting international humanitarian and human rights law. In that connection, Costa Rica highlighted concerns with possible violations of the right to life that could be caused by the use of armed drones inside and outside armed conflict. Pakistan repeatedly raised concerns with the implications and effects of extrajudicial killings using these weapons.

Civil society has been increasingly raising concern with armed drones in the First Committee context. PAX, speaking during the civil society segment, highlighted the high civilian casualties that accompany the use of armed drones in so-called counter-terrorism operations. PAX stressed its concern with the uses of these weapons outside of armed conflict and underlined that such practices "run counter to international human rights law, which is the applicable set of rules outside of armed conflict and which requires that suspects be captured and tried before being sentenced." The organization called for increased transparency over the use of armed drones and for concrete measures, as "the practice of extrajudicial killing and other problematic uses of armed drones could set a precedent for other states if it is not strongly condemned by the international community."

Reaching Critical Will and Article 36 published a short paper, *Sex and drone strikes*, which looks at gender and identity in targeting and casualty analysis. The paper addresses concerns that the sex of individuals is being used as a signifier to designate people as militants in drone strike targeting decisions and post-strike analysis of casualties. Among other things, these two groups argue that using sex or gender to systematically remove a person's claim to protection as a civilian is unacceptable. •

## SEX AND DRONE STRIKES

Gender and identity  
in targeting and  
casualty analysis

# DEPLETED URANIUM WEAPONS

Doug Weir | International Campaign to Ban Uranium Weapons

This year's First Committee concluded with 143 states supporting a fifth NAM-sponsored resolution on depleted uranium (DU) weapons. As with previous years, the action was mainly within the European Union, with Sweden and Bulgaria voting in favour for the first time and Germany shockingly shifting from a yes to an abstention.

The resolution contained new language on both post-conflict assistance and specific research on the health and environmental risks from DU in conflict situations, but it was language from 2012 that proved the most contentious. In 2012, the NAM had added a quote from a 2010 report from the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) that called for a precautionary approach to the use and post-conflict management of DU. This call was made on the basis of ongoing uncertainties over DU's behaviour in the environment.

The United Kingdom, United States, and France, all of which are DU users, as well as Germany and the Netherlands, which aren't, took exception to what they viewed as the "cherry picking" of UNEP's report. Explaining their votes, all five quoted the first few sentences of the pertinent paragraph, which stated that dangerous levels of radiation had not been found at the sites UNEP had been able to study in the Balkans.

As it happens, UNEP has called for a precautionary approach in all their post-conflict studies. This is largely unsurprising as, comprehensive as they were, these studies were often geographically limited by the presence of explosive remnants of war (ERW) and took place many years after the conflicts. The behaviour of DU in the environment is also highly variable and the risks it may pose specific to each site. This makes generalised statements about risk hard to justify scientifically. Thus the inclusion of the precautionary call is an accurate representation of UNEP's position on DU

following field studies, as is their call for risk reduction work at sites. It also has parallels in the warnings the UK, US, German, and Dutch militaries give to their troops to avoid DU exposure.

Unfortunately UNEP has never been able to undertake a comprehensive study in Iraq, where around 60 times more DU was used than the Balkans. One of the reasons has been the United States' refusal to make targeting data available, be it to UNEP, the Iraqi government, or organisations engaged in ERW clearance. Ironically, the final part of UNEP's apparently contentious paragraph recommends "that action be taken to clean up and decontaminate the polluted sites [and] for awareness-raising among local populations and future monitoring." Naturally, these last two sentences were missing from the explanations of vote given by the five states.

Decontamination, awareness raising, and transparency are all norms currently applied to ERW and yet not to DU; this is a curious oversight. It also means that radiation protection norms applicable in peacetime, which are based on common standards promoted by the International Atomic Energy Agency and intended to protect human health and the environment, somehow cease to apply in the case of DU use in weapons.

Beyond Germany's surprising change of position, the inclusion of language on assistance in this year's resolution was a welcome development. The complete absence of clearance obligations is a glaring omission and one that must be rectified. ICBUW also welcomes the call for research specific to conflict settings. This should mean studies into the extent to which civilians have, and continue to be, exposed to DU; these should focus on those at high risk of exposure, such as workers in Iraq's informal scrap metal trade. •

# CLUSTER MUNITIONS AND LANDMINES

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

Preventing and addressing the suffering caused by cluster munitions and antipersonnel mines is high on states' agenda, as evidenced by this year's First Committee debates. A large number of delegations chose to address the issue—including both states parties and states not party to the conventions that ban these abhorrent weapons. Demonstrating their pragmatic engagement, many states referred to the

financial and technical support they provide for the clearance of contaminated land and for assistance to victims. The ten-year aspirational deadline for completing Mine Ban Treaty obligations, agreed to at the Third Review Conference of the treaty in June this year, was mentioned with enthusiasm. Very importantly, there were numerous condemnations of recent use of cluster munitions in Syria, Ukraine, and South





Sudan, assorted with calls for all actors in any conflict to refrain from using cluster munitions and landmines. Resolution A/C.1/69/L.5/Rev.1 on the “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction” was adopted with a vote of 160-0-17. This included remarkable positive votes from 17 states not yet on board the convention (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, China, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Lao PDR, Libya, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Mongolia, Morocco, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tonga, Turkmenistan, and the United Arab Emirates.) The resolution calls for the full universalization and thorough implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty. It contained technical updates to last year’s version and new language welcoming the outcomes of the Third Review Conference.

A small number of states expressed their long-held view that their respective “security circumstances” require them to cling to antipersonnel mines, including Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Cuba, India, Pakistan, and Republic of Korea. Further to recent announcements by the United States that it is bringing its policies in alignment with the Mine Ban Treaty except in the Korean peninsula, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines expected that the

US would be in a position to support the resolution for the first time. Instead the US abstained and shared information on the support it provides to humanitarian mine action.

During civil society statements, the Cluster Munition Coalition noted that recent casualties due to new cluster munition use in Ukraine and Syria are a grim reminder of why states, international organizations, and civil society came together to ban this indiscriminate weapon. In Syria, 97% of those recorded killed by cluster munitions were civilians. This devastating fact should renew our sense of urgency to push for full universalization of the convention.

In addition to informal intersessional meetings on both conventions in early June 2015, the next landmark event is the First Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions taking place in Dubrovnik (Croatia) from 7–11 September 2015. There is still time for a large number of states not yet on board the convention to join and participate to this event as full states parties. The Review Conference should be seen as a deadline for signatories to ratify and for others to accede—helping to further stigmatize use and ensure civilians can live free from the impact of this horrific weapon. •

## SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Joanne Mulligan | International Action Network on Small Arms

During the final ten days of First Committee, many delegations reiterated their concerns about the impact of small arms and light weapon (SALW) proliferation on international peace and security as well as human and socioeconomic development. These concerns were also expressed in two draft resolutions adopted without a vote at First Committee and in a civil society presentation delivered at the end of the thematic debate.

A/C.1/69/L.4, “Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic on small arms and light weapons and collecting them,” and omnibus resolution A/C.1/69/L.35, “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects” were both adopted without a vote. In addition, resolution A/C.1/69/L.48, “Preventing and combating illicit brokering activities,” which deals with SALW among other issues, was adopted by vote, with 174 states voting in favour and two states abstaining. Delegations also voted on preamble paragraph 8 of L.48 relating to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT); 159 states voted in favor of retaining the paragraph while eight states abstained.

The International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) expressed concern with some language in L.35, which encourages states to implement “as appropriate” the recommendations from the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS5). IANSA is concerned that this phrase weakens even further the already modest obligations under the UN Programme of Action (UNPoA) and suggested that “as appropriate” be replaced by “as reflected in the report”. IANSA also underscored the advances made at BMS5, in particular, the commitment to increase the participation of women in small arms issues and the framing of small arms as a problem not just in conflict and post-conflict settings. But it also highlighted topics that failed to gain consensus at BMS5, namely the formal recognition of the needs and rights of gun violence survivors and the inclusion of ammunition in the scope of the UNPoA.

Throughout First Committee, a sizeable proportion of delegations applauded the UNPoA as a key instrument in curbing the illicit trade in conventional arms. They emphasized the importance of the full, balanced, and effective implementation of the UNPoA,

which depends on strong international cooperation and assistance. Many urged member states, particularly the major arms producers, to ensure that the sale of SALW is limited to governments or to entities duly authorized by them, in order to protect against the illicit transfer of arms to non-state actors. In addition, various delegations underscored the importance of UN Security Council Resolution 2117, the Second Review Conference of the UNPoA in 2012, and the UN Register on Conventional Arms as well as the UN Report on Military Expenditures.

Most delegations welcomed the outcome of BMS5. Among other things, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the European Union (EU), and Jamaica welcomed the inclusion of the provision on the role of women in disarmament processes. Delegations such as the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), EU, Jamaica, Guatemala, Spain, Netherlands, and Uruguay lamented the slow pace of progress, particularly the failure at BMS5 to include ammunition in the UNPoA. UNASUR and Jamaica also pointed out that the non-

legally binding nature of the instrument is an obstacle for effective implementation. Jamaica and Uruguay further discussed issues of brokering and border controls, while some delegations noted optimism for synergy between the UNPoA and the ATT.

This year's discussions or resolutions on SALW did not demonstrate much progress on the issue. Many gaps still remain, such as the exclusion of ammunition, the destruction of surplus weapons, assistance to survivors, border controls, and the possibility of limiting global production of SALW, among others. The world situation has changed drastically since the UNPoA was adopted in 2001. The world has evolved and in order to fulfill its role, the UNPoA must also evolve and adapt to these new realities. It is hoped that the next Review Conference will aim at moving ahead, at examining ways to fill these gaps in order to make the UNPoA more effective. It is not enough to just review what has been achieved over the past years, as has been mostly the case until now. •

## ARMS TRADE TREATY

Raluca Muresan | Control Arms

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The momentum surrounding the upcoming entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) on 24 December was evident at First Committee this year, as 46 states as well as several regional blocs and international organizations mentioned the Treaty in their conventional weapons debate statements. Slovenia expressed its satisfaction with "the successful outcome of the 'race to first 50' ratifications," and the Netherlands and Jamaica called the Treaty a "wonderful Christmas present". Switzerland, which was "pleased by the vigor of the ratification process and the importance attached by States to the implementation of the ATT," echoed the views of over twenty states that stressed the importance of strongly implementing the provisions of the Treaty. Ireland reminded delegates that although the Treaty's entry into force is a great achievement, its universalization and implementation "will make the real difference".

Numerous delegates commended the ATT's positive role in the preservation of international human rights and humanitarian law and international peace and security. Chile also highlighted that the ATT is "the first treaty to recognize the link between the arms trade and gender-based violence (GBV) and violence against women and children," describing this as a significant advancement in international humanitarian and human rights law. Finland, Austria, Italy, Ireland, Sweden, and the European Union also stressed the impor-

tance of the GBV provision and the impact it will have on reducing the risk that arms will be used to commit acts of GBV. However, as Sweden pointed out, this provision can only be implemented effectively if states "update their risk assessment procedures and provide appropriate training for their licensing officers."

Several states also stressed the importance of the ATT in reducing the diversion of conventional arms and in curbing the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons. Australia, Thailand, Finland, Costa Rica, the Republic of Korea, and CARICOM urged states to strengthen the synergies between the ATT and the UN Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (UNPoA) in order to establish a "cohesive and effective global regime on conventional arms control."

To support the implementation of the ATT, several states including Australia, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the UK, have already contributed to the UN Trust Facility for Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR). Similarly, the EU has adopted "an ambitious and tangible implementation support programme" aimed to assist developing countries. Encouraging international cooperation, Jamaica called for "enhanced sharing of information, best practice and intelligence among States" to foster the implementation of the Treaty, while Sweden, Romania, and



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UNLIREC offered their assistance to the states that require it.

Several states used First Committee to announce that they are currently undergoing national legislative reviews before signing or ratifying the ATT. Israel is taking steps towards becoming a signatory state while China is “seriously considering” signing the Treaty. Similarly, the Republic of Korea and Georgia are moving towards ratification of the Treaty. Numerous states also called on those who have not signed or ratified the Treaty to do so soon. More than ten delegations expressed their gratitude for Mexico’s initiative to organize the first informal consultations for the first Conference of States Parties (CSP) and welcomed its offer to host the first CSP. Switzerland, Austria, and Trinidad and Tobago reiterated their bids to host the ATT Secretariat in advance of further discussion in Berlin later this month.

Resolution A/C.1/69/L.32/Rev.1, “The Arms Trade Treaty,” welcomed the 54 ratifications of the ATT as well as the offer by Mexico to host the first CSP, called on all states to sign and ratify the treaty “at the earliest possible date,” and asked for any state in a position to do so to provide assistance to requesting states intending to become parties to the Treaty. It was adopted as a whole with a vote of 150 in favor, 0 opposed, and 26 abstentions. A paragraph vote was called for operative paragraph 3 (“Calling upon all States that have not done so to sign”), which was retained with 145 votes in favor, two opposed, and 23 abstentions. India, Ecuador, Cuba, and Libya attributed their abstentions to the fact that the Treaty was not adopted by consensus. They also criticized the ATT’s imbalance between importing and export-

ing countries and claimed the Treaty is subjective and politicized. On a more positive note, China used its explanatory statement to indicate its support for the objectives of the Treaty and reiterate its plan to sign the ATT as soon as its internal review process is concluded.

Two other resolutions also include references to the ATT. Resolution A/C.1/69/L.48, “Preventing and combating illicit brokering activities,” recognizes in preambular paragraph 8 “the importance of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty taking measures, pursuant to their national laws, to regulate brokering taking place under their jurisdiction, in accordance with article 10 of the Treaty, which will enter into force on 24 December 2014.” This paragraph was submitted to vote and was retained with 159 votes in favor and 8 abstentions. The resolution as a whole passed with 171 in favor, and only two abstentions. Discussion about the ATT typically center on its provisions related to imports and exports, but this resolution draws further attention to other aspects of the Treaty, such as brokering.

First Committee concluded this year with a vote on resolution A/C.1/69/L.47, “Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control”. In preamble paragraph 8, it encourages states parties “to fully implement the provisions of the Treaty, including the provision on serious acts of gender-based violence.” The paragraph was subject to a vote but was retained with 139 votes in favor, none opposed, and 24 abstentions. With nearly 100 co-sponsors, this resolution was one of the most popular during this First Committee session. It was adopted as a whole with 171 votes in favour, and no abstentions or opposing votes. •

## OUTER SPACE

Garbiella Irsten | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

The final ten days of First Committee included the thematic debate on outer space issues, during which 18 states and four groups addressed the issue. In addition, three draft resolutions related to outer space were adopted by the Committee, including a new one on preventing the placement of weapons in outer space.

The Arab Group and UNASUR are examples of new actors that have shown greater interest in space issues throughout the 2014 First Committee. This increased attention has specifically been seen amongst non- and small space-faring nations that have highlighted the need of space security for sustainable development. The Non-Aligned Movement, for example, stated that

space technology “can contribute more effectively to efforts to promote the development of all countries, to conserve natural resources, and to enhance the preparedness for and mitigation of the consequences of disasters.”

The increased attention of “new” countries indicated the urgency of space security. The Arab Group, UNASUR, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), and Switzerland emphasized the lack of progress on outer space safety and the need for legally-binding instruments. This message has been echoed throughout First Committee both in plenary and outside. Many have also welcomed transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) but at the same time

highlighted that this is an intermediate step and cannot substitute a legally-binding tool. UNASUR reiterated that while political commitments and voluntary arrangements are welcomed, they cannot replace binding and long-term obligations on all states.

The most discussed TCBM initiative during this year's session was the EU's International Code of Conduct. However, the EU decided not to table its intended resolution on this subject, noting that several UN member states requested more time to study the EU's proposal for a resolution calling for the commencement of negotiations on the Code. The EU also stated that it is ready to move the process from a consultation to a negotiation phase and that it is currently consulting with member states on how to reach this phase. UNASUR and Switzerland welcomed the Code and called for the start of a multilateral approach and negotiations. Bangladesh stated that the Code could be a complementary measure to legally-binding instruments but that it in no way should divert attention away from the work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in the Conference in Disarmaments. Russia raised the point that one of the first questions that should be dealt with at such a multilateral negotiation should be whether or not weapons in space would be prohibited by the Code.

The weaponization of space was a well-debated topic all through the month of October. The NAM, Australia, DPRK, and the United States raised concerns about the development and testing of anti-satellite systems during the thematic debate. Kazakhstan stressed the danger that a situation in which some countries have "advanced space warfare technology can result in proliferation by others also wanting to acquire it, as happened in the nuclear field."

The prevention of a weaponization in space was the main topic of two of the three resolutions dedicated to outer space this year. The voting of resolution A/C.1/69/L.3, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space," received the same result as last year, 180 in favour with abstentions from the United States and

Israel. The US argues that the Russian and Chinese revised draft treaty on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space (PPWT) does not sufficiently deal with verification measures and does not prohibit the research, development, testing, producing, and storing of anti-satellite weapons. Switzerland also stressed the need for such a treaty to deal with some of these aspects, but it voted yes on the resolution.

The resolution initiated by Russia, A/C.1/69/L.14, "No first placement of weapons in outer space," passed with 126 in favour, four against, and 46 abstentions. Ukraine, US, Israel, and Georgia voted no to the resolution. The US argued that the initiative has several flaws such as no definition of weapon in outer space, other states not being able to confirm a state's political commitment, and focusing only on space-based weapons and not ground-based anti-satellite weapons.

In the EU's explanation for abstaining on the resolution, it also raised the lack of definition and argued that the resolution can be interpreted "as implicitly encouraging States to pre-emptively develop offensive space capabilities, in order to be able to react to the placement by another State of a weapon in space by placing in turn a weapon in space."

The third resolution on space, A/C.1/69/L.15, "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities," was adopted without a vote just like in 2013.

Today, only a handful of member states possess space-based technology. However more and more actors are finding their way up to space, where private corporations are particularly eager to advance space technology. The development in space activities will not halt and wait for member states to start negotiation in the CD on preventing an arms race in outer space, or for the EU to decide its next step on a Code of Conduct. It is therefore time for "a little less conversation, a little more action." •

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND SECURITY

Thomas Nash | Article 36

Resolution A/C.1/69/L.26, "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security," was adopted without a vote on 31 October, in keeping with practice in previous years. Ahead of the resolution's adoption, there were general statements from Cuba, Belarus, and Sweden (on behalf of a group of states).

Cuba noted that the use of telecommunications should be compatible with the UN Charter and pointed to violations of international law by certain states, reiterating its specific concerns around the "ZunZuneo" programme. For Cuba, human rights and the right to sovereignty are key considerations in this area.



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Sweden, speaking on behalf of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Uruguay, encouraged the group of governmental experts (GGE) on this issue to continue its work and emphasised that the Internet should remain open to facilitate the free flow of information. An open Internet is important for economic, social, and political development and a multi-stakeholder approach is needed in this area, including to protect Information Communications Technology infrastructure. “The work against threats to our freedom and security in cyberspace can only be tackled effectively through global cooperation between states as well as the private sector and civil society,” Sweden noted.

Belarus warned that cyber space is increasingly being used for crimes. Given that contemporary society cannot function without these technologies, cyber

space is now one of the key elements of humankind’s strategic infrastructure. In this way, protecting it from attacks is a key task.

The adoption of L.26 capped an active First Committee on questions related to cyber space, with a number of statements by delegations, a prominent side event hosted by the Netherlands, and the first civil society statement on cyber space in First Committee. Deliberations on this matter will no doubt intensify in the period ahead. It will be important to develop effective links between the different elements and groups that intersect on questions of cyber space. From securing individual privacy and human rights, to preventing cyber attacks that affect civilians and civilian infrastructure, to addressing wider questions of Internet governance, there are pressing imperatives for action by states, civil society, and international organisations in this area. As a group of NGOs noted in their statement to First Committee on this issue, a key priority of relevance for First Committee should be the development of an international legal framework to prevent cyber attacks. Action should begin on this without delay. •

## DISARMAMENT MACHINERY

Gabriella Irsten | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Throughout this year’s First Committee session, member states once again struggled to think of new and innovative ways to overcome blockages in the existing UN disarmament machinery. There appears to be a large consensus that this machinery is facing significant challenges, but as in years past, views differ over the origin and nature of these challenges. Ten resolutions were tabled on the disarmament machinery. Eight of these were adopted without a vote, while two called to a vote.

Resolution A/C.1/69/L.44, “Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament,” was the most contested resolution on disarmament machinery this year. The resolution reiterates its call for the convening of a high-level conference, no later than 2018, on nuclear disarmament to follow up on the progress made in this field. The resolution received marginally more support than last year; it was adopted with 135 votes in favour, 24 against, and 18 abstentions (last year’s voting pattern was 129-28-19). The resolution was mainly criticised by nuclear-armed states and states including nuclear weapons in their security doctrines. France, the United Kingdom, and United States complained that the resolution does not reflect their views expressed at the

2013 high-level meeting and does not include sufficient references to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Action Plan. Furthermore, they believe that planning another conference when the NPT Review Conference will take place next year is not consistent with the NPT and risks weakening the review cycle. The biggest changes in voting this year was Sweden moving from a no vote in 2013 to a yes vote this year, Finland moving from no to abstention, and Montenegro moving from an abstention to a yes.

The second resolution to have a recorded vote was A/C.1/69/L.37, which focuses on the open-ended working group (OEWG) on the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament (SSOD IV). It was adopted with 169 in favour and four (France, Israel, UK, and US) abstentions. The resolution calls for the convening of SSOD IV and for an organizational session to set a date for substantive sessions of the OEWG in 2015 and 2016.

In their explanation of vote the France, UK, and US explained that their abstention is based on “budgetary and substantive grounds”. Cuba, one of the resolution co-sponsors, explained in a general statement that the meeting of the OEWG should take place in mid-2015

and would respond to call for efforts to optimize UN disarmament machinery.

Unfortunately, none of the current disarmament machinery is getting any closer to commencing work. Changing methods of work or developing new mechanisms seems to be the only way to move forward on nuclear disarmament. Singapore argued in one of its statements during First Committee, “We need to

make a conscientious effort to keep the disarmament conversation going. Existing multilateral regimes must actually be implemented. With the progressively transnational nature of threats to security, it is even more imperative today to look beyond national boundaries and towards common interests.” Not engaging in new initiatives is only a way to uphold the status quo, which will only lead to further stalemate. •

## DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Nalinn Larsson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

On 31 October, First Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/69/L.15, “Relationship between disarmament and development,” without a vote. The resolution encourages achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), calls for consideration of the challenges that exist within the field of development and poverty eradication, expresses concern over increased global military spending, and urges countries to redirect resources to development needs to reduce the gaps between developed and developing countries.

In relation to the adoption of the resolution, Cuba stressed that it is unacceptable that annual global military expenditure exceeded \$1.75 trillion last year when these resources could be spent on combating poverty and to foster development. Cuba underscored that a fund should be established to dedicate at least half of today’s global military spending to instead meet economic and social needs. The UK and the US, on the other hand, argued that disarmament and development are two separate issues—that disarmament is not necessarily dependent on development and development not always being dependent on disarmament. The UK ambassador stressed that investment in militarism is “necessary” for peace missions and so disarmament does not necessarily mean that more money can be allocated to development.

Throughout this year’s First Committee most delegates have stressed the negative impact that weapons of mass destruction have on countries’ socioeconomic development. They have highlighted that security and development reinforce each other and that progress in disarmament, by eliminating or regulating weapons, can serve to advance humanitarian and developmental goals. Many delegations mentioned the gap that exists between resources allocated to military expenditure and that allocated to development, and saw it as unacceptable that the world’s military spending is so vastly exceeding that of development. Many delegates called on states to reduce their high military spending and instead redirect these resources towards

economic and social development, especially to the fight against poverty and to achieve the MDGs. Some highlighted that only 10% of the annual global military expenditure would be enough to meet all eight MDG by 2015.

Most delegates mentioning development also highlighted the negative effect that the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons (SALW) has on the stability of societies and on socioeconomic development. Countries affected by the illicit trade in SALW highlighted the high number of casualties that these weapons have caused in their countries, as well as their negative effects on human rights, health, and stability in the societies. Delegates stressed that the illicit trade of SALW is a problem that spill over borders and that a limitation of these weapons would allow states to devote more resources to economic and social development. The risk of SALW ending up in the hands of extremists and terrorists was also highlighted, as it results in insecurity and has negative consequences for development. Also landmines and the use of explosive weapons in populated areas were raised as posing threats to the security and development of countries, as they result in high number of casualties and injuries, have devastating effects on infrastructure, and lead to forced displacement—all of which impedes socioeconomic development.

In terms of how to move forward, various delegations urged countries to reconsider their high military expenditure and divert more of these resources to socioeconomic development. Even though a decrease in military expenditure might not automatically lead to more resources for development initiatives, it will free up financial, technological, and human resources that could be diverted to socioeconomic development. Many delegates also expressed hopes that the Arms Trade Treaty will be an effective way to address the illicit trade of SALW and consequently have positive effects on the socioeconomic development and stability of countries. •

# GENDER AND DISARMAMENT

Sofia Tuvestad | WILPF Sweden

When summarising this year's First Committee it is clear that while most states are moving far too slowly, or not at all, on promoting gender equality in disarmament, there is still growing momentum around this issue. We heard some strong statements this year from a number of delegations including the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Austria, Ireland, and Jamaica. These states acknowledged gendered aspects of armed violence and conflict and called for further action to promote women's participation in shaping and implementing disarmament policy.

What's more, we saw an improved text in this year's First Committee resolution on women, disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control (A/C.1/69/L.47), piloted by Trinidad and Tobago co-sponsored by 97 other states. The text includes language reflecting the women, peace, and security agenda; encouraging action to prevent arms transfers that could be used to facilitate gender-based violence (GBV) and violence against women and children, including through implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT); and encouraging states to strengthen the collection of sex and age disaggregated data on the impact of armed violence. These are meaningful changes that could facilitate more effective action.

As expected, these improvements resulted in more intense debate and negotiations during the drafting process. The 2013 version of the resolution was adopted in First Committee, as well in the General Assembly, without a vote. This proved impossible with this year's text, despite several rounds of informal and bilateral consultations. The delegation of Iran called for a recorded vote on the resolution as a whole. Yet the voting result was 171 yes with no states voting no or abstaining. A separate vote had already taken place on preambular paragraph 8, which references the ATT—but most of the 24 states that abstained on that paragraph actively voted in favour of the resolution as a whole. The push back on the ATT reference came mostly from states that have consistently argued the ATT is not a "consensus treaty" or that it is imbalanced or discriminatory. They seemed to object to calling on ATT states parties to implement this Treaty.

In order to try to reach consensus, however, Trinidad and Tobago orally revised a different paragraph—operative paragraph 7—by removing the reference to GBV. In the final written draft, this paragraph called "upon all States to develop appropriate and effective national risk assessment criteria to facilitate the prevention of the use of arms to commit gender-based violence or violence against women and girls." The strength of this paragraph is that it reflects article 7(4) of the ATT, but applies to all states, even those that are not ATT states parties. It is unfortunate that the language on GBV was removed.

The last-minute change might have come as a result of resistance from the Arab Group. As Egypt declared in its statement of behalf of the Arab Group, it is their opinion that GBV should be defined as violence directed towards women because they are women, or violence that affect women disproportionately. This is a deeply discriminatory interpretation of the concept of GBV, which in fact captures a broad range of acts of violence, having in common that they are based on socially constructed norms, perceptions, and power relations relating to gender. This can indeed include violence against women as described above. But it also includes attacks based on other forms of gender and sexuality norms and discrimination, such as attacks on homosexual men based on the fact that they are not practicing heterosexuality and as such are seen to challenge conventional dominating norms around masculinity.

It is critical that other states, together with civil society, continue to push back on interpretations that try to equate GBV with violence against women and as such disregard the widespread human suffering caused by other forms of gender-related violence. We must ensure the current momentum around gender and disarmament develops progressively and results in action that takes into account all people's human rights and security, and not just some. •

# SIDE EVENT REPORT: THE UN AND A NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE WORLD: NEW APPROACHES AND INITIATIVES

Nalinn Larsson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

On 28 October the Permanent Mission of Indonesia organized a side event together with UNFOLD ZERO to discuss some approaches and initiatives towards a nuclear weapon free world. UNFOLD ZERO showed a video that had been made to put focus on the International Day of the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

Ambassador Desra Percaya of Indonesia questioned how effective the various nuclear disarmament initiatives within the UN have been, and stressed the need to look at challenges and how best to overcome them. The importance of the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention was highlighted, and the International Day of the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons was described as a step in the right direction. Mr. Percaya also stressed the important focus on the humanitarian concern in relation to nuclear weapons, suggesting that it will contribute in educating policy makers to underscore the urgent need for nuclear disarmament, as the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only way of guaranteeing that these weapons will never be used again.

Ms. Virginia Gamba from the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs spoke of three recent trends in the field of nuclear disarmament. Firstly, the growing attention worldwide to the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, which has resulted in the fundamental legitimacy of nuclear weapons being questioned. This has been seen in the high turnout in the conferences in Oslo and Nayarit, and the upcoming one in Vienna that will carry forward this conver-

sation. The second trend mentioned is the expanding diversity and motivation of non-governmental groups, including environmentalists, human rights activists, women's organizations, religious leaders, parliamentarians, etc. Ms. Gamba stressed that this combination of many voices of interest is part of the current trend of a growing democratization of disarmament. The third trend she highlighted was the current recognition that all states share the common responsibility of nuclear disarmament, and that it requires participation of nuclear weapons states, active engagement by coalitions of member states, and broader initiatives from civil society.

Jonathan Granoff of the Global Security Institute stressed the importance of non-nuclear states to be assured that nuclear weapons will not be used against them, as a nuclear weapon attack would be a threat to the existence of us all. He also highlighted the value of the prohibition of nuclear testing. Mr. Granoff suggested that the General Assembly should call upon the Security Council to take action to prevent the use of nuclear weapons.

At the end the co-sponsors made some comments. The Ambassador of Kazakhstan stressed that political will is of highest importance in moving towards nuclear disarmament, and suggested there is a need for a universal declaration for the achievement of a nuclear weapon free world. The Ambassador of Finland stressed the need to strengthening the NPT and work towards its universalization, as well as to have inclusive discussions in which other nuclear weapon possessors participate. •

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# SIDE EVENT REPORT: THE ROLE OF EDUCATION TO FURTHER ADVANCE THE DISCUSSION ON THE HUMANITARIAN IMPACT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Allison Boehm | Peace Boat

On 20 October Peace Boat co-sponsored an event titled, "Towards Vienna: The Role of Education to Further Advance the Discussion on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons," with the NGO Committee on Disarmament Peace and Security, Ban All Nukes Generation, and the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation. The purpose of the event was to discuss disarmament and non-proliferation education and its role in the field of nuclear disarmament, as well as the upcoming conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons to be held in Vienna, Austria 8–9 December 2014. The three speakers were Ms. Caroline Woergoetter, Disarmament Counselor of the Permanent Mission of Austria to the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. John Ennis, Chief of Information and Outreach of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, and Mr. Akira Kawasaki, Executive Committee Member of Peace Boat.

Ms. Woergoetter discussed the upcoming conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons and explained that the main focus will be on the effects of a nuclear explosion, the impact on communities and people, on public health, climate change, food security, and infrastructure, as well as on the risks involved in nuclear detonation, including human error. The Vienna conference will build upon the previous two conferences held in Oslo in 2013 and Nayart in 2014. Ms. Woergoetter noted that "new information is becoming available about the risks of nuclear weapons; they are more serious than previously known, and (the risks) can never be eliminated completely." The Vienna conference will address the need and urgency to build momentum for nuclear disarmament. Lastly, Ms. Woergoetter emphasized the importance of "all stakeholders joining together on disarmament education, as this is the only way to make progress."

Mr. John Ennis, Chief of the Information and Outreach branch of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (ODA) discussed disarmament education efforts by his office and noted that in 2002 the importance of education was recognized in a First Committee resolution. He stressed the importance of the Hibakusha, the survivors of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, themselves talking about the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. Mr. Ennis highlighted UNODA's efforts to translate the Hibakusha's testimonies into several different languages. He also pointed out various interesting disarmament education projects including the 2011 Poetry for Peace Contest and the World Free

of Nuclear Weapons Art Contest. Lastly, Mr. Ennis mentioned an exciting initiative between UNODA, Peace Boat, and Hibakusha Stories; every year on US Election Day, 4 November, the three organizations host a training session at the UN for New York City teachers on what they can teach their students in their classrooms about nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Akira Kawasaki, Executive Committee Member of Peace Boat, shared his experience as the Director of Peace Boat's Hibakusha Project. This project has traveled with more than 150 Hibakusha around the world, organizing testimonies with school children and citizens in each country they visit. He explained that in partnership with local organizations, Peace Boat connects atomic bomb survivors with those who have suffered in other countries, for example Holocaust survivors or those in French Polynesia who have experienced nuclear testing "more than 100 times". Peace Boat connects these "Global Hibakusha" to one another. Onboard the ship, youth are engaged in educational programs to learn from the Hibakusha's testimonies. Mr. Kawasaki also discussed a new project of Peace Boat and Mayors for Peace called the "I was Her Age Project," working with young children and their parents to understand what it may have been like to live through the nuclear bombing. Mr. Kawasaki noted that next year will mark the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Ahead of the Vienna conference in December, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) is holding a Civil Society Forum. Mr. Kawasaki encouraged NGO participation in this forum as both an educational and advocacy opportunity ahead of the 70th anniversary.

The event concluded with a lively discussion between the speakers and participants. A granddaughter of a Hibakusha spoke about the importance of the second and third generation Hibakusha to help carry on the legacy of fighting for a nuclear free world. Mr. Ennis of UN ODA expressed that "the power of the people is often more powerful than what governments have to offer," noting the success of civil society efforts to achieve a universal ban on landmines and clusters munitions. Mr. Kawasaki noted that "holding the humanitarian event in Vienna is a big step in itself," and Mr. Ennis concluded that, "these conferences on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons are indeed having an impact at the political level." •

# 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 coordinated and edited by **Reaching Critical Will** of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).

*Contributing organisations and coalitions to this edition:*

Article 36  
Cluster Munition Coalition  
Control Arms  
International Action Network on Small Arms  
International Campaign to Ban Landmines  
International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons  
NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security  
Peace Boat  
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