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Reaching Critical Will is a programme of the
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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: Taken from a Women's International League for Peace and Freedom blog post about the first humanitarian disarmament forum in 2012 (<https://wilpf.org/moving-humanitarian-disarmament-forward/>)

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.

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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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EDITORIAL: HUMANITARIAN DISARMAMENT IS HERE TO STAY

Allison Pytlak | Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

"Humanitarian disarmament is a people-centered approach to disarmament, which focuses on civilian protection rather than traditional concepts of national security. It addresses adverse effects on humans, including gendered impacts, as well as damage to the environment."

These words are taken from a joint civil society statement delivered at the First Committee on Wednesday. Intended to frame the other civil society statements, it ended up being squeezed in just ahead of the lunch break, well ahead of the others and as delegates were leaving the conference room, and did not have the impact that was intended by its authors.

Yet, the general concept and some of its key elements are being reflected and echoed in statements delivered by governments throughout the general debate, and even in the thematic cluster on nuclear weapons, which began late Thursday afternoon. Compared to other years, more states are emphasising the importance of a holistic approach to disarmament and arms control, by linking action in those areas to their efforts to implement and reach the Sustainable Development Goals; noting the impact of arms, armed violence, and conflict on the environment; and acknowledging the gendered impact of weapons.

"Human security—our ability to protect, feed, house and support our citizens—depends upon effective disarmament. Disarmament therefore cannot exist in a vacuum; it must be part of a broader conversation about vulnerability, insecurity, and weaponisation," stated the representative of Trinidad and Tobago.

South Africa's statement in the nuclear disarmament cluster reinforced a view of security that puts people ahead of outmoded security concepts: "Instead of deterring conflict and war, as some continue to allege, [nuclear] weapons remain a constant source of insecurity and a driver of proliferation. The enormous amount of public resources directed at the production and maintenance of nuclear weapons remains in sharp contrast to those channeled towards socio-economic development, including the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Today, the cost related to the maintenance of nuclear arsenals amount to approximately more than double the development assistance provided to Africa. This is neither justifiable nor sustainable in a world where the basic human needs of billions have yet to

to be met." Other examples are provided in the articles included in this edition on the subjects of development, gender, and the environment.

The best example however is to look beyond words at action: the success of the treaties banning landmines and cluster munitions; the adoption and coming entry-into-force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; and the people-first mentality that led to the Arms Trade Treaty. UN Secretary-General Guterres writes in the introduction of *Securing our Common Future*, his agenda for disarmament welcomed by many states, that "Disarmament and arms control measures can help ensure national and human security in the 21st Century, and must be an integral part of our collective security system."

Of course, there are some that still cling to an old-fashioned and more narrow, concept of national security, or look to entities within the UN disarmament machinery that have not yielded results in decades. In the First Committee, states speak a lot about building trust and confidence; sometimes in a way that makes it seem as if these are elusive moments in time that the international community can only dream of, but are unlikely to be achieved. Some give the impression that they almost prefer it this way. The United States, and other nuclear-armed countries, for example, use the lack of trust and confidence as a rationale and justification for maintaining, and expanding, their nuclear weapons. It has put forward a new concept, "Creating the Conditions for Nuclear Disarmament" as an effort to demonstrate goodwill and an intention to pursue nuclear disarmament (eventually), but overlooks the fact that continuing to possess these weapons contributes to insecurity, and will not lead to stability. As Sweden stated when referencing the need for a nuclear weapons free world, "The fact that we have a tense and unpredictable security climate makes this task more urgent—not less."

It would be naïve to pretend that we live in a place or time of harmony, trust, and global peace, but it is also naïve to overlook that there has been a transformation in how a majority of nations now approach security and disarmament. Those that are resisting this change are rapidly becoming a minority; their excuses and double standards ring increasingly hollow. A humanitarian approach to disarmament is here to stay. •

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Katrin Geyer | Reaching Critical Will of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

During the final days of the general debate and the start of the thematic cluster on nuclear weapons, a majority of delegations expressed anxiety over heightened tension and polarisation at the international level and the detrimental impact this has on efforts towards eliminating nuclear weapons.

Delegations continued to express their firm support for the groundbreaking Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), thereby demonstrating their strong determination to eliminate nuclear weapons once and for all. Close to 40 delegations spoke to the invaluable contribution of the Treaty on the path towards a world free of nuclear weapons. Trinidad and Tobago observed that the Treaty's adoption by a majority challenged the notion that disarmament is a neglected goal of the UN. The Holy See observed that "states signing the Treaty have rejected the fallacy that 'might makes right' and its pernicious modern corollary that some nations have the right to nuclear weapons while others do not." Further testimony to the broad support are the 53 co-sponsors for Austria's draft resolution on the TPNW, which will be reported on in more detail next week.

Trinidad and Tobago stressed the value of the Treaty's positive obligations, such as victim assistance, environmental remediation, and international cooperation and assistance. Ireland noted the nuclear ban treaty's references to the gendered impacts of nuclear weapons. Liechtenstein concluded that the TPNW is the "best reason for optimism" to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

Opponents of the TPNW, such as the United States maintained that it "jumps straight to a perceived solution of nuclear disarmament without doing any hard work necessary to achieve this outcome. It contains no verification provisions". In a similar vein, Pakistan described the Treaty as a "faulted initiative by ignoring the fundamental security environment" that "will not lead to any real change, no matter how well intentioned and justified." Germany acknowledged its humanitarian impetus but stated that it would "run the risk of furthering gaps where rapprochement is needed." Some states formulated their reservations towards the Treaty more carefully. Sweden has commissioned an independent inquiry to assess the consequences of acceding the Treaty. Switzerland acknowledged the value of the instrument but stated that at this stage, it is not sure it would strengthen the non-proliferation and disarmament architecture and advance the implementation the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty's (NPT's) Article VI. Switzerland informed that it will participate as observer state in future TPNW states

parties meetings.

Iran, Liechtenstein, the Group of African States, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and Mexico noted that the TPNW complements and strengthens the NPT. Liechtenstein further noted that the TPNW complements the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in establishing clear legal norms against nuclear tests. It also remarked that nuclear-armed states' obligations under the NPT are "routinely mistaken for discretionary options or worse, entitlements." Ghana criticised that nuclear-armed states redefine their international obligations and replace existing commitments with vague security assurances in order to maintain their stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction. Palestine argued that allowing the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons and the exceptional status granted to nuclear weapons cannot be justified. Some countries that haven't signed affirmed their commitment to do so swiftly, including Trinidad and Tobago and Botswana. Delegations in the process of ratifying the TPNW equally notified First Committee, including the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Benin, Ecuador, Paraguay, Honduras, South Africa, and El Salvador. Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, South Africa, Bolivia, Cuba, and the Group of African States called upon all states to follow suit.

Various delegations, such as Indonesia, Senegal, the Community of Caribbean States (CARICOM), Ghana, and Ireland expressed their appreciation for and will to continue working with civil society organisations to ensure the total eradication of nuclear weapons. El Salvador particularly recognised the Hibakusha's efforts towards nuclear disarmament. The Group of African States reminded delegations of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize last year.

TPNW supportive and non-supportive delegations alike reiterated their concern at continued quantitative and qualitative modernisation of nuclear arsenals, which Lithuania described as "muscle flexing". Numerous delegations condemned the increase of military expenditure on nuclear weapons instead of allocating those resources towards eliminating arsenals or advancing sustainable development.

Some states amplified their commitment to nuclear weapons rather than nuclear disarmament. The United States argued that the TPNW "does not acknowledge the important role nuclear deterrence plays in protecting international security". Other opponents to the TPNW highlighted that nuclear disarmament requires

the active involvement of nuclear-armed states. Delegations thoughtfully refuted arguments for the need of a “Creating Conditions for Nuclear Disarmament (CCND)” approach, as proposed by the United States and supported by others. Interestingly, while those same states argued to have a “realistic,” “practical” or “pragmatic” approach, Ireland noted that it was rather utopian to argue that nuclear disarmament is only possible if and when security conditions permit. Almost 20 delegations expressed concern about the inclusion of nuclear weapons in states’ military or security doctrines, even against non-nuclear armed states.

Many delegations identified various tools to advance nuclear disarmament. These included overcoming the impasse in the UN Conference of Disarmament, nuclear verification frameworks, the commencement of negotiations of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), the entry into force of the CTBT, confidence-building measures, re-establishing joint early warning systems, de-alerting, and legally-binding negative security assurances. Other measures included continued enforcement of regional or bilateral agreements such as the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) or the Budapest Memorandum. Delegations further expressed broad support for further concrete steps towards the complete denuclearisation

of the Korean peninsula.

More than 20 delegations called on all parties for continued commitment to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Along with the United States and Saudi Arabia objecting to JCPOA last week, this week, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Israel supported the United States’ decision to withdraw from the agreement. The UAE was concerned about Iran’s ambitions to develop weapons of mass destruction, and Israel called upon the international community to condemn Iran’s ballistic missile tests and to show “zero tolerance”.

The vast majority of states expressed their support to preserve and expand nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZ). The Arab Group has tabled its resolution requesting the UN Secretary-General to convene a conference towards establishing a legally-binding treaty to create a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction with the participation of all countries in the region. Over 20 delegations expressed their support for these efforts. Israel however strongly opposed such initiative and accused supporters of holding the First Committee hostage, reiterating that a peaceful Middle East cannot be “fulfilled without recognition, reconciliation and the cessation of acts of terrorism.”

CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Allison Pytlak | Reaching Critical Will of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

Discussion on the subject of chemical weapons continued largely along the same themes as had been discussed during the first week of general debate and again was the focus of many rights of reply.

Bolivia, Canada, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, and Bangladesh stressed the importance of accountability in attributing responsibility for chemical weapons use. Bolivia insisted on having a research mechanism with clear mandates that can research objectively and impartially, and with transparency in a depoliticised way; a point that was emphasised by many other countries from the region in their general debate statements during the previous week, and supported by Bangladesh during the second week. Iran stated that the divisions regarding the mandate of the Organisation of the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) must be settled or is at risk of becoming further polarised and may inflict lasting damage on the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which should be avoided. Belarus condemned any use of chemical weapons but said it objects to any decisions that are confrontational in nature or measures that undermine trust among member states. Switzerland, Spain, and Liechtenstein further emphasised that the

repeated use of chemical weapons in the Syrian conflict and other situations constitutes a serious violation of international law, including international humanitarian law. Liechtenstein noted that the Security Council “...too often fails to live up to its responsibility in this regard. But the increasing willingness of the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies to step up should be a reason for hope.” Slovenia stated that the use of chemical weapons is unacceptable and represents a breach in international law amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Belgium, Haiti, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, and Bangladesh expressed concern over the use of chemical weapons generally; Timor-Leste referenced use in Syria and the indiscriminate suffering it has caused, including to children and women. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said it remains deeply concerned by the repeated use of chemical weapons, notably in Syria and that ICRC field teams also have treated victims of chemical weapons in Iraq. Spain, Slovenia, and Bulgaria referenced use in the United Kingdom. Syria also condemned using chemical weapons and said that it joined the CWC to prove to the world its commitment on this point.

Despite the harsh conditions it faces, Syria said that it has met its commitments and destroyed chemical weapons sites. It registered its continued belief that other countries, notably “terrorist supporting” ones, and with the cooperation of Libya, Turkey, and Qatar, are responsible for chemical weapons attacks inside Syria and for placing blame on the Syrian government. Libya denied this during a right of reply; Syria clarified that it did not assert that Libya produced the weapons but enabled their transfer.

The United States, in a right of reply, warned that if Syria uses chemical weapons again there would be a clear response from the United States and its allies.

A joint statement from Human Rights Watch and Green Cross International called on member states to pursue full universality of the CWC; press for full implementation; and verify on-going safe destruction of declared chemical weapons in the United States. •

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

Filippa Lentzos | King's College London

Eighteen states referenced biological weapons in the second week of the General Debate. Most took the opportunity to reaffirm their support for the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, and to emphasise the treaty's importance for countering the hostile use of biology.

Reference was made to the Secretary-General's report on “Current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts”. In the biological field, the report highlights how scientific advances could undermine the norm against biological weapons. It notes that many of the challenges to synthesising viruses and bacteria in the laboratory have been overcome. Further, that genetic modification of biological agents can improve their pathogenicity, circumvent host immunity, enhance transmissibility and host range, improve antimicrobial and drug resistance, and boost their environmental stability. The report also notes that developments in production technologies have reduced production signatures, meaning that less space and time are needed to develop biological weapon agents, thus narrowing windows for detection and interdiction. Finally, it reports that advances, in areas such as nanoparticles and the sophisticated modelling of dispersal patterns using aerobiology techniques, have also contributed to the increased ease with which biological agents can now be delivered.

In the panel on the “Current state of affairs in the field of disarmament and arms control”, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms Izumi Nakamitsu, noted that the scientific advances in the biological field, coupled with the still-unanswered challenges to the norm against chemical weapons in Syria and elsewhere, “have given rise to new concerns about the increasing likelihood of biological warfare.” She stressed the potential severity of such an eventuality, “The use of a weaponised biological agent could bring unimaginable devastation and suffering to human populations.” To address this potential threat, the Secretary-General is increasing capacities and readiness, within existing mandates, to respond to the use of biological weapons. To that end, the Office for Disarmament Affairs aims to establish a small operational capacity to conduct effective and credible investigations into the alleged use of biological weapons. It is currently reaching out to member states to encourage offers of training, equipment, and targeted nominations of experts to the roster of the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons. Through a series of workshops and stakeholder meetings, the Office for Disarmament Affairs is also developing a framework to ensure a coordinated international response to the use of biological weapons. A table-top exercise with relevant UN Secretariat entities and international organisations is planned for 2019 to test the draft framework.

In another right of reply, Syria again made references to Georgia hiding secret biological weapons labs in viola-

OUTER SPACE

Jessica West | Project Ploughshares

During general debate this week, the Democratic Republic of Congo stressed that security in the global domain of outer space requires concerted, collective action. But the type of action required is contentious. Factious divide has long held sway between those favouring new legal mechanisms and those prioritising political and normative measures to enhance transparency and confidence building (TCBM). Effectively, progress on both sides has been held hostage. Delivering the civil society statement on outer space, Project Ploughshares' Executive Director Cesar Jaramillo noted that today there are neither norms nor laws to prevent an arms race in outer space, while technical capabilities and policy rhetoric continue to escalate. Nonetheless, there are tentative signs that common ground on arms control is slowly taking shape.

The 20 government statements that referenced the security of outer space expressed a collective desire to prevent a looming arms race and support for a legal mechanism to do so. To this end, the update by Brazilian Ambassador Antonio Patriota, who chairs the Group of Government Experts (GGE) on further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS), is encouraging. Tasked with identifying elements for a future treaty, he reported that initial meetings have emphasised mutual understanding and commonalities and acknowledged the role of TCBMs.

Effort to transcend misgivings related to previous treaty proposals by broadening the discussion is evident in references to issues such as self-defence and monitoring. Patriota pointed to participation in discussions by many states that had previously expressed reservations as a positive sign.

Canada's statement is illustrative of this. Emphasising that responsible norms of behaviour and international cooperation are "essential in ensuring the peaceful and sustainable use of outer space," Ambassador McCarney expressed optimism that the GGE will identify complementary elements for a potential legal instrument, while commending the ability of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) to achieve consensus on long-term sustainability guidelines. It is a reminder that security in outer space stretches beyond a single instrument as well as the mandate of the First Committee itself: it is not a single note exercise but requires a chorus of interacting efforts.

And yet, it is on the question of arms control where progress has been most fraught. This is harmful. Lebanon recalled that the "collective faith" between peace, security, development, and human rights embedded in the Charter of the United Nations is underpinned by global disarmament. Uses of outer space epitomize this faith. It must not be armed. •

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FULLY AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS

Mary Wareham | Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

Interest is building in pursuing new international law to determine the acceptable levels of autonomy in weapons systems. At least eight states raised killer robots in their statements to the second week of UNGA First Committee: Belgium, Canada, Ecuador, Israel, Liechtenstein, Slovenia, Spain, and Tunisia, as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

In its first statement on the matter, Liechtenstein found that “A number of technical developments clearly point to a need for new legal obligations, in particular in the area of lethal autonomous weapon systems. Liechtenstein supports efforts to establish binding standards to ensure a human component in the decision making processes of such systems.”

In a reference to the August Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) meeting on lethal autonomous weapons systems, Liechtenstein found that “the principled resistance of very few States should not prevent the large majority from establishing and benefitting from new standards in this area – as it did not on many other important disarmament questions in the past.” It looks forward to “stronger collective action” in this area.

Liechtenstein is the third European state after Austria and the Holy See to call for new treaty. Tunisia also commented on killer robots for the first time, stating that autonomous weapons must be regulated before they are used. Ecuador said that partial regulations on killer robots will be insufficient to address concerns. Slovenia stressed the need for human control over all weapon

systems.

Canada said that the pace of CCW deliberations are “moving ahead at a reasonable pace and in a constructive manner through the CCW” while Spain said last meeting found “the basis for progress.”

On Friday, 19 October, the New York Times published a special edition on artificial intelligence, including a story entitled “Will There Be a Ban on Killer Robots?” The article cites the UN Secretary-General’s description of killer robots as “morally repugnant.” It concludes with a quote from one of the 26 states calling for a ban, Austria. Ambassador Thomas Hajnoczi said Austria objects to fully autonomous weapons as “You’re delegating the decision to kill to a machine” and “a machine doesn’t have any measure of moral judgment or mercy.”

This week, the ICRC urged states to tackle the “difficult question” of “what type and degree of human control is needed to ensure compliance with international law, and ethical acceptability?” It repeated its position that “limits are necessary for addressing legal, ethical and humanitarian concerns” raised by killer robots.

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots convened a side event together with Austria on 17 October. The following day it delivered a statement to First Committee that called on “responsible governments to act promptly and pursue multilateral negotiations on a new ban treaty.” The Campaign said it expects “nothing less” than a treaty to retain meaningful human control over weapons systems and the use of force and stands ready to cooperate

EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS IN POPULATED AREAS

Anna de Courcy Wheeler | International Network on Explosive Weapons

As First Committee moved into its second week, Indonesia, San Marino, and Haiti raised concerns over the use of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA), alongside the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW).

These speakers focused attention on the devastating impact on civilians caused by the use of explosive weapons in urban and other populated areas. San Marino highlighted the high numbers of civilian casualties and the impacts on infrastructure that leaves civilians deprived of medical care and food and results in forced displacement, and called on states to limit the impact of military operations on civilians. Haiti and Indonesia similarly

flagged the dangers of explosive weapons and explosive devices.

The ICRC also drew attention to the impact of explosive weapons on civilians, saying that through its work on the frontlines of conflict it has continued to witness “high levels of civilian death and injury (including lifelong disabilities), destruction of critical civilian infrastructure and consequent disruption of services essential to the survival of the civilian population (such as vital health care and water and electricity supply), and displacement”. Noting that these effects are reasonably foreseeable, the ICRC emphasised that warring parties have a “legal and moral duty to take measures to avoid them”. The ICRC also said that that though hostilities are increasingly



being fought in populated areas, belligerents have not adapted their choice of weapons and means of warfare to these environments, and that heavy explosive weapons are not appropriate for use in populated areas due to their wide-area effects. Citing the “significant likelihood of indiscriminate effects”, the ICRC reiterated its call on states and parties to armed conflict to avoid the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

INEW echoed this call to action in its statement to First Committee, which highlighted the “high levels of death, injury and trauma” as well as “severed and long-lasting damage and destruction to essential infrastructure” caused by the use of explosive weapons in populated ar-

eas. It also referenced the consistent priority given to this issue in the UN Secretary Generals reports on the protection of civilians in armed conflict as well as his New Disarmament Agenda. In particular, INEW raised the need for the development of new international standards, such as an international political declaration, as well as clear policy and operational guidance to aid armed forces in decisions over the choice of explosive weapons, and how they are used. INEW urged all states to take urgent action to better protect civilians in conflict. •

PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Wim Zwijnenburg | PAX

In the debate over military conduct in armed conflict, environmental damage and conflict pollution caused by wars and armed conflicts gained significant attention in the last decade. The annual UN Day on Protection of the Environment in Times of War and Armed Conflict on 6 November helped to put a spotlight on the far-reaching impacts on ecology and human health. Both past and on-going conflicts are telling compelling tales of the devastating environmental destruction caused by oil well fires, military toxic waste, and destruction of critical infrastructure. Discussions around military conduct could also benefit from the expected updates of the ICRC’s Guidelines for Military Manuals and Instructions on the Protection of the Environment in Times of Armed Conflict.

2018 reminds us how relevant the debate is on military tactics, the use of particular weapons and the impact of toxic remnants of war. The on-going fight by Turkish and Iranian troops against Kurdish armed groups on the borderlands of Iraq caused severe environmental destruction. Blistering heatwaves in northern Iraq, combined with increased droughts made the Kurdish mountains into a tinderbox. Artillery bombardments, airstrikes, and illumination sniper rounds caused widespread wildfires destroying at least 500,000 acres of lands in the past three years. The wildfires killed firefighters, destroyed villages, displaced thousands of people, and contributed to the loss of pastoral lands.¹ In Libya, fighting in the so-called “oil-crescent” resulted in significant oil fires at the storage tankers; while in Yemen, the targeting of water infrastructure exacerbated the already devastating cholera outbreak, affecting at least one million people.

This year also marked small but meaningful steps of progress to address the environmental impacts of conflict pollution. Last year, the UN Environmental Assembly adopted by consensus Resolution 3.1 and its implemen-

tation process has led to UN Environment supporting the Iraqi government in cleaning up the oil pollution caused by the scorched-earth tactics of the so-called Islamic State.² On-going scientific research, including among military practitioners, on environmental remediation and mitigation of munitions impacts and military toxics is making significant progress. Explosives and bullets often contain toxic substances and heavy metals that can have long-lasting impacts on the environment. In the US alone, more than a billion dollars per year is spend on cleaning up military sites.³ There are important lessons to be learned from here that can foster understanding of wartime pollution from military toxics and health risks to civilians resulting from intense munitions use in densely populated urban areas, or from explosions of ammunition storage facilities.

The progress in multilateral debates and responses should also be reflected in the work of First Committee, as the linkages between military conduct, weapons development and use, and their direct and long term impact on the environment are intrinsically linked with global challenges and threats to sustainable peace. •

¹Bellingcat, Burning Borderlands: Open-source monitoring of conflict caused wildfire in Iraq, 2018, <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/mena/2018/09/11/burning-borderlands-open-source-monitoring-conflict-caused-wildfires-iraq/>.

²UN Environment, “Iraq officials trained in assessing oil contaminated sites from the ISIL conflict”, 2018, <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/press-release/iraq-officials-trained-assessing-oil-contaminated-sites-isil>.

³ProPublica, Bombs in the Backyard, 2017, <https://projects.propublica.org/bombs/#b=22.724464758385405,-135.213664923563,45.83565409252354,-76.32694617356299&c=shrink>.

LANDMINES

Amelie Chayer | International Campaign to Ban Landmines

All the delegations that spoke about the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention (or Mine Ban Treaty) last week supported its universalisation, called for its full implementation, or explained their efforts on demining and assistance to victims.

Cameroon and Spain, as well as the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), called on all states to join the Treaty.

Belgium emphasised the importance of gender-sensitive assistance to victims and encouraged a cross-cutting approach across relevant conventions, a call echoed by Spain. Cambodia commended the “firm solidarity” among all states parties and other stakeholders contributing to the objective of a mine-free world.

Haiti and Slovenia deplored the important numbers of victims of antipersonnel mines and Haiti called for thorough global implementation of the Treaty. Similarly, Botswana urged “full implementation of the Maputo Action Plan that sets critical milestones” while Tajikistan said the efficient implementation of the Treaty is crucial. Cote d’Ivoire and Ecuador recalled that the vast majority of landmine victims are civilians.

The Democratic Republic of Congo outlined the measures it takes to implement the Treaty and stated its intention to complete mine clearance in 2021. Sri Lanka noted its recent accession to the Treaty.

Myanmar, where the armed forces have used antipersonnel mines on a regular basis throughout the last 20 years, called for collective and meaningful engagement towards the Mine Ban Treaty “to contribute to our future task ahead” although did not specify what that task referred to.

Afghanistan explained that it remains one of the most mined countries in the world, and it shared its expertise about the threat posed by improvised explosive devices. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines reminded delegations that any device—improvised or manufactured—that can explode due to the presence, proximity, or contact of a person is an antipersonnel mine and is covered by the scope of the Mine Ban Treaty. •

CLUSTER MUNITIONS

Amelie Chayer | Cluster Munition Coalition

All the delegations that mentioned cluster munitions during the second week of general debate supported the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM).

Cameroon, Ecuador, Lebanon, Senegal, Spain, and Sri Lanka called for further universalisation of the CCM, with Cameroon noting that cluster munitions continue to kill and maim people every day. Ecuador characterised these weapons as “particularly cruel”. The Cluster Munition Coalition and the International Committee of the Red Cross also encouraged all states to join the Convention.

Slovenia announced that all its stockpiles of cluster munitions have now been destroyed.

Spain suggested that increased synergies could be developed between the CCM, Mine Ban Treaty, and Arms Trade Treaty, especially on the topic of assistance to victims. Spain also invited states to consider using its national implementation legislation as a possible model, as it covers all three treaties and prohibits investments.

Sri Lanka, the current president of the Convention, said the use of cluster munitions was in “clear violation of the cardinal principles of international humanitarian law”, and it stated its unequivocal commitment to end “the use and prevalence of these destructive, indiscriminate and inhumane weapons.”

Myanmar, a state not party to the Convention, said that “we need to work together” and to demonstrate a “meaningful engagement” on the issue of cluster munitions. •



SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Lucía Centellas | International Action Network on Small Arms

During the second week of the First Committee general debate, states continued to touch on the many problems that small arms and light weapons (SALW) facilitate—including transnational crime, sexual violence, trafficking of humans and of drugs, conflict, human rights violations, and the hampering of development.

Burkina Faso, Cameroon, and Afghanistan also expressed concern about SALW fueling terrorist groups. Afghanistan called on relevant parties to take full responsibility for controlling the access of weapons to terrorist organisations. Cameroon said multinational efforts have reduced the power of Boko Haram, and coordinated actions are needed to successfully end recruitment to violent extremist groups and bring about sustained growth in the Lake Chad Basin. They hoped for the support of the international community in this regional effort.

The delegations of Trinidad and Tobago and Senegal welcomed the inclusion of references to ammunition in the outcome document of the Third Review Conference (RevCon3) on the UN Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (UNPoA) that was held in June 2018. Switzerland said the measure to strengthen the safe and secure management of ammunition that is included in the UN Secretary-General's new disarmament agenda "Securing Our Common Future," is essential. Serbia announced that a roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024 was adopted at a summit earlier in the year, and the country is in the process of drafting a national action plan in accordance with the roadmap.

While a few states mentioned the importance of stockpile security, Sri Lanka also called for weapons collection and destruction, and Palestine expressed concern over by the ever-increasing production of weapons, and the wasteful expenditures on them. Oman and San Marino also decried this waste of resources.

At an interactive panel on October 17, the International Committee of the Red Cross lamented the grim humanitarian consequences of the wide spread availability and use of SALW, including damage to services beyond repair, displacement of people, and deaths. A representative for the UN's Peacebuilding Fund said \$40 million in funds will be dedicated to peace building activities, and a new window on SALW called "SALIENT" will become operational if it receives proper support and further resources. The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs noted that a conference next year on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16.4 will provide an intergovernmental opportunity to discuss the illicit trade in SALW and actions to address it.

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/unoda-web/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/2018-06-17-Concept-note-MPTF-Small-Arms.pdf>

As part of the civil society presentations held midweek, Dr. Natalie Goldring of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) highlighted the important commitments states made at RevCon3 on almost all of the six key issues that IANSA had pressed for in the lead-up to the conference, including gender, ammunition, gun destruction, and sustainable development. To move forward after RevCon3, IANSA called for greater sustained and integrated work across relevant agendas—including the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda, the SDGs, the UNPoA, the UN Firearms Protocol, and the Arms Trade Treaty. IANSA also called for continued and increased assistance for civil society in order to be fully effective in assisting states in implementing UN agreements. •

INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRADE

Aaron Lainé | Control Arms

As the general debate continued into the second week of First Committee, 20 states referenced the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in their statements, many highlighting its important role in curbing the illicit trafficking of arms and reducing human suffering. Trinidad and Tobago and Mexico both asserted that the ATT, if implemented in good faith, could reduce human suffering caused by illegal and irresponsible arms transfers, improve regional security and stability, as well as promote accountability and transparency by states parties. Similarly, Bulgaria

noted that "the international norm on responsible trade in arms set by the ATT plays an important role in preventing atrocities, curbing terrorism and promoting international security."

Senegal, Benin, Bulgaria, among others, stressed the value of ATT universalisation. Namibia, which signed the ATT in September 2014, announced progress towards universalisation in the near future. Canada, another country expected to join the Treaty soon, was "heartened

by the work being undertaken, although there is a need to further clarify and focus our efforts within the ATT". Positively, Lebanon announced its progress towards ATT ratification, hailing it as a "significant step forward" for the Middle East and North Africa region. Currently, Palestine is the only ATT state party in the region.

Some states spoke of ATT implementation, including regional cooperation, described by Serbia as being of "paramount importance", including for ensuring compliance with ATT. Such an approach was taken in the Western Balkans to establish an effective regional coordination mechanism for small arms and light weapons export control—the Centre for Small Arms and Light Weapons in Southeast Europe. It has contributed to "regional confidence-building, transfer of knowledge and best practices and information exchange". During the civil society statements, Control Arms encouraged governments to rigorously implement and adhere to the Treaty's provisions in order to stop arms transfers that fuel human suffering.

A few states including Slovenia, Greece, and Benin recognised synergies between the ATT and other disarmament instruments, particularly the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNPoA).

A record seventy-seven states co-sponsored the ATT resolution, introduced this year by Latvia as president of the fifth Conference of States Parties to the ATT. This sets a high bar for years to come.

The second week of First Committee ended with another key moment for the ATT, as Suriname ratified the Treaty on 19 October, bringing the total number of States Parties to 98. Haiti is now the only Caribbean state outside of the ATT. •

CYBER

Allison Pytlak | Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

References to cyber during the remainder of the general debate tended to either express concern over cyber conflict or indicate preferences for forward action on this issue in the United Nations.

Belgium, Sri Lanka, Lebanon, and Lithuania described the changing shape of conflict and the rise of new challenges that result from technological change. Indonesia said it strongly promotes the peaceful use of the Internet. Belarus supports the resolution to be presented by the Russian Federation on cyber security.

Bangladesh—who hosted a high-level event on cyber security during the opening of the General Assembly—said it takes particular interest in ensuring the application of relevant international law for an "open, secure and inclusive cyberspace" and underscored the importance of compliance with norms agreed through inter-governmental processes for regulating responsible state behaviour, including the development of further norms and standards. It stressed that the voices and concerns of developing countries must be factored into any process; a point that it had made during the high-level event.

Bulgaria acknowledged the need for new rules to respond to new challenges and supports the development of universal norms and principles, as well as confidence-building measures. Liechtenstein stated that the UN Charter does not cease to apply in cyberspace and the applicability of existing legal obligations in cyberspace is an "indispensable component of our future discussions, and indeed a precondition to identify possible legal

gaps." It supports further discussion in this area, undertaken on a "regular and inclusive" format.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and a joint civil society statement delivered by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) also stressed inclusiveness in future discussions as well as encouraged further research on the human impact of cyber operations. The ICRC said that any capability that states develop in cyber space must remain within the limits imposed by law but acknowledged that common understandings are needed. While supporting the applicability of international humanitarian law in cyber space, the ICRC was careful to point out that doing so should not be interpreted as encouraging the weaponisation or militarisation of cyber space. The civil society statement also expressed concern about militarisation of cyber space and advocated for approaches that would support cyber peace, such as positive obligations and not discussing cyber space in a sanitised or faceless way.

On 15 October, the mission of Austria hosted a side event considering the application of international law in cyber space—which has been a key question dogging UN discussions on the issue. The expert presenters helped to identify and explore some of the main points of disagreement; hopefully contributing to common understandings and general awareness-raising on one of the finer points of this issue. •



GENDER

Katrin Geyer | Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Fifteen delegations made references to women or the need to include gender perspectives in disarmament deliberations during the second week of the First Committee, that included the end of general debate and start of the thematic cluster on nuclear weapons. The subject of gender and disarmament was also the topic of two widely attended side events organised by the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group, and the Permanent Missions of Ireland and Sweden, and Control Arms. The interactive panel on the "Current state of affairs in the field of disarmament and arms control" dedicated considerable attention to gender considerations in their discussions.

During the general debate, some delegations, such as Lebanon, Namibia, and Slovenia, highlighted the need to work towards gender parity in all disarmament efforts. Canada noted that after having hosted a workshop on gender and disarmament in Geneva, many missions and civil society organisations shared a strong desire to advocate for the incorporation of gender perspectives in First Committee resolutions. Trinidad and Tobago, a long-standing champion of advancing gender perspectives in First Committee and beyond, argued that "Gender is an undeniable factor in peace and security. Women play a crucial leadership role in the ability of communities to counter violence and insecurity. Women must play a similarly crucial role in disarmament."

In the same vein, the United Arab Emirates reiterated the need for women's engagement at all decision-making levels and cited national initiatives to further advance this objective. Slovenia noted that the protection of women's rights is a priority for its foreign policy. Following the briefing by the Chair of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) expert preparatory group, Australia and Latvia welcomed the report's references to gender balance in all processes leading up to possible treaty negotiations.

Similar to the first week, states, including San Marino, pointed at the disproportionate impact of small arms and light weapons (SALW) on women due to their hugely destabilising effects on society. San Marino, Trinidad and Tobago, and others stressed the role of SALW in exacerbating the risk of gender-based and sexual violence. Senegal and Trinidad and Tobago welcomed the inclusion of gender considerations in the outcome document of the Third Review Conference on the Programme of Action and recognised that the 2016 Biennial Meeting of States, in the lead up to the Third Review Conference, laid the foundation for such significant progress.

Delegations addressed the gendered impacts of other types of weapons. Trinidad and Tobago noted that the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the potential use of nuclear weapons remain a threat to the pursuit of sustainable development and gender equality. The New Agenda Coalition expressed grave concern at gendered impacts of the potential use of nuclear weapons. During the nuclear cluster, Ireland noted the nuclear ban treaty's ground-breaking references to the gendered impacts of nuclear weapons. Belgium stressed the need to include a gender perspective in the provision of assistance to victims of antipersonnel mines and Timor-Leste highlighted that the indiscriminate use of chemical weapons in Syria has affected vulnerable groups of society, including women.

Trinidad and Tobago announced the tabling of its biennial resolution since 2010 on Women, Disarmament, Non-proliferation and Arms Control, and noted that this year's resolution will reflect current developments in the field. Canada informed that its tabled resolution on the FMCT includes language recognising the importance of women's participation in all processes for the advancement of the FMCT. •

ARMED DRONES

Elizabeth Minor | Article 36

During First Committee's General Debate this year, seven states mentioned armed or military drones in their statements. These were Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Ireland, Nepal, Portugal, and Trinidad and Tobago. Cuba, Ecuador, Ireland and Portugal spoke on armed drones at First Committee last year, but Chile, Nepal and Trinidad and Tobago have not raised the subject before. As in previous years, no resolutions have been proposed on armed drones in First Committee this year.

Trinidad and Tobago raised concerns around civilian harm from the use of armed drones, their implications for international peace and security, and spoke against the ethical, legal, and humanitarian consequences of uses that are "incompatible with international law."

Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Nepal, and Portugal highlighted armed drones within the context of other emerging technologies and concerns, including autonomous weapons and the weaponisation of cyber and outer space.

Nepal called for strong national and international regulatory frameworks and the promotion of responsible behaviour amongst states and non-state actors, highlighting the potential for ethical and moral concerns from misuse. Portugal proposed transparency, and either adapting existing law or developing new frameworks, for the goals of protecting civilians and human rights. Chile highlighted the complexities and challenges to international humanitarian law and human rights generated by drones. Cuba called for the regulation of armed drones alongside the prohibition of autonomous weapons. Ecuador proposed the need for regulation in the context of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), and observed that the regulation of trade alone would not be sufficient.

Regarding trade, Ireland reported that states devoted increased attention to "Unmanned Aerial Vehicles" in meetings of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), which Ireland co-chaired this year. The MTCR's aim is to restrict the spread of delivery systems for nuclear weapons, including ballistic missiles and drones. Though not mentioned in Ireland's statement, this increased attention may be due in part to a US proposal to downgrade restrictions on drone exports within the MTCR.

In the civil society presentations, Non-Violence International Southeast Asia presented a joint statement on behalf of 54 organisations, from 20 countries, and the regions of Europe, North America, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. More organisations from more countries endorsed this year's statement than ever before.

The organisations highlighted testimony from a family affected by a drone strike in Yemen, and noted the harm caused in communities by current drone use, as well as ethical and legal concerns, and the risks of some states' complicity in others' illegal strikes. They welcomed the common understanding that drones are included within the provisions of the Arms Trade Treaty and encouraged stronger export controls. They stressed that states must also, however, move beyond issues of trade to actively decide what role—if any—drone technologies should play in the use of force, and articulate what the specific limits and standards for their use are. The statement called for a progressive, inclusive, international process to be developed on this issue, welcoming the UN Secretary-General's commitment in his Agenda for Disarmament that UN institutions would support states to undertake such a process. •

DEVELOPMENT

Ariana Smith | Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy

This week, as the general debate continued, several delegations again referred to the link between disarmament and development with particular emphasis on the need to divert excessive military spending to sustainable development and poverty reduction. The delegation of Switzerland spoke of closely integrating development considerations with the work of the First Committee.

Multiple delegations including Lebanon, Bolivia, and Bangladesh discussed their concerns over expanding military budgets—particularly those of the United States and other nuclear weapon states (NWS). Lebanon and San Marino expressed particular alarm regarding

the dedication of excessive funding to new weaponry, stating that such expenses hurt positive developmental agendas. Modernising existing weapon stocks also presents a serious threat, Burkina Faso and Peru stated.

Nuclear weapon states need to abolish their policies of nuclear deterrence, said the delegations of Bolivia and South Africa. The NWS should then divert the money recouped into strengthening economic and social development. Many member states—including the Côte d'Ivoire, El Salvador, Ghana, Oman, and Paraguay—consistently called on each other to reallocate their weapon budgets to sustainable development.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) said that reducing arms expenditures overall is crucial for developing countries in particular to address their socio-economic needs. The Côte d'Ivoire emphasized that all states need to engage in disarmament for the regime to be successful.

Citing the Preamble of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as well as Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 (both of which promote peace through arms reduction and diverting resources to human and economic development), the Holy See urged governments to earmark a "sizable portion" of disarmament savings for the impoverished. The delegation of Palestine stressed that just 20 per cent of the globe's estimated \$1,700 billion annual investment in the military-industrial complex could end world poverty. Honduras and Timor-Leste also cited SDG 16 as an illustration of the nexus between peace and sustainable development.

Later in the week, the Committee moved into its thematic debate on nuclear weapons. Member states including Afghanistan called for the immediate destruction of nuclear weapons, in part because of their negative socio-economic impacts. South Africa's delegation highlighted that the costs related to maintaining global nuclear arsenals equal more than double the amount of development assistance provided to the African continent. "This is neither justifiable nor sustainable in a world where the basic human needs of billions have yet to be met," said South Africa. Many states—the DRC, among others—affirmed their rights to pursue peaceful purposes for nuclear energy as essential for development while denouncing investment in weapons.

Finally, multiple delegations' statements also focused on the humanitarian impact of promoting disarmament in conjunction with development. Ghana and Myanmar stressed that the reduction of human suffering is a vital component of sustainable development and essential to consider within disarmament regimes. •

DISARMAMENT EDUCATION

Matthew Bolton | International Disarmament Institute, Pace University

In *Securing our Common Future*, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres highlights the importance of disarmament "education and training opportunities ... in order to empower young people to be a force for change and disarmament." He specifically notes disarmament education's contribution to the "Quality Education", required by Sustainable Development Goal, "on peace and non-violence, conflict resolution, sustainable development, gender equality, economic justice, human rights and tolerance of cultural diversity."

Two years ago, in Resolution A/RES/71/57, the General Assembly encouraged all States to report on their disarmament and non-proliferation activities to the Secretary-General to aid in the preparation of his July 2018 report (A/73/119) on the topic. However, only five states (Cuba, El Salvador, Japan, Madagascar and Mexico) provided submissions. By contrast, seven UN agencies and other multilateral organisations and 34 civil society and academic institutions reported on their work to the Secretary-General.

While civil society offers a "significant proportion of advocacy and instruction", said Sydney Korman and Terrie Soule in the Joint Civil Society Statement on Disarmament Education on 18 October, "Member states must also adhere to their obligations for disarmament education." In particular, they identified "a lack of funding and few professional opportunities for youth who are passionate about disarmament issues, leaving them ultimately disengaged."

As a result, Soule and Korman, undergraduate students at Pace University speaking on behalf of nine civil society and academic institutions, underscored "the importance for states and civil society to provide education not only about disarmament, but for disarmament." They welcomed the inclusion of "the importance peace and disarmament education" in the Preamble of the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. "If targeted well," Soule and Korman said, "disarmament education can help empower the greater participation of youth, women, survivors of violence and people from the Global South in peace and security policymaking." They encouraged states to "support efforts to establish platforms for youth engagement" and "be proactive in sharing what you are doing."

Korman and Soule are not alone in raising the importance of disarmament education in First Committee. Disarmament, said the representative of the Holy See, requires "a change of fundamental attitude, a movement from fear to trust"; "To build this new culture of peace, extensive investment in peace and disarmament education is needed."

Disarmament and nonproliferation education is "imperative," said Japan, to "pass on the threat of the diverse nuclear risks, the devastation that was caused by the use of nuclear weapons, and the necessary steps to overcome these challenges." In two statements on 9 and 19 October, Japan highlighted the need to cultivate "critical thinking skills", while "learning about the humanitarian

about the humanitarian consequences of a nuclear detonation as well as proliferation.”

In her statement on behalf of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), Dr. Natalie Goldring, said that “At all levels, local, national, regional, and global, we believe that education is – and will remain – critical.” CELAC praised the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in

Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC).

The UN Peacebuilding Support Office and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) both emphasised the importance of disarmament education and the voices of young people. Similarly, Jamaica emphasised the role of disarmament education in encouraging the involvement of young diplomats and youth, as well as promoting gender equality in disarmament. •

SIDE EVENT REPORT: PROMOTING GENDER-RESPONSIVE DISARMAMENT AND SECURITY

Katrin Geyer | Reaching Critical Will of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

At a very well attended and gender-balanced side event on 15 October, the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group posed as a guiding question, how can the UN system, member states and other stakeholders act to improve women’s participation and apply gender considerations in the disarmament machinery?

Ms. Nakamitsu, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, argued that applying gender analyses to disarmament issues challenges traditional security orthodoxies underpinning the utility of weapons and challenges specific expressions of masculinities and entrenched narratives related to militarism. She highlighted the need to analyse the gendered impacts of different types of weapons, and maintained that strengthening the role of women in disarmament is not only a moral and ethical imperative but also an effective and under-utilised strategy to facilitate the progress of disarmament as a whole.

Ms. Kannisto of UN Women brought her experience from the field to the UN headquarters. She described the role of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in exacerbating sexual and gender-based violence. She pointed at the crucial role of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and highlighted the need to focus on the engaging local actors and women to ensure sustainable peace. She concluded by noting that the international community’s funding priorities are telling—military expenditure amounted to \$1.7 billion last year, while less than five per cent of all aid has been

directed towards gender equality in conflict prevention.

Ambassador Beckles of Trinidad and Tobago stressed connecting the WPS agenda with the General Assembly resolution addressing the role of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, of which Trinidad and Tobago has been the main sponsor since 2010. Ambassador Beckles called upon the international community to address women not as victims but as empowered agents that play a crucial part in addressing disarmament challenges.

Ms. Scott of Namibia urged connecting the outcomes of the 1995 Beijing conference with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the WPS agenda so to ensure women are present at the negotiation table. She called on all states to implement national action plans on the WPS agenda as they offer practical solutions to advance women’s participation in disarmament. •

Ms. Cabrera Balleza of the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders highlighted both the need for women’s participation and incorporating a gender analysis in disarmament efforts, calling on delegates to ensure gender equality and perspectives in all of their endeavours.

The floor was then opened to the audience. Reaching Critical Will’s Director stressed the importance to address the relationship of masculinities and gender norms in disarmament and cautioned against the militarisation of the WPS agenda. Delegations from Jamaica, Sweden, Australia, Canada, Lebanon, and Thailand expressed their firm commitment to apply gender considerations in the

SIDE EVENT REPORT: DIVERSION AND THE ARMS TRADE TREATY

Katherine Young | Control Arms

Diversion of arms and ammunition poses a high risk to global peace and security. It exacerbates conflict, fuels organised crime and terrorism, and contributes to violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. A side event hosted by Control Arms and the governments of France and Mexico, with participation from Conflict Armament Research (CAR) and Project Ploughshares, identified this risk and presented ways in which the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) provides a framework to ensure regulation of the illicit trade of arms and achieve the Treaty's core objective of reducing human suffering.

Diversion can occur at any point in the life cycle of a weapon. Shawn Harris of CAR made clear that diversion can happen at multiple times throughout this cycle, and presented CAR's typology of diversion, drawn from its field-based documentation and information that supplying states have provided in response to CAR's trace requests. These types of diversion include battlefield capture, leakage due to ineffective physical security and stockpile management (PSSM), loss from national custody by undetermined means, state-sponsored diversion, loss following state collapse, and unclear causes.

Diversion can occur even when arms or ammunition do not change hands from one state to another. For this reason, it is important to consider the difference between end-users and end-uses. A transfer can be made to an authorised end-user who then puts the arms or ammunition to an unauthorised end-use. When assessing the risk of diversion in accordance with ATT obligations, it is possible to miss consideration of many incidents of diversion if attention is only paid to the end-user.

The ATT provides much opportunity for states to address diversion. Mexico highlighted the importance of effective implementation of the ATT for doing so, and the importance of creating a catalogue of lessons learned by ATT States Parties to show others why certain actions to address diversion work and some do not. Both Mexico and France encouraged the participation of civil society. France, in particular, stressed the importance of consulting specialised experts from civil society and the private sector. Cooperation and information sharing between many Treaty stakeholders can help address diversion and stop the human suffering caused by the illicit trade of arms and ammunition. •

SIDE EVENT REPORT: HOW THE ATT CAN ADDRESS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Nina Joyce | Control Arms

In a side event that presented a new resource from Control Arms on how to assess the risk of gender-based violence (GBV) when conducting a weapons exports assessment, Ambassador Brian Flynn of Ireland underlined that the inclusion of GBV in Article 7.4 of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) was "ground-breaking". The challenge now for states is to consider how best to implement Article 7.4. The way that the ATT will make a difference is the way it is being implemented, especially on GBV," said Daniel Nord of Sweden. He also stressed the need for further deliberations in the ATT sub-Working Group on the Implementation of Articles 6 and 7. He also stressed that the Control Arms practical guide on How the Arms Trade Treaty can Address Gender-Based Violence is exactly the type of material that will be help for implementers.

Verity Coyle of Control Arms presented the organisation's new practical guide on GBV criteria, which was first launched at the Fourth Conference of States Parties to the ATT, in Tokyo. The practical guide builds upon Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 and offers a foundation on which states can build their national ATT risk

assessment criteria for gender-based violence.

Allison Pytlak from WILPF's Reaching Critical Will stated that the inclusion of GBV measures in the Arms Trade Treaty is there by design, not by accident, and is integral to the overall success of the Treaty. WILPF's own work in this area includes publishing its own guides and contributing to human rights review mechanisms such as the Universal Periodic Review or under the Convention to Eliminate Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). She called for more dialogue between civil society, experts, and governments to ensure that the work is mutually beneficial.

Veronique Christory of the ICRC expressed sadness for the abduction and execution of ICRC colleagues in the field, a stark reminder of the real risk of GBV. She noted that strict GBV criteria outlined in ATT Article 7.4 will not be effective "unless they are applied in a rigorous and consistent manner". Through the Control Arms Practical Guide, states have a "familiar starting point for assessment". •

SIDE EVENT REPORT: STRENGTHENING THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS FROM EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS IN POPULATED AREAS

Anna de Courcy Wheeler | Article 36

On 18 October the Permanent Missions of Austria, Chile, Ireland, and Mozambique together with the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW) and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) organised a side event to discuss how to better protect civilians from the effects of explosive weapons. Chaired by Ambassador Hajnoczi (Austria), the discussion covered the harm resulting from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and actions that can be taken to address such harm, including the development of an international political declaration on explosive weapons.

OCHA opened the discussion by emphasising the ways in which the use of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA) destroys essential services and causes and prolongs displacement. OCHA also cautioned that the approach taken by several states, which centres around compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL), cannot effectively address the issue. Kathleen Lawand from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) similarly emphasised the ways in which the increasingly urbanised and protracted nature of conflict is increasing the urgency of tackling EWIPA. She reiterated the ICRC's call for an "avoidance principle"—whereby use of explosive weapons with wide area effects should be avoided in populated areas—to be adopted by states.

Speaking on behalf of INEW, Laura Boillot highlighted the potential for a political declaration on explosive weapons to set a political and operational direction to avoid the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas, to provide a forum for states to discuss and develop policies and practices, and to provide a framework for states to support victims and survivors. In the discussions that followed, Ireland's representative flagged the UN Secretary-General's call to develop a political declaration and noted the encouraging level of engagement by civil society.

Closing the panel presentations, Alma al-Osta described the harms that her organisation, Humanity and Inclusion, has observed in its work with conflict-affected communities, and the ongoing work it is doing to raise awareness among parliamentarians in European and other Western states. The representatives from Mozambique and Chile briefed on the past Maputo conference and resulting Communiqué, and the upcoming conference in Santiago for states from the Latin American and Caribbean region. Alma al-Osta, OCHA, and several commentators from the floor also emphasised the need to include a gender perspective—both in terms of the harm caused and solutions proposed—on this issue. •

**NUCLEAR WEAPONS BAN
MONITOR**



Buan-ionad na hÉireann
chun na Náisiún Aontaithe
Permanent Mission of Ireland
to the United Nations



PERMANENT
MISSION
OF AUSTRIA
TO THE UNITED
NATIONS IN NEW YORK

The Permanent Missions of Austria, Ireland & New Zealand with
Norwegian People's Aid & the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons
invite you to the launch of the

NUCLEAR WEAPONS BAN MONITOR 2018

1.15 – 2.30 pm Monday 29 October 2018 in Conference Room A

featuring

Grethe Østern (Norwegian People's Aid), Editor, Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor
Stuart Casey-Maslen, Policy and Research Coordinator, ICAN
Ambassador Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger, Austrian Permanent Representative, Geneva
Frank Groome, Deputy Director, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Section, DFAT Dublin
Katy Donnelly, New Zealand Deputy Permanent Representative, Geneva

Lunch will be provided from 1 pm by the ramp near the Vienna Café



Reaching Critical Will

SIDE EVENT REPORT: RETAINING MEANINGFUL HUMAN CONTROL OVER WEAPON SYSTEMS

Isabelle Jones | Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

"This is the upcoming, main issue we have on the disarmament horizon," said Ambassador Thomas Hajnoczi of Austria as he opened a side event organised by the Permanent Mission of Austria to the UN in partnership with the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

The briefing, held on Wednesday, 19 October and moderated by Ms. Mary Wareham, Coordinator of the Campaign, brought together a cross-sector panel of experts to discuss various ethical, legal, and technical concerns with the development of fully autonomous weapons systems.

Dr. Lucy Suchman, a member of the International Committee for Robots Arms Control (ICRAC), summarised the requirement of meaningful human control as a cornerstone of an international treaty banning fully autonomous weapons. She provided a brief historical reflection on automation in weapons systems, and gave her thoughts on recent actions taken to prevent Google's on-going engagement with Project Maven. Dr. Suchman argued, "Rather than further diminishing the timeframes of action and response in warfighting through increasing automation, we need creative diplomatic initiatives aimed at de-escalating the hair triggers of modern weapon systems, and expanding the spaces for meaningful human judgment."

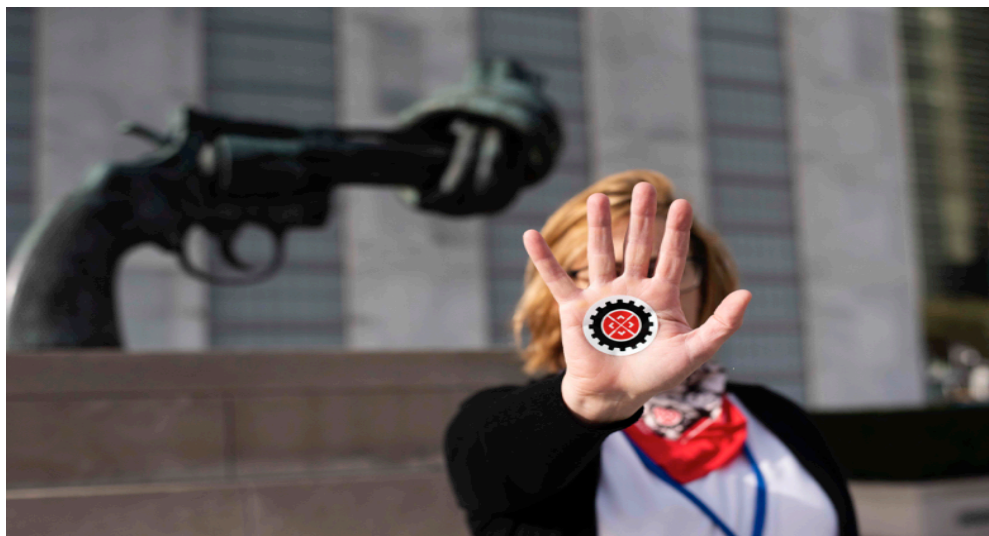
Dr. Branka Marijan, Project Officer, Project Ploughshares, remarked that the discussion is actually about the "outsourcing of decisions over human life to algorithms". This is a "clear moral line that should not be crossed". Arguments that autonomous systems will bring more precision to the battlefield overlook ethical concerns

raised by trends in modern warfare, such as the fallibility of pattern-of-life identification and targeting of combatants, and the urbanisation of conflict which increases risk to civilians. Use of systems without meaningful human control would lower the threshold for conflict and lead to global arms races, said Dr. Marijan, reminding the room that there is nothing inevitable about these systems, and that the countries developing them are doing so by choice.

The panel's final speaker was Mr. Michael Klare, Senior Visiting Fellow, Arms Control Association, which recently released a paper "Addressing the Risks of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Through the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons". Mr. Klare described the collective security risks raised by autonomous weapons systems, including the destabilising nature of the technology and the accidental escalation of conflict that could occur without human control. Mr. Klare encouraged responsible states to commence negotiations on a legally-binding measure to ensure humans are always in control of all weapons systems.

Following the panel, the audience raised questions about strategic security, alternative legal networks to complement legal instruments, technologies currently being developed, and how semi-autonomous technologies should be included in the discussion.

Weapons systems without meaningful human control would change the dynamics of conflict. To address the threats they raise, the panelists agreed new international law must be established to ban fully autonomous weapons. As Ambassador Hajnoczi said, "The clock is ticking."



Photos: Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, October 2018

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, the disarmament programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).

Contributing organisations and campaigns to this edition:

Article 36

Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

Cluster Munition Coalition

Control Arms

International Action Network on Small Arms

International Campaign to Ban Landmines

International Disarmament Institute, Pace University

International Network on Explosive Weapons

King's College London

Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy

PAX

Project Ploughshares

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

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Reaching Critical Will