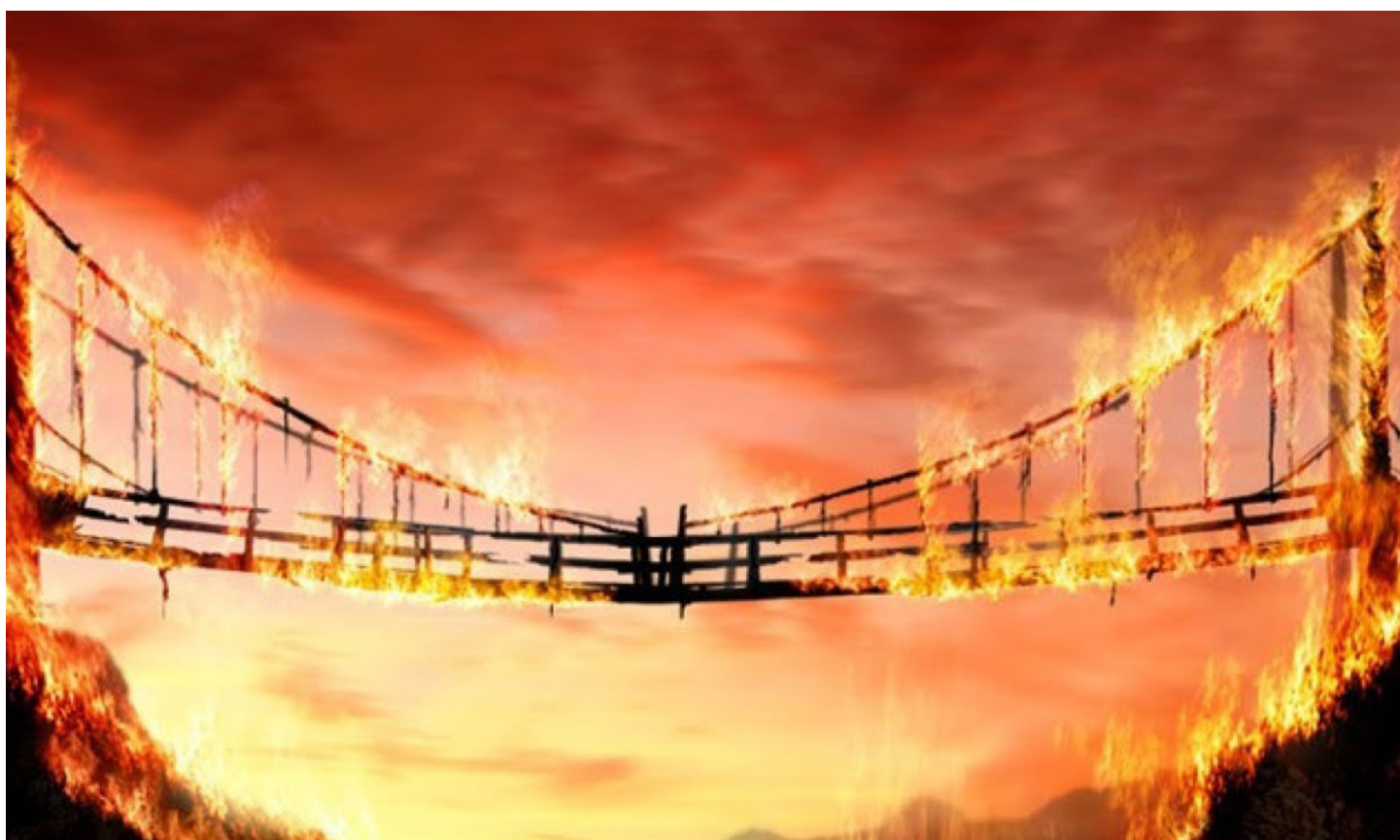


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Reaching Critical Will is a programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

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

Cover image: Burning bridge

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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IN THIS EDITION:

Editorial	3
Nuclear weapons	5
Outer space	12
Cyber.	13
Fully autonomous weapons	14
Explosive weapons in populated areas	14
Landmines.	15
Cluster munitions	16
Drones	16
Small arms and light weapons	17
International arms trade	18
Gender.	19
Development	20
Education	21
Side event report: Building momentum for the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons	22



Reaching Critical Will

EDITORIAL: THE MYTH OF THE MIDDLE

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

If one had to pick a single word to describe this year's First Committee, contentious would be a reasonable contender. The increased volume—in all senses of the word—of accusations and denials has descended as close to name calling as diplomatic forums get. Amidst all this tension, it's no surprise that appeals for a "middle ground" are also on repeat. It sounds rational: so many cracks and fissures have begun to split wide open, and a number of delegations are keen to "build bridges". But this impulse for the middle is misguided and dangerous.

"What is halfway between moral and immoral?" author Tayari Jones asks in a recent article about US politics.¹ Looking at historical events, she suggests the middle ground on slavery would be indentured servitude; the middle ground on internment Japanese-Americans during World War Two would perhaps have been to return their property after they were released.

What is the middle ground on nuclear weapons? What is in between those who categorically reject the bomb and those who say it is instrumental to (their) security and for maintaining "stability" in the world?

Those calling for a middle ground are mostly those who do not possess nuclear weapons themselves but include them in their security doctrines. Perhaps for these governments, this is the middle ground. In which case, should all non-nuclear-armed states buddy up with a nuclear-armed overlord for protection? This doesn't seem to be what these governments mean when they call for middle ground. They don't advocate for other countries to introduce nuclear weapons into their security doctrines. So what are they calling for?

They call for more transparency, and yet some of them are not transparent about hosting nuclear weapons on their territories. They call for a treaty to stop the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons, but refuse to promote a version of this treaty that could have an impact on existing stockpiles. They say the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) must enter into force, yet they won't join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which includes a ban on testing.

The steps they suggest are not really the middle ground. They are steps that allow the nuclear-armed states to maintain their arsenals, and even to modernise them. They are steps that entrench the status quo rather than challenge it.

The middle ground as described by these countries is one that tries to completely accommodate the interests of nuclear-armed states. Much like the "bros" who enable rape culture by laughing at sexist jokes or stories of sexual assault, or by warning survivors of sexual violence against reporting these crimes, these governments enable the nuclear-armed states to remain nuclear-armed states. Calling for a middle ground on nuclear disarmament enables the continued possession, and thus the use and threat of use, of these weapons of mass destruction.

As we enter a world now in which the US is tearing up arms control agreements, such as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran, or the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty with Russia, what are those advocating a middle ground saying? In First Committee and beyond, some of them have expressed concern. Some have called for respect of international law. Some have tried to articulate, in the case of the JCPOA, how they will maintain the deal regardless of the US government's position. Yet at the same time, these middle-ground governments continue to reject the TPNW. They say that those who outlawed nuclear weapons are being "divisive". They still ask countries that have completely rejected nuclear weapons to "compromise".

Diplomacy and negotiation are of course largely based on compromise. It's rare that everyone gets what they want in situations of polarisation. But what are nuclear-supportive governments saying when they ask those who have prohibited nuclear weapons to compromise?

This obsession with the middle ground is what led Japan to destroy its annual resolution, United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Not that this resolution was previously a masterpiece of progressive action for nuclear disarmament, but what Japan has accomplished through its remodeling of this text over the past two years is to trash hard-won, long-held commitments and agreements. Perhaps the most egregious in a litany of problems, this resolution has rewritten the unequivocal undertaking of the nuclear-armed states to totally eliminate their nuclear weapons. They made this promise at the 2000 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, and it has been a touchstone for measuring their efforts for nuclear disarmament since then.

And what does Japan get for its efforts? Votes on thirteen separate paragraphs, a boatload of absten-

tions and explanations of vote expressing concern with this text, and not even the support of the United States. As was reported by the Japanese press in 2017, the government watered down the resolution under diplomatic pressure from the United States.² Now, even this mangled interpretation of NPT commitments is too strong for the current US government.

In an explanation of vote on this year's draft, the US ambassador said that while Japan's resolution "remains the most realistic and practical of the nuclear disarmament resolutions," it is also a "step back from the baseline set in 2017 in some important ways," including a *return to language that dates from a different time and a different security environment than we currently face*. He emphasised that to make progress, *we need to look forward, not backwards—we must not fixate on historical language that is out of date and out of step with the current prevailing security environment*.

This is an incredible statement, the importance of which should not be underestimated in the context of the forthcoming NPT review conference and US commitments—rhetorical or otherwise—to nuclear disarmament. It can be read as a signal that the US no longer accepts the agreed outcomes from the 2000 or 2010 NPT review conferences. By describing language from those consensus-based outcomes as backwards and out of step, it seems the United States is saying it will not agree to this again in 2020—let alone any steps or measures that could help achieve nuclear disarmament.

It would seem, then, that Japan's attempt at "bridge building" has actually enabled the US to justify its walk back from decades' worth of multilateral and bilateral agreements.

That's the thing about the middle ground. Rewriting documents to suit the interests of the nuclear-armed states is not building a bridge—it's burning existing bridges down.

This isn't just about the United States, of course. Russia's delegation, in an explanation of vote on the resolution related to the CTBT, criticised comments from the US government that may signal a resumption of explosive nuclear testing. In this context, the Russians seemed to be asking what the relevance of the CTBT would be if this happened. And, while these long-held instruments are under threat, the nuclear-armed states continue to categorically reject the newest one. Almost all of the nuclear-armed states have at one point or another during this First Committee leveled their "consistent objections" against the TPNW, emphasising that the Treaty does not bind them and

will not constitute customary international law. France went even further, saying that the "emotional and divisive" approach to nuclear disarmament (note the gendered, patriarchal language) represented by the TPNW is *disconnected from credible work*. It said the Treaty is aimed a "discrediting deterrence," which it argues will undermine international security.

The Treaty is aimed at discrediting deterrence. That is indeed one of its objectives. But the states supporting the TPNW do not see this as undermining international security. They see it as essential to enhancing security. Deterrence is the theory that justifies the continued possession, modernisation, deployment, and possible use of nuclear weapons. Challenging deterrence theory is critical to the project of nuclear abolition—take away the justification for nuclear weapons, and take away one of the key pillars sustaining their continued existence.

But it's not the only piece of the puzzle that needs addressing. As scholar Jonathan Hunt writes, the continued exaltation of nuclear weapons is not just about deterrence but is about the "culture and conceptions of power tied to understandings of national security."³ Nuclear weapons "are the ultimate guarantors" of primary and privilege. He argues that nuclear arms control will remain under threat until we change how we think and talk about national security.

This is another of the main objectives of the TPNW, and the process of considering the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons that led to it. The Treaty mounts a challenge to the idea that nuclear weapons afford national security. It also mounts a challenge to the notion that arms control, as reflected by the step-by-step approach to nuclear disarmament endorsed by the middle-grounders, is sufficient to deal with the problem of nuclear weapons. There are "inherent contradictions in the project of arms control as a way to control the threat of nuclear war," physicist Zia Mian argued recently.⁴ The US government is using arms control as a way to justify nuclear build-up, saying it wants to have something with which to bargain. Historically, arms control "was designed to preserve a nuclear striking power." Thus this project of managing nuclear weapons through piecemeal arms control and non-proliferation initiatives has led us to where we are today, and to where those calling for a "middle ground" seem to want to keep us.

In this context, why should nuclear abolitionists compromise? Where would we be without a strong majority calling for the total elimination of nuclear weapons and taking concrete actions to promote this, including by outlawing nuclear weapons, discrediting deterrence, and divesting from the production of weapons



of terror? Does compromising on any of these steps make the world safer? Lead us closer toward a world free of nuclear weapons, which is the stated goal even of the step-by-step approach demanded by those seeking a “middle ground”?

The world has changed, and we are operating in a different international security environment. This much is true. But this understanding does not mean that those rejecting nuclear weapons need to compromise. As Mian writes, “Accepting the need to face the world as it is and the logic of changed circumstances leads in another direction, one that does not involve accepting the dominance and impunity of nuclear states and the continued existence of nuclear weapons.” This is the path those governments supporting the TPNW have taken, and it is the path that will lead to positive change, even over the objections of the nuclear-armed states.

Appeasing the nuclear-armed is not the answer. They objected to the development of the NPT, calling it “potentially dangerous,” just as they object now to the TPNW. They will always resist limitations on their

power and privilege. Protecting them will not make the world safer, it will only get you burned. Standing up for what is right—morally, legally, politically, and in terms of security, human, collective, global security—is what will make the world safer.

“Compromise is not valuable in its own right,” notes Tayari Jones. “And justice seldom dwells in the middle.” •

Notes

1. Tayari Jones, “There’s Nothing Virtuous About Finding Common Ground,” *TIME*, 25 October 2018, <http://time.com/5434381/tayari-jones-moral-middle-myth>.
2. “Editorial: Japan’s weakened UN draft resolution on nukes erodes trust,” *Mainichi Japan*, 17 October 2017; Masakatsu Ota, “Under U.S. pressure, Japan waters down text of anti-nuclear resolution,” *Kyodo News*, 21 October 2017.
3. Jonathan Hunt, “Why the arms race is still white hot decades after the Cold War ended—and how to stop it,” *The Washington Post*, 2 November 2018, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2018/11/02/why-arms-race-is-still-white-hot-decades-after-cold-war-ended-and-how-stop-it>.
4. Zia Mian, “The INF Treaty and the crises of arms control,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 24 October 2018, <https://thebulletin.org/2018/10/the-inf-treaty-and-the-crises-of-arms-control>.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

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

Delegations continued to address nuclear weapons throughout various thematic clusters last week. In the regional disarmament cluster, the Arab League, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the European Union (EU), as well as a few individual states reiterated their call to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMDZF) in the Middle East. NAM, Algeria, and the Arab Group called upon Israel to submit its nuclear facilities under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA). The United States (US) reiterated that it does not support the Arab Group’s initiative to kick off discussions towards a legally binding instrument establishing a WMDZF, as such an initiative has to include all states in the region. The United Kingdom (UK) said it is committed to establishing a WMDZF and expressed concern at the lack of inclusiveness of the Arab Group’s proposal.

Beyond the Middle East, statements by ASEAN, Malaysia, and Uzbekistan referred to their regions free of nuclear weapons (NWFZ), such as the regions of Southeast Asia and Central Asia. ASEAN and Malaysia stressed that nuclear-armed states’ accession to the Protocol of the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free

Zone (SEANWFZ) is essential. Kazakhstan observed that while all delegations proclaim to be committed to nuclear disarmament, none of the NWFZ resolutions have ever been adopted by consensus.

Six states welcomed recent developments in the Korean peninsula. The UK and the EU maintained that until concrete steps are taken, the international community is to keep sanctions in place. Meanwhile, the EU, Kazakhstan, the UK, and Iran expressed their continued commitment to the Joint Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran. The EU and the UK expressed concern about Iran’s testing of ballistic missiles. The US argued that the JCPOA “has fallen flat in its attempt to stabilise the region,” and said it is willing to negotiate a new treaty if Iran changes its behaviour.

During the cluster on disarmament machinery, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Timor-Leste, South Africa, and Kazakhstan welcomed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. CARICOM hopes this Treaty will foster a workable, humanitarian-based approach towards disarmament. Kazakhstan applauded the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons’ “active and tireless voice for nuclear disarmament.”

Resolutions

L.1, “Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East,” is traditionally adopted without a vote. For the first time this year a vote was requested. The resolution was adopted with a vote of 174-2-5. Israel and the United States (US) voted against.

In an explanation of vote, Israel blamed the Arab Group for breaking consensus on this resolution by proposing a conference towards establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East (MEWMDFZ). It argued that advocates of the resolution are not willing to solve the “real threats” in the region. The US delegation said it supports the pursuit of an MEWMDFZ, endorsing key elements such as the need for direct dialogue to resolve contentious issues. However, it voted against this resolution due to the Arab Group’s decision to advance L.22/Rev.1, which involves “coercive solutions” that will cause damage to the aims of this resolution and the dialogue between states in the region.

The UK said that it remained fully committed to establishing a MEWMDFZ but abstained arguing this has to be achieved by all states of the region. Australia, on the other hand, voted yes on L.1 but abstained on L.22/Rev.1. Syria also voted in favour of L.1, as it believes that establishing a MEWMDFZ is of importance for regional and global stability. Iran voted in favour of the resolution and argued, “Breaking the three-decade-long consensus on this resolution by the US exemplifies the unilateralism and the reckless behavior and decisions of a nuclear weapon State that has assumed international commitment and responsibility to undertake all necessary measures for prompt implementation of the 1995 Resolution on Middle East.”

L.2, “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East,” was adopted with a vote of 158-5-21. Canada, Israel, Micronesia, the US, and Palau voted against the resolution. A separate vote was held on PP5 and PP6, which were retained by 170-4-4 and 171-3-5, respectively. The paragraphs deal with decisions of the 1995 and 2000 NPT Review Conferences.

Canada said that while it supports inclusive efforts towards the establishment of a MEWMDFZ, it did not perceive this resolution to be inclusive. Argentina and Turkey also reiterated their support to a MEWMDFZ but said that the participation of all relevant states is necessary and therefore abstained from the resolution. Switzerland voted in favour but stated that the resolution refers to only one dimension of the nuclear proliferation and focuses on one state. Syria voted in favour as it believes that establishing a MEWMDFZ is

of importance for regional and global stability. Iran voted in favour saying that it reflects the concern of the majority that Israel, as only nuclear weapon possessor in the region, represents a risk of nuclear proliferation.

The US argued that it will not continue to support this resolution when the Arab Group is advancing L.22/Rev.1, for the reasons indicated above. The US abstained from PPs 5 and 6 but hoped for the achievement of the NPT’s universalisation. Israel maintained that this resolution is an attempt to divert attention away from the “real threats” to the Middle East and argued that it distorts the truth and undermines attempts to address regional threats effectively. India argued that the resolution’s call for non-member states of the NPT to join the Treaty is at odds with the 1969 Vienna Convention on Treaty Obligations and therefore did not support the resolution. Pakistan voted against the two PPs. The DPRK abstained from both PPs, but both voted in favour of the whole resolution as they concur with the primary focus and purpose of the resolution.

L.4, “Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons,” was adopted with a vote of 122-0-65.

L.10, “Draft decision: Missiles,” was adopted with a vote of 166-2-9. Israel and the US voted against. The US stated that it voted against the resolution as it considered it as Iran’s attempt to prevent the prohibition of the proliferation of nuclear missiles, maintaining that Iran was “hypocritical” in co-sponsoring this resolution. Israel voted against the resolution due to Iran’s development of ballistic missiles and alleged violations of the NPT.

L.14, “Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament,” was adopted as a whole with a vote of 143-27-14. A separate vote was held on PP12, which was retained by a vote of 129-20-22. PP12 notes the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

Canada abstained both on the resolution as a whole and on PP12, and remained concerned that the resolution does not encompass the full range of proposals of the 2013 meeting. It stressed that it must welcome the participation from civil society. Bulgaria, on behalf of a group of states, voted against the resolution. It argued that NPT obligations should not be approached selectively. Referring to the TPNW, Bulgaria shares the concern of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons but does not agree that the TPNW contributes to



the elimination of nuclear weapons. The Netherlands on behalf of a group of states explained they voted against the resolution due to a lack of language addressing key concerns, including a perceived failure to acknowledge the NPT and its Review Conferences. This group of countries does not believe that the UN high-level conference sets the mandate for proper negotiations on the subject.

The UK on behalf of the France, UK, and the US explained that they voted against the resolution due to its reference to the TPNW and its omission of the threat of nuclear terrorism. The UK also argued that the text contains a number of assertions that are not compatible with security doctrines pertaining to the nuclear weapons use and international law.

L.19, "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status," was adopted without a vote. India welcomed the adoption without a vote and reiterated its assurances to respect Mongolia's nuclear free status.

L.22/Rev.1, "Convening a conference on a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and of other weapons of mass destruction," was adopted with a vote of 103-3-71. The US, Israel, and Micronesia voted against the resolution.

Switzerland and New Zealand shared the frustration about the lack of progress in this area, but Switzerland argued that the resolution singles out one state. Switzerland, the UK, Japan, Australia, Turkey, Argentina, and India stated that the resolution's suggested process may not be inclusive. They all therefore abstained. New Zealand also abstained and "strongly [urged] all relevant parties to work together to arrive at a feasible and durable approach (...) applicable to all States in the region." The EU and Brazil acknowledged the importance of establishing such a zone. The EU stated that dialogue and confidence-building amongst stakeholders is the only sustainable way to agree on the arrangements of a conference attended by all Middle Eastern states.

Israel reiterated it to be unfortunate the Arab Group suggested this initiative instead of confronting the "real security challenges" in the region and said that the Group sought to create another platform to single out Israel, which is a destructive approach. The US regretted the Arab Group's decision of this resolution as it is "fundamentally misguided" as all arrangements must be mutually agreed on to be able to create such a zone in any region. It further argued that the resolution does not address legitimate concerns by parties to the region such as Israel and will not advance the long-term goal for the creation of a MEWMDZF.

Canada voted against despite strongly advocating for the establishment of such a zone. Canada highlighted that such a process must be effective, legitimate, and must ensure full and mutual agreements between all states.

Syria voted in favour as it believes that establishing such a zone is of importance for regional and global stability. Iran voted in favour of the resolution and argued that it is consistent with article 52 of the UN Charter that allows for regional arrangements and previous NPT commitments. Iran concluded that by voting against this text, the US' and Israel's hypocritical position is exposed. Pakistan voted in favour of the resolution and recalled the consensus final document of the First Special Session (SSOD1) calling for the establishment of nuclear weapon free zones (NWFZs) through the cooperation of all states in the region. The Philippines voted in favour and said that another NWFZ is a "parallel track" to a nuclear weapon free world but noted that it does not support the use of this platform to criticise individual states in the region.

L.23, "Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons," was adopted with a vote of 143-15-26. The UK explained the vote of France, UK, and US against the resolution, reiterating their perceived list of problems of the TPNW. They stated that they will never join and will not be bound by the Treaty. China voted against this resolution as it said that the "goals of nuclear disarmament cannot be achieved over night." Pakistan abstained and argued that focusing on humanitarian concerns would "trivialise" security concerns. Japan expressed its support for the resolution.

L.24, "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons," was adopted with a vote of 122-41-26. The resolution is a short and technical resolution resembling the resolutions dedicated to other disarmament treaties. The UK explained that France, UK, and US voted against the resolution because of their rejection of the TPNW. Israel explained it has deep reservations on the Treaty, which it said does not contribute to the development of customary international law (CIL) nor does it reflect legal norms that apply to non-states parties. Pakistan stressed that it does not consider itself bound by any obligations enshrined in the TPNW, and argued that it does not contribute to the development of CIL. India also voted against and said that it will not become a party to the Treaty. Japan voted against and stressed it to be essential that all states take untied action towards the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Argentina explained that while it had participated in the negotiations for the adoption of the Treaty, it has begun the process of analysing the Treaty's impact.

Argentina informed that since it hasn't signed the Treaty, it abstained on the resolution. Sweden similarly said that after the Treaty's adoption, it "appointed an independent inquiry tasked with analysing consequences of a possible Swedish accession," which is still on-going. The report will form the basis of the government's further considerations on this issue. Sweden highlighted that this was also the reason it abstained from other resolutions' paragraphs referring to the TPNW. Likewise, Switzerland said it supports the goal of the Treaty but abstained as it has not yet signed it and continues to have questions about its impact on existing agreements. Singapore abstained and elaborated that it had participated in the TPNW negotiations, but its concerns had not been fully taken on board. It is concerned that Treaty affects the rights and obligations of other treaties such as the NPT, the CTBT, and NWFZ treaties. Iran voted in favour and noted that this was a step forward, and should be complemented by negotiations for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

L.25, "The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation," was adopted with a vote of 171-1-12. Iran voted against the resolution, and argued that it is an offshoot of an exclusive and discriminatory regime, the Missile Technology Control Regime (NTCR). It also argued that the Code is silent on the threat of nuclear-armed ballistic missiles and thus sends a discriminatory message. Iran and Egypt argued that the Code cannot be considered an internationally negotiated text as it was adopted outside UN in a selective and non-transparent manner. It is for this reason that Algeria also abstained from the resolution. Egypt further noted that the resolution ignores other delivery methods of WMD such as cruise missiles. Syria voted to abstain as it perceives the Code of Conduct to be biased. Brazil voted in favour as it acknowledged the action by 139 states to sign up to the code even if Brazil is not amongst them. Brazil stated that it supports actions to prevent ballistic missile proliferation.

L.26, "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty," was adopted with a vote of 181-1-4. Democratic People's Republic (DPRK) voted against the resolution. A separate vote was called on PP4, which stresses the urgency of the Treaty's entry into force. PP4 was retained with a vote of 169-0-13. PP7, which was kept with a vote of 170-0-9, recalls the adoption of follow-on action of the 2010 NPT RevCon and the inclusion of vital importance of the CTBT's entry into force.

Iran voted in favour because it is a signatory to the CTBT, but criticised the nuclear-armed states for modernising their nuclear arsenals and regretted that the resolution does not call on states to refrain from such

measures. Iran outlined a number of other concerns with the draft, and with the "closed and non-inclusive process for updating this resolution." Iran also disassociated itself from the mention of the UN Security Council resolution 2310, which Egypt, Brazil, Ecuador, and Pakistan also expressed concern about it. Egypt, Brazil, and Pakistan further expressed concern about PP7, including the reference to a joint ministerial statement not endorsed by all member states. Pakistan proposed to convert unilateral moratorium into bilateral agreements. Brazil noted the lack of condemnation to the development of new nuclear weapons.

Israel voted in favour of the resolution but said it was unable to support the language in its entirety. Syria abstained on the resolution because Israel has not joined the CTBT yet and further argued that the Treaty does not seek to delegitimise the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The DPRK argued that this resolution took a position of confrontation instead of inclusion and regrets the inability to arrive at a common understanding with sponsors. It assured that it will seek to continue dialogue with all relevant parties.

L.28, "Nuclear disarmament," remains focused on the Conference on Disarmament and its failure to proceed with substantive work. It only contains technical updates from last year, the operative paragraphs continue to urge nuclear-armed states to take effective disarmament measures. It was adopted as a whole with a vote of 120-41-21. Voting was called on PP32 and OP12. Both were retained with a vote of 117-37-19 and 168-2-8, respectively. PP32 welcomes the adoption of the TPNW last year. OP12 underlines the importance of nuclear-armed states' efforts towards the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, as reaffirmed in the Final Document from the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

The Arab Group voted in favour to show commitment towards nuclear disarmament despite its condemnation of Myanmar's treatment of the Rohingya Muslims in its territory. (Myanmar tabled the draft.) The DPRK voted in favour but reiterated that does not subscribe to decisions made under the NPT. India and Pakistan abstained due to references to the NPT and TPNW but support other aspects of the resolution.

L.31, "Draft decision: nuclear disarmament verification," was adopted with a vote of 177-0-3.

L.33, "African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty," was adopted without a vote. India and Spain supported the WMDFZ in Africa; India welcomed that all states support the decision and respect the sovereign choice of states parties of the Pelindaba Treaty. Spain reiterated its explanation for not joining the protocol.



L.43, “Reducing nuclear danger,” was adopted with a vote of 127-49-10.

L.44, “Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons,” was adopted with a vote of 120-50-15. Pakistan, China, and Thailand issued EVOs, with Thailand noting that it abstained as the risk of unauthorised detonation still remains unaddressed and the resolution should include the TPNW.

L.46, “Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World,” was adopted as a whole with a vote of 135-21-27. Separate votes were called on PP7, which was retained by a vote of 126-21-26, and PP9, retained by a vote of 137-3-36. PP7 notes the adoption of the TPNW, and PP9 takes into account the UN Secretary-General’s disarmament agenda. New Zealand explained its abstention and noted that it remains unclear to New Zealand how the resolution’s annexed Universal Declaration in 2015, and its follow-up resolution, will assist in achieving a nuclear weapon-free world. Syria voted in favour of the resolution but voted against PP9 as the UNSG’s disarmament agenda contains “baseless allegations” against Syria.

L.48, “Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia,” was adopted without a vote.

L.52, “Decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems,” was adopted with a vote as a whole by 173-4-7. France, the UK, the US, and Russia voted against the resolution. A vote was called on PP8 and was retained by 166-2-10. This paragraph refers to the follow-up action agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, including the consideration of the legitimate interest of non-nuclear weapon states in reducing operational readiness of nuclear weapons.

L.54, “United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons,” was adopted as a whole with a vote of 160-4-24. China, the DPRK, Russia, and Syria voted against the resolution. Separate votes were held on 13 paragraphs.

Switzerland and Sweden voted yes as they share the objective of the resolution to create unity among delegations but said they were concerned with language that deviates from agreed NPT outcomes. They believed it is more important than ever to stand by previously agreed outcomes, especially with a view of making progress at the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

Austria abstained because the resolution restates agreed disarmament language, misrepresents the TPNW, lacks references to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and undermines the CTBT.

Brazil abstained and observed that last year’s text was a disappointing step backwards and that this year’s draft has gone further in this direction. It said the conditionality for disarmament is an unacceptable re-interpretation of previous unequivocal commitments to nuclear disarmament. Brazil also could not support backtracking of language on the CTBT. Brazil underlined that the resolution fails to mention the adoption of the TPNW. Brazil called it “a milestone in disarmament and non-proliferation,” and its lack of inclusion in the resolution was inconceivable as it was adopted by the majority of UN member states and supported by civil society, marked with the awarding of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize to ICAN.

New Zealand, abstaining from the resolution as a whole, also noted that last year’s text was a departure from precursors, which did try to find common ground for united action for nuclear disarmament. It observed that this year’s draft was very concerning in light of weak language on the CTBT and reinterpretations of commitments made in the NPT context.

Egypt abstained and explained that the resolution implied that nuclear disarmament is responsibly shared equally by nuclear-armed and non-nuclear-armed states, and seeks to justify non-compliance of nuclear-armed states with their nuclear disarmament obligations. It further noted that the resolution continues to weaken language on unequivocal undertakings agreed at NPT meetings, and links the achievement of disarmament to preconditions. Egypt noted that this was concerning in light of already fragile regime.

Venezuela abstained as it dilutes commitments made in the NPT context and does not include any mention of the TPNW.

Whilst Mexico said that it understands the drafters’ motivation, it argued that states must comply with their agreements without any conditions and the resolution reinterprets the NPT, and cannot replace the language agreed upon by NPT states parties previously. It therefore abstained.

Liechtenstein and Ecuador appreciated the drafters’ efforts to “build a bridge” but since changes made in 2016, Liechtenstein has abstained for the second year. It observed that the polarisation is not caused by the TPNW but a consequence of long-term negative developments. It maintained that the resolution should have included a reference to the TPNW but that it was mainly concerned with language backtracking from long-held CTBT and NPT commitments. It concluded by saying that against sustained efforts to weaken the rules-based order, calling for unequivocal support for nuclear disarmament is key.

Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Algeria underlined that the adoption of the TPNW must be recognised as it is a fundamental part of the disarmament machinery. They hoped that it can be included in this resolution in the future.

The US maintained that it abstained this year as it was taking a “step back” from the baseline set in 2017. This was when Japan rewrote the resolution and backtracked on agreed commitments. It argued that the language referred to in the resolution is out-dated and does not reflect the current security environment.

France abstained on the resolution as a whole and voted against some paragraphs as it is concerned at the suggested link between humanitarian impacts and nuclear disarmament. It argued that there is no consensus that the humanitarian approach underpins the efforts for nuclear disarmament. France said it is crucial to work together collectively under the security conditions that enable disarmament and highlighted its commitment to “deterrence”. In that vein, France expressed concern at the development of an “emotional and divisive” approach to nuclear disarmament that is disconnected from credible work, and that is aimed at discrediting deterrence, which it says will undermine international security.

Pakistan abstained on the whole of the resolution and voted against various paragraphs. It was concerned that the resolution only addresses non-proliferation issues of fissile material and described the resolution’s call for Pakistan to join the NPT as unrealistic.

The DPRK rejected the resolution, as it refers in several paragraphs to the DPRK distorting the spirit of dialogue that has come out of the region. It argued that Japan has no moral standing to table such a resolution and to interfere in the Korean peninsula.

The Philippines appreciated Japan’s efforts to make the resolution “more balanced,” supported the resolution as a whole but could not co-sponsor as it did in 2016.

China argued that the paragraph welcoming the visits of political leaders to Hiroshima and Nagasaki singles out “one particular episode” in World War II and “whitewashes” Japan’s war of aggression. The Republic of Korea (ROK) abstained from the resolution because references to atomic bomb survivors do not fully take into account the entirety of survivors regardless of nationality. ROK noted that it nevertheless respects the spirit of the resolution.

PP19, which reiterates language from the 2010 NPT about the humanitarian consequences of nuclear

weapons, was retained with a vote of 164-3-12. France, Russia, and South Africa voted against.

PP20, which calls for efforts to increase the understanding the humanitarian impacts, was retained with a vote of 170-2-7. Russia and France voted against.

OP2 reaffirms nuclear-armed states’ “unequivocal undertaking” to fully implement Article VI of the NPT and recalls the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. It was retained with a vote of 145-5-23. South Africa, Austria, New Zealand, Liechtenstein, and the United States voted against this OP. New Zealand explained that its vote reflected its “concern at the implications for the health and viability of the NPT regime of changing long-agreed language on fundamental NPT undertakings.” (The original unequivocal undertaking is in reference to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, not to implement the NPT as a whole.) Liechtenstein and Malaysia considered the formulation as falling short in addressing nuclear-armed states’ obligation to eliminate their nuclear arsenals as enshrined in article VI.

OP3 was retained with a vote of 139-8-20. It calls on states parties to the NPT to implement steps agreed during the 1995, 2000, and 2010 NPT Review Conference, “with due consideration to developments in global security”. New Zealand explained that its no vote on this OP also reflects its concern at changing long-agreed language on fundamental NPT undertakings. Austria and Liechtenstein rejected the introduction of conditionality of nuclear disarmament in this paragraph. Malaysia, abstaining, noted that the inclusion of new language risks the fulfilment of obligations under the NPT.

OP5, calling upon all states not party to the NPT to accede as a non-nuclear weapon state, was retained with a vote of 173-3-5. India, Israel, and Pakistan voted against this OP. India explained its vote as it does not accept or support the NPT.

OP7 emphasises the “deep concerns about the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons”. It was retained with a vote of 165-4-11. Russia, France, South Africa, and Monaco voted against OP7. Malaysia abstained in line with last year’s position.

OP10 stresses the importance of transparency in building confidence and trust. It was retained with a vote of 152-1-23. Austria voted against OP10.

OP12 was retained with a vote of 147-2-26. It outlines various measures to facilitate further nuclear reduction by improving the international security environment. South Africa and Austria voted against OP12.



OP13 “urges all states possessing nuclear weapons to continue to undertake all efforts necessary to comprehensively address the risks of unintended nuclear detonations.” It was retained with a vote of 170-3-6. Russia, China, and France voted against.

OP18, which discusses the CTBT, was retained with a vote of 158-2-19. South Africa and the United States voted against. Liechtenstein, Algeria, Malaysia, and Switzerland and Sweden were concerned at the paragraph’s failing to make a direct call to states to sign the CTBT, and especially Annex 2 states.

OP20, urges all states to commence negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear devices. It was retained with a vote of 172-2-5. The DPRK and Pakistan voted against OP20. Egypt observed that this OP does not meet the requirement of what it considers necessary for a non-discriminatory FMCT.

OP21, urging states to declare and maintain a moratorium on the production of fissile material, was retained with a vote of 172-2-5. Pakistan and the DPRK voted against OP21. India explained its abstention as it supports the creation of an FMCT in the CD but not the creation of moratoriums on the production of fissile material.

OP31 strongly encourages states to adopt the additional protocol. It was retained with a vote of 170-0-9.

L.57/Rev.1, “Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat of use or use of nuclear weapons,” contains only technical updates from last year. It was adopted as a whole with a vote of 131-31-19. Voting was called on PP9, PP17, and OP2. They were retained with a vote of 137-1-35, 118-34-23, 120-34-22, respectively. PP9 notes the UN Secretary General’s disarmament agenda, which the US voted against. PP17 welcomes the TPNW and OP2 calls on states to engage in negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament, including under the TPNW. Due to substantial changes, India did not co-sponsor the resolution anymore and abstained.

L.58, “Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices,” was adopted with a vote of 180-1-5. Pakistan voted against the resolution. Iran abstained and stated that any such treaty should be comprehensive and non-discriminatory, of a nuclear disarmament nature and its scope has to cover the past, present, and future production of fissile material. Syria abstained because the resolution does not take into account concerns related to fissile material stockpiles. Egypt reiterated this concern. It further

argued that the language intentionally avoids explicit references to ensure that the FMCT will be negotiated in the context of the CD and that it will and will be non-discriminatory. Egypt criticised that the nuclear-armed states are setting multiple preconditions for nuclear disarmament obligations. Israel noted that the proposed FMCT’s ability to stem proliferation was questionable, especially in the Middle East. Pakistan voted against the resolution as it considered that the resolution does not effectively serve the purpose of disarmament, and would not participate in the FMCT Group of Governmental Experts due to its limited scope and divisive genesis.

L.62, “Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-free world,” was adopted as a whole with a vote of 130-34-18. A vote was called on PP11, and retained with a vote of 121-29-22. PP11 recalls the adoption of the TPNW, “in which the ethical imperatives for nuclear disarmament are acknowledged”.

Pakistan abstained and argued that focusing on ethical concerns would “trivialise” security concerns. India maintained that it supports several provisions such as references to states’ legal obligations to pursue negotiations on nuclear disarmament but argued that questions of immorality have to be examined against states’ responsibility to “protect their people” through nuclear “deterrence”.

France, UK, and US jointly explained their vote against the resolution. They reiterated their perceived list of problems of the TPNW and stated that they will never join and will not be bound by the Treaty. China voted against this resolution as it said that the “goals of nuclear disarmament cannot be achieved over night.”

L.64, “Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments,” is the annual New Agenda Coalition (NAC) resolution, although has brought on additional co-sponsors. It has been updated to note the twentieth anniversary of the launch of the NAC, and to welcome both the declaration adopted by the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit and the UN Secretary General’s disarmament agenda. This year, the resolution notes in PP10 for the first time the “strongly disproportionate and gendered impact of ionising radiation for women and girls”. It added another PP to note with concern the rising tensions in international relations and the increased prominence of nuclear weapons in some states’ security doctrines. PP27 emphasises the importance of a successful process leading to the 2020 NPT Review Conference. OP13 now added a reference to convening a conference on the establishment of a WMDFZ in the Middle East. OP 16 reflects recent positive developments with respect

to the Korean Peninsula. This year, it was adopted as a whole with a vote of 134-31-18. Votes were also called on various paragraphs.

PP4, welcoming the UN Secretary General's disarmament agenda, was retained with a vote of 134-1-36. The US voted against PP4. PP12, welcoming the TPNW, was retained with a vote of 120-35-18.

OP13 urges co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East to exert their utmost efforts, including through the convening of a conference, to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. It was retained with a vote of 131-2-41. Israel and the US voted against OP13.

OP15, calling on India, Israel, and Pakistan to accede to the NPT as non-nuclear weapon states, was

retained with a vote of 160-5-9. The US, Pakistan, Greece, India, Israel voted against OP15.

The DPRK abstained as OP16 contains elements unacceptable to the DPRK, such as references to the NPT and IAEA safeguard regime. India and Pakistan voted against the resolution as they cannot accept calls for states to accede to the NPT. Pakistan added that it perceives the TPNW to be inherently flawed. France, UK, and US jointly explained their no vote due to references to the TPNW.

OP24, welcoming the adoption of the TPNW, was retained with a vote of 122-35-17.

Canada voted against various paragraphs of the text and reiterated its belief in a pragmatic and inclusive approach, encouraging supporters of the resolution to consider future increased emphasis on the NPT. •

OUTER SPACE

Jessica West | Project Ploughshares

The simmering sense of urgency on the need to restrict weapons and the use of force in outer space bubbled to the surface in a number of statements this week. While Cuba cited the continued absence of a legally binding measure to prevent an arms race in outer space (PAROS), Egypt emphasised that rapid technological development is taking place even in the absence of any rules or norms, accusing some states of seeking dominance. Meanwhile the United States reiterated concern for what it views as the deployment of weapons in outer space by Russia.

Nonetheless, the specific mention of outer space woven throughout a variety of statements related to disarmament machinery suggests a tentative sense of headway through multiple avenues. For example, a presentation by the Chair of the UN Disarmament Commission, Gillian Bird of Australia, highlighted the body's new working group dedicated to discussion of practical measures for transparency and confidence building, coordinated by Belgian Ambassador Jorgen Cooreman. This work received praise in statements made by Portugal, Paraguay, India, and the Caribbean Community. Similarly, delegates were informed of renewed efforts within the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to advance productive discussions on a number of topics—including PAROS—through the creation of subsidiary working bodies intended to deepen technical discussion and identify areas of mutual understanding. This process was highlighted by Kazakhstan, which described it as a sign of "positive dynamism and momentum" while pointing to an unsound lack of harmony across the various disarmament fora.

Indeed, process is important and while any progress is appreciated, the disjointed nature of these activities is problematic. There is a sense from the failure of previous governance efforts that they should be universal and as comprehensive as possible. This is reflected in Egypt's statement criticising the Hague Code of Conduct on Ballistic Missile Proliferation, which was adopted outside of the UN machinery and which Egypt claims missed an opportunity to restrict to peaceful uses of outer space.

Some attempts to bring conversations and stakeholders together is undertaken by UNIDIR, as detailed by its new Director, Renata Dwan. UNIDIR is engaged in the work taking place on outer space in both the CD and the new Group of Governmental Experts on PAROS. Its annual conference on space security includes over 160 delegations in addition to civil society, and has reached out to include participation from the private sector. Last year the European Union (EU) used the opportunity of this gathering to fund a seminar on the Hague Code of Conduct. And yet Dwan urged that sustained dialogue that includes academics and civil society is needed beyond an annual meeting.

However, while civil society can grease the wheels, the machinery of disarmament ultimately moves through formal channels. As voting on outer space resolutions approaches, Switzerland's previous call for the First Committee to build consensus and bring together various parts of this machinery comes to mind. In the absence of such leadership, praise and good intentions ring hollow. •



CYBER

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

References to cyber issues have taken on increasing depth and dimension during the 2018 session of First Committee. This largely mirrors the ways in which member states are using cyber technologies in their real-world foreign policies and military strategies, but also the broader politicisation characterising First Committee this year.

This is demonstrated well by the fact that two resolutions have been tabled on the subject by the United States and Russia. Russia is the traditional sponsor of the First Committee resolution on "information and communications technologies" which has, in past years, rather non-controversially established groups of governmental experts (GGEs) on the subjects. This year, its resolution proposes a new GGE to continue the discussion, as well as ensure regular dialogues with the broader UN membership in an effort to be more "democratic, inclusive, and transparent" than past GGEs have been; sometimes described as more of an open-ended working group format. However, the Russian resolution, L.27, "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security," has also incorporated specific elements from the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's Code of Conduct into its text as a proposed basis for an agreed code of conduct. If adopted, this would then become a basis for all member states for their conduct in cyber space. This has prompted the United States, with the support of others, to table a second resolution. The US resolution, L.37, "Advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security," is predicated on the traditional resolutions on this subject. It invites all member states to submit their views on this issue to the UN Secretary-General; establish another GGE; and organise two two-day informal consultative meetings with the wider UN membership.

The Russian resolution has tended to attract more support from Asian and African states, whereas the US resolution has Europe and countries like Australia and Canada behind it. L.27 attracted criticism mainly for the inclusion of the Code of Conduct language from the European Union (EU) and the US, among some others like Finland, who stated, "The purpose of the resolution to be adopted here is to define the modalities of the future work, not to anticipate its results."

At the other end of the spectrum, Iran and Cuba indicated their support for L.27. While not naming the United States, Iran described its tabling of L.37 as "hypocritical" given its collusion with Israel in the Stuxnet operation and other known offensive opera-

tions and policies. It's a fair point, but the Russian track record in cyber space is certainly not any cleaner; overall, the fact that these two countries are dominating the advancement of this issue at the United Nations is concerning and should be a call to action for other states to take an active and vocal role in determining what is and is not acceptable behaviour in cyber space.

Some statements during the thematic debate focused more on mandate, scope, and importance of a new GGE on cyber, and did not speak to the dueling resolutions. This includes the European Union, Australia, Estonia, France, Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland, and Japan. These delegations are united in wanting to build off the achievements of past GGEs; a point also underscored in a joint statement delivered by Canada on behalf of Australia, Chile, Estonia, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, and the United Kingdom. Encouraging implementation of earlier agreements, notably the 2015 recommendations, in lieu of further exploratory discussion has been a growing theme in First Committee statements on this issue. It's true that these recommendations have been adopted by the entire UN membership via the General Assembly, but the way in which this is being articulated and heavily promoted indicates that in the course of widening discussions on this subject, new ideas or approaches may not be entirely welcome by former GGE-participant countries.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the European Union, France, Estonia, the United Kingdom, and the United States also provided updates about regional and national programmes, activities, or cyber strategies. Most delegations continued to identify capacity- and confidence-building as priority areas of work. Mexico and Estonia also highlighted the economic role that digital technologies play in development. The joint statement delivered by Canada emphasised that cyber threats not be used to "legitimise Internet controls that would restrict human rights and freedoms or hinder the free flow of information."

Voting for the resolutions in this thematic cluster will occur during this final week of First Committee. The way ahead is not clear, particularly if both resolutions are adopted. Despite the rather ominous "vote or lose" message put out by Russia, many other delegations urged cooperation on such a vital issue. As Mexico stated, the need for a decision on the way forward "is not a possibility, it is an obligation." •

FULLY AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS

Erin Hunt | Mines Action Canada

The diversity of views among the international community regarding autonomous weapon systems or “killer robots” was evident during the conventional weapons thematic cluster at First Committee. At least thirty-four states spoke on the topic: India, Cuba, Mexico, Netherlands, Switzerland, Canada, Guatemala, Germany, Kazakhstan, Ireland, Costa Rica, France, Australia, Pakistan, New Zealand, Portugal, Turkey, South Africa, Brazil, Spain, China, United Kingdom, Republic of Korea, Bulgaria, Israel, Thailand, Bangladesh, El Salvador, Japan, Ecuador, Botswana, Russia, and Algeria. Killer robots were also referenced by the European Union and in the statements delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Arab Group, and the Nordic Countries. States from all regions with all sizes of robotic and artificial intelligence industries provided their views on the topic.

Most states that spoke recognised that there are concerns about the potential development of weapon systems without human control and that the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) is the appropriate body for these discussions. Some welcomed the recently agreed consensus report from the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS) and the principles included in that document. Botswana, which is not a High Contracting Party to the CCW, clearly expressed its opposition to autonomous weapon systems, stating that Botswana is “convinced that such critical decisions involving use of weapons of war and taking of human lives should not be abdicated to machines.”

In addition to geographic diversity, there was a diversity of opinions about the correct path forward to address concerns about autonomous weapons systems.

A number of states expressed support for continuing the GGE on LAWS in 2019. France introduced the political declaration proposal it has put forward with Germany. A few states explicitly stated their support for that path forward including Switzerland which believes a political declaration could “pave the way for possible practical measures.” Other states outlined a desire for regulations regarding the use of autonomous weapons systems. Throughout the thematic debate, there were strong calls for new international law to prohibit autonomous weapons systems and ensure human control over weapons systems including from Cuba, El Salvador, Ecuador, and Pakistan. Russia and the United Kingdom were among a minority group of countries that expressed opposition to new international legal instruments or caution about moving the conversation forward.

The precarious financial situation of the CCW was an area of agreement along the states. The Republic of Korea’s assertion that it is in everyone’s best interest to find a feasible solution to the Convention’s financial difficulties is well taken. The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots has frequently raised concerns about the impact financial shortfalls had and continue to have on the CCW process to address autonomous weapon systems.

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots continues to work at the national and international level to build further momentum towards the goal of a pre-emptive ban on autonomous weapon systems. Campaign activities are expected in more than fifteen countries this month alone. It is time to move this discussion towards action; the risks are too great to wait. •

EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS IN POPULATED AREAS

Anna de Courcy Wheeler | Article 36

States continued to speak out on the issue of explosive weapons last week, following the previous week’s unprecedented joint statement that saw 50 states express grave concern over the humanitarian harm caused by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA). These included Austria, Brazil, Botswana, Senegal, Norway, Italy, Germany, Spain, Poland, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Madagascar, Nigeria, Bangladesh, New Zealand, Ireland, Ghana, Costa Rica, Australia, Ecuador, Ukraine, and Portugal. Several states including New Zealand and Ukraine took the opportunity to (re)express their alignment with last week’s joint statement.

States including Austria, Brazil, Norway, and Costa Rica drew attention to the increasingly urban nature of conflict and the way in which this is exacerbating the devastating direct and indirect effects of the use of explosive weapons on civilians. Ireland, Poland, and Botswana also emphasised these effects, which include deaths and injuries, psycho-social harm and trauma, and damage and destruction to critical civilian infrastructure. Brazil said the harm caused puts EWIPA at the forefront of humanitarian concerns, while Austria referenced the disproportionate impact that the use of EWIPA has on civilians, with over 90% of casualties on average being civilian.

Several states welcomed the ongoing multilateral efforts to address EWIPA, including the German-led 'EWIPA Talks' in Geneva, the meeting of African states in Maputo in 2017 and resulting communiqué, and ongoing efforts to develop a political declaration. Several states including Ghana, Austria, and Madagascar welcomed the UN Secretary-General's call on the international community to develop a declaration and his ongoing support for state initiatives on this issue. Norway noted the UN Secretary-General's call to avoid

the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas—such weapons include air-delivered bombs, artillery projectiles, missiles and rockets, mortar bombs, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Austria also emphasised the need to improve data collection on EWIPA, whilst it and several others including Australia, Brazil, Spain, and Norway stressed the need for full compliance with international humanitarian law and better protection of civilian populations in armed conflict. •

LANDMINES

Amelie Chayer | International Campaign to Ban Landmines

No less than 37 delegations mentioned the Mine Ban Treaty (MBT) last week, a testament to the vibrancy of the 20-year-old agreement. Burkina Faso, France, Ghana, Italy, Indonesia, Poland, and Portugal called for further universalisation of the Treaty. Djibouti and Senegal said the Treaty should be "a priority," and Turkey stated is strong support for the instrument.

Myanmar is the only state where the armed forces have used antipersonnel mines on a regular basis since the MBT entered into force. Quoting the September 2018 report by the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission to Myanmar, the representative of Bangladesh spoke persuasively and encouraged Myanmar to account for the Mission's conclusions documenting landmine use. Bangladesh called on Myanmar to clear mines, declare a moratorium on production, end casualties, and join the Treaty.

Ukraine took a crucial step towards Treaty compliance last week when it submitted a long-overdue request for an extended deadline to clear landmines. In its statement at First Committee, Ukraine acknowledged the fundamental character of the Treaty in minimizing the occurrence, risk, and effects of landmines. It also explained the threat that mines and explosive remnants of war pose to civilians in the occupied territory.

Cambodia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Iraq, Niger, Sudan, Thailand, and Ukraine provided an outline of their mine clearance efforts. In a rare statement on the matter, Eritrea, where no mine clearance has been reported in years, stated the "great importance" it attaches to Treaty implementation. Japan recalled that "significant work still remains ... to achieve our important goal of realising a mine-free world by 2025", an assessment also echoed by Spain.

Indonesia made an interesting point not often heard at First Committee, about the need for affected states

to demonstrate national ownership on the issue of victim assistance. Italy explained that gender- and diversity-responsive assistance to survivors and their families should be a key component of long-term development strategies. Austria highlighted victim assistance obligations, and Spain called for further synergies between relevant conventions with regards in particular to land clearance and assistance to victims.

Lao PDR, a state not party, stated that its vote in favour of the annual resolution on the MBT demonstrated its support for the objectives of the Treaty. South Korea said that it was "still premature" to accede, but that it "aligned itself" with the humanitarian spirit of the treaty and paid special attention to the issue of assistance to victims. Russia explained that it does not exclude the possibility of joining in the future, and that it is working to address technical, organisational, and financial issues related to MBT implementation.

Pakistan said that the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) was the most appropriate forum to address the issue of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) "in a comprehensive and balanced manner." France strongly promoted discussions on IEDs held in the context of the CCW, while also saying that political and practical work on the issue must contribute to "an overall coherence of the international community's efforts." The International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) notes that an excellent way of ensuring such coherence is to recognise that any explosive device that can be activated by the presence, proximity, or contact of a person is in fact an antipersonnel mine and is covered by the regime of the Mine Ban Treaty.

The numerous references to cooperation and assistance will be summarised in the last issue of the *First Committee Monitor*. •

CLUSTER MUNITIONS

Amelie Chayer | Cluster Munition Coalition

Twenty-six delegations mentioned the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) last week, some speaking at length and sharing elaborate updates and positions. There were calls for further universalisation of the Convention from Burkina Faso, Ecuador, France, Ghana, Lao PDR, New Zealand, and South Africa. The Philippines announced further steps taken towards ratification. Interestingly, Djibouti, a state not party, called for CCM universalisation.

Ireland and the United Kingdom expressed deep concern about the reported continued use of cluster munitions. Ecuador condemned any use by any actor, and Indonesia said that cluster munitions should never be used. Portugal said the use of cluster munitions deserved the strongest condemnation. New Zealand “unreservedly” condemned any and all instances of the use of cluster munitions, including in Syria and Yemen. Bulgaria and South Africa expressed concern with the use of these weapons. Sri Lanka, the President of the 9th Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, said that cluster munitions clearly violated the principles of international humanitarian law (IHL).

Lao PDR, the state most affected by cluster munition remnants, explained that it has adopted an 18th SDG at the national level to address the problem posed by unexploded ordnance. It stressed that explosive remnants of war “have been a daunting challenge to the socio-economic development and poverty eradication efforts” in the country. Burkina Faso noted that cluster munition remnants hamper the attainment of SDGs in many contexts.

Trinidad and Tobago shared its assessment that the CCM “has proven to be a key component of the

broader normative framework for the protection of civilians.” Austria noted that the instrument has saved thousands of lives and limbs, and Senegal called it a “significant step forward” on IHL.

Madagascar condemned any induction to engage in activities prohibited by the Convention, and relatedly called for a “reduction” of financial investments in “controversial weapons”. Spain encouraged all states to include in their national legislation a prohibition on investments in cluster munition production. Trinidad and Tobago stated that financial investments in the production of cluster munitions contravene the CCM.

South Korea said it aligned itself with the Convention’s humanitarian spirit, a rather surprising statement for a state that produces the weapon. Like last year, Russia stated that “the CCM only declares the prohibition of cluster munitions, but, in essence, it does not contain such a ban” but rather provides for an artificial rearrangement of the market. Russia also shared its interpretation that the CCM “allows any state—in the lack of any ground—to use such weapons during military operations conducted together with the states nonparties to the Convention”.

The Cluster Munition Coalition notes that, while the CCM allows for joint military operations with states not party, any use of cluster munitions by a state party would of course violate both the letter and spirit of the Convention.

Numerous references to financial and technical support to implement the Convention will be summarised in the last issue of the *First Committee Monitor*. •

DRONES

Elizabeth Minor | Article 36

During the debates on conventional weapons and other disarmament measures, fourteen states raised drones in their statements. These were Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ireland, Mexico, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Portugal, Thailand, and Trinidad and Tobago.

This brings the total number of states that have highlighted drones in First Committee statements this year to sixteen (Chile and Nepal also mentioned drones in the general debate). This is a steep increase from last year’s session, when only seven states referred to

drones, and from 2016 and 2015, when ten and nine states did so, respectively.

Austria, Bulgaria, Brazil, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Portugal highlighted the need to ensure that the use of drones complied with or was grounded in international law. Some raised international humanitarian law in particular, with Ireland drawing attention to international human rights law. El Salvador also condemned uses contrary to the law, and Trinidad and Tobago highlighted the ethical, legal, and humanitarian consequences of use incompatible with international

law. Costa Rica similarly called for attention on the humanitarian, human rights and international legal impacts of drones, and on moral and ethical standards for their use. Pakistan noted that unauthorised trans-border use represented a violation of various laws, and also highlighted the Human Rights Council and civil society's condemnation of extrajudicial killings using drones.

Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, and Trinidad and Tobago highlighted different aspects of the humanitarian impacts and harm to communities or civilians caused by the use of drones, including loss of life, psychological damage and lack of reparation for victims. Trinidad and Tobago also noted the risks posed by drones to international peace and security. Costa Rica raised concern at the lack of transparency and accountability in the use of drones, and noted that this eroded democratic oversight and international scrutiny. El Salvador also called for transparency, with Brazil noting that transparency, accountability, and oversight was needed to ensure compliance with the law.

The Netherlands and Pakistan proposed that non-state armed groups acquiring armed drones represented a threat.

Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, the Netherlands, and Thailand situated the need to address drones wholly or partly within the context of addressing the ethical, legal, and other implications of the availability of new

technologies. The Netherlands highlighted the need to consider positive applications as well as risks.

In terms of responding to the issues raised by armed drones, Ireland and the Netherlands highlighted the US-led process to create politically binding export control standards, with the Netherlands also reaffirming their strong commitment to existing standards. Ecuador noted that the regulation of international trade would be insufficient to address concerns around new technologies.

On the use of drones or the issue more broadly, Ireland welcomed efforts by states, UNIDIR and civil society to promote continued discussion. The Netherlands noted the need for additional international understandings around the use of drones, which should result from inclusive discussions. Thailand proposed that ongoing discussions on new technologies including drones should be based on codifying practices and the progressive development of the law. Cuba and Pakistan called for the regulation of armed drones, with Costa Rica calling for concrete action on use outside of "active hostilities." El Salvador also noted that appropriate and effective international standards to prevent damaging impacts were needed. Mexico highlighted the importance of open, transparent, inclusive discussions on the limits of the use of force, and the legal, technical, and ethical aspects of new technologies, noting that such discussions should result in the regulation of armed drones. •

SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Cullen Barrie | International Action Network on Small Arms

Small arms and light weapons (SALW) are the de facto weapons of mass destruction given the tremendous scale of deaths, injuries, displacement of peoples, destabilising effects on states, human rights violations, and other harms they cause. This was affirmed by a number of member states during the thematic discussion on conventional weapons at First Committee. Burkina Faso, Mali, Togo, and Republic of Korea emphasised this point, and France noted that SALW are the weapons that by far kill the most people worldwide.

States continued to raise the issue of ammunition in their statements on conventional weapons. Madagascar expressed concern over its uncontrolled and unregulated use, and Spain called SALW and ammunition the key plank in terrorism and organised crime. "Ammunition is the oxygen nourishing conflicts more than SALW themselves," Germany emphasised, adding that efforts must be undertaken to counter the

diversion of conventional ammunition into zones of both conflict and crime. Ghana, Costa Rica, Brazil, and Trinidad and Tobago welcomed the overt inclusion of ammunition in the outcome document of the Third Review Conference (RevCon3) on the UN Programme of Action (UNPoA), with Ghana noting that for the first time the need to deal with the issue of ammunition was recognised. Bangladesh called the RevCon3 outcome on ammunition "modest progress". Bulgaria said the case has been made for the inclusion of ammunition in the UNPoA and remains valid. Italy asserted that applying the UNPoA provisions to ammunition would be beneficial, and Portugal said it's convinced that the inclusion of ammunition in the scope of the UNPoA will significantly increase its implementation. The Czech Republic stressed that curbing the illicit trade in SALW and ammunition is crucial in reaching the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Referring to efforts in their own countries, Brazil said that it is pioneering legislation on the mark-

ing and tracing of ammunition, Malawi pointed to its national action plans on the control of SALW and ammunition; Mali said it has adopted strong legislation regarding the possession of SALW and ammunition; and Niger reported that it is collecting not only illicit weapons but also ammunition.

A number of states, including Bangladesh, Sudan, Greece, Argentina, and the Czech Republic also highlighted the need for synergies among efforts and instruments relevant to SALW. It's been 17 years since the UNPoA was established, said Greece, and "the time is ripe to accelerate our work towards synergizing and streamlining efforts that link the illicit trade of SALW with the plethora of regional and national initiatives to battle the illicit trade." Argentina asserted it's important to explore synergies between the UNPoA, the International Tracing Instrument (ITI), the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the Firearms Protocol (FP). Thailand said the UNPoA complements the ATT in ensuring that SALW are consistently regulated, and

Ghana said implementation of the FP and UNPoA can help prevent illicit transfers and diversion of SALW. Malawi also referenced the importance of the FP, while Trinidad and Tobago encouraged all countries to ratify FP and ATT, and Spain encouraged the universalisation of the FP.

Emerging technologies were also a topic of concern for some states. Australia said that tracing must remain effective in the face of technological advances, and said it is promoting an annex to the ITI on this issue. The Czech Republic said that although the ITI is a successful initiative, it is still necessary to address the growing trend of modular design in small arms manufacture and the increased use of polymer frames. Bangladesh noted that the issue of new manufacturing and marking technologies is of deep concern for least developed countries trying to address it. Senegal stated that the implementation of the UNPoA should deal with the emergence of polymer and modular weapons. •

INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRADE

Aaron Lainé | Control Arms

Statements on the conventional weapons cluster spilled into the fourth week of First Committee, with at least 40 states referencing the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Poland cited a statistic from the Stockholm Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) that notes that there has been a steady increase in the volume and value of international transfers of major weapons which "in the last two years has reached the level of late eighties and beginning of nineties of the 20th century"—something that Poland attributed to the deteriorating security environment and challenges of the day.

A majority of states expressed the opinion that the ATT, if effectively implemented and universalised, could play a critical role in maintaining regional and international peace and security through controlling the illicit flow of arms to terrorist groups, transnational criminals, and human rights abusers. As Kazakhstan put it, "the full and effective implementation and universality of the ATT will contribute to promoting international peace and security by reducing human suffering caused by armed violence." Costa Rica said that the ATT is unique because it combines technical arms control objectives with humanitarian aspects, and El Salvador added that irresponsible and poorly regulated arms transfers hinder the sustainable development of states.

Importance of ATT universalisation was mentioned by at least 20 states including the Czech Republic, who named it as one of its main goals. "In general, the

number of states parties has been increasing and we remain convinced that a broader universal adherence to the ATT will strengthen global security and will positively contribute to conventional weapons trade regulation." Positive signs of steps taken towards adhering to the ATT were shown by some, including signatory Malaysia, which will "continue to uphold its spirit and work towards ratification" as well as Turkey, who is "looking forward to acceding to the Treaty in the near future."

On the topic of Treaty implementation, New Zealand expressed that "the success of a treaty cannot be measured simply by the extent of its membership but rather in its progress towards the realisation of its object and purpose." The delegation went on to describe these as "establishing the highest possible common standards for regulating the international trade in conventional arms, and preventing and eradicating their illicit trade". Twelve other states called for effective Treaty implementation while Madagascar described a capacity-building workshop held this year, funded by the Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF).

Namibia, on behalf of 56 other states, delivered a joint statement on "Gender and the Disarmament Machinery", in which they "welcome the 2019 Arms Trade Treaty focus area on gender and gender-based violence (GBV)." Six other states mentioned the importance of the implementation of the ATT's GBV criteria, with Ireland referencing Control Arms' *Practical Guide to assess the risk of Gender-Based Violence*

under the ATT, as a guide that offers a “step-by-step approach designed to support the development of more robust export control procedures and ensure GBV forms a key part of risk assessments.”

At the end of the fourth week of First Committee, the Arms Trade Treaty resolution tabled by Latvia has accumulated 93 co-sponsors, with voting set to take place early this week. •

GENDER

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

Many delegations continued to address gender and disarmament across thematic clusters. Some dedicated significant portions of their statements to this topic. Canada argued that applying a feminist lens to disarmament provides essential perspectives on how governments can prevent and respond to violence and conflict. The joint statement delivered by Namibia on behalf of 56 countries noted that considering gender perspectives allows for “deeper examination of underlying assumptions about how gender shapes our own work and the dynamics of joint disarmament efforts.”

Close to ten delegations continued to welcome gender dimensions in the outcome document of the Third Review Conference of the Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons (SALW). Portugal further stressed that it strongly advocates for the inclusion of gender aspects in all SALW-control projects, “as part of the broader effort to promote women participation in disarmament affairs.”

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM), European Union (EU), Malawi, Paraguay, Canada, Nepal, Portugal, Ireland, Austria, Australia, Thailand, Spain, and the Philippines announced that they are committed to ensuring women’s full participation in disarmament processes, so as “to overcome entrenched discrimination and achieve genuine progress,” as observed by Canada. Australia observed that “visible role models ... of their own gender” benefit women considerably. The United Kingdom (UK) stressed that women’s “involvement is key to developing and delivering sustainable action,” and that “this should be recognised in relevant UNGA resolutions.”

Close to ten states referred to the groundbreaking provision on gender-based violence (GBV) in the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Portugal, Ireland, and Norway highlighted the need to effectively implement the provision. Canada stressed its commitment to take into account the risk of GBV in export control assessments. South Africa noted that the ATT, if universalised and effectively implemented, will contribute to reducing violence most often affecting women and children. Trinidad and Tobago welcomed the decision to make gender and arms-related GBV a priority for the next ATT states parties conference.

Costa Rica pointed out that it has established binding criteria for all conventional weapons transfers. It did so to prevent them from aggravating armed conflict, correlated with “deplorable acts of [GBV]”. Ireland added that the illicit proliferation of SALW “overwhelmingly contributes to [GBV]”. Zambia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) reaffirmed that SALW proliferation inhibits gender equality. Namibia, on behalf of 56 states, argued more broadly that gendered experiences during and after conflict, as well as differential impacts of weapons in non-conflict environments must be assessed. The joint statement also referenced the work of the WMD Commission in recognising the impact gender norms can have on approaches to disarmament.

Paraguay called on states to foster cooperation towards strengthening data collection that feeds into comprehensive policies dealing with this threat. Canada reiterated that call, observing that the development of gender-responsible evidence-based policies is crucial along with consultations with a broad spectrum of actors.

With respect to mine action, Italy reiterated that it engages “in promoting gender- and diversity-responsive assistance, aiming to adequately address the different needs of different beneficiaries.” Burkina Faso observed that the continued existence of cluster munitions impedes the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including women’s empowerment.

Trinidad and Tobago introduced its draft resolution on *Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control*, discussed in last week’s Monitor. Trinidad and Tobago noted that the resolution transcends notions of women as victims of armed violence and acknowledges women’s actual and potential contribution in relevant processes. Paraguay informed that in light of its role as a co-sponsor to aforementioned resolution, it recently incorporated the identification of femicide into its penal legislation. The Philippines also presented some of its national initiatives to “reframe the intersection of women and disarmament from one of oppression to one of agents of change.” •

DEVELOPMENT

Ariana Smith | Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy

Last week, member states continued to refer to sustainable development in discussions on conventional weapons. Many states referred to the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and its damaging effect on regional development. The delegation of Argentina, among others, highlighted the consequences of conventional weapon proliferation on already vulnerable populations and their “fundamental rights” to pursue sustainable development. Togo cited illegal flows of SALW as the biggest threat to security and development in Africa. Aligning with the statements of both the African Group and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Zambia also discussed the impact of SALW on African development and called for full implementation of the UN Programme of Action (UN-PoA), which aims to prevent, combat, and eradicate the illicit trade of SALW.

Turkey, along with Ghana, Italy, Pakistan, and Portugal, among others, commended the recent outcome document of the UNPoA’s Third Review Conference, which reaffirmed international commitment to eliminating illicit SALW while highlighting the link between this goal and sustainable development. In particular, states mentioned Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 16.4 (calling for a significant cut to the illicit weapon flows by 2030).

Many states, including Costa Rica and Greece, also referenced SDG 16 as a representation of how disarmament and development must converge to achieve sustainable development. Ghana welcomed the

compatibility of the UN Secretary-General’s disarmament agenda with both the SDGs and the African Union’s (AU) Agenda 2063, which is a framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent over the next 50 years. “It is vital that efforts towards achieving the SDGs and the AU Agenda 2063 are mutually reinforcing and link disarmament to development,” Ghana said.

The Republic of Korea and Portugal, among others, discussed the importance of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in promoting disarmament and enabling regional development. The Republic of Korea called for universalisation of the Treaty and for broader regional membership in order to support SDG 16, among other developmental benchmarks.

Lao People’s Democratic Republic (PDR) discussed the challenge of managing the devastating effects of explosive remnants of war (ERW) and unexploded ordnances (UXO) on socio-economic development and poverty eradication. To meet this need, Lao PDR adopted national SDG 18, called “Lives Safe from UXO.”

A few member states, including China and Zambia, called for developed countries to increase development assistance to developing countries. China also encouraged states to release expenditure and arms transfer information to the UN Register of Conventional Arms and the UN Report on Military Expenditures to increase transparency. Timor-Leste promoted improved regional information sharing and border



control pertaining to illegal arms and ammunitions, citing this as essential to regional development initiatives. Zambia, referencing the “symbiotic link between peace and sustainable development,” also called for international assistance in implementing the UNPoA and its International Tracing Instrument. Throughout the week, member states, including Indonesia, Iran, and Pakistan, reiterated appeals to reduce military

spending and to reallocate funding to development needs. Pakistan cited several “worrying trends” pertaining to conventional weapons, including the scale of global military expenditures. Indonesia stated that reallocating military budgets is essential to eliminating poverty and achieving the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Climate Agreement. •

EDUCATION

Matthew Bolton | International Disarmament Institute, Pace University

On 19 October 2018, thirty-eight co-sponsoring states released their text of L.49 “United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education.” The draft resolution is substantially the same as General Assembly Resolution 71/57, adopted without a vote in 2016. It expresses appreciation to those states, international organisations, civil society, and academic institutions that provided submissions for the UN Secretary-General’s 2018 report on implementation of the recommendations of the 2002 “UN Study on Disarmament and Non-proliferation Education.” It calls for states to submit similar reports in 2020.

The only major change is a new operative paragraph (OP3), which expresses appreciation to the Secretary-General for his new disarmament agenda, *Securing Our Common Future*, and “notes the proposed actions therein to further advance disarmament and non-proliferation education.” The new Agenda highlights the importance of disarmament “education and training opportunities ... in order to empower young people to be a force for change and disarmament.” It offers a concrete plan for ways to establish platforms for such engagement.

The most detailed statement on this topic in the last two weeks has been from Japan, on 30 October, regarding the role of disarmament and non-proliferation education in “moving towards ‘a safer world free of nuclear weapons.’” Such education, said Japan, “provides people with a variety of perspectives, enabling greater engagement and fostering dialogue and cooperation among a wide range of actors.” It “has significant potential to bridge political, regional and technical differences, consequently crystallising into concerted efforts.” Japan raised the possibility that the 2002 UN Study “might require updates to better suit today’s situation, and we believe that it is high time to begin discussing the matter.”

Japan also asserted that “Active engagement with the younger generation is essential.” Similarly, Kazakhstan noted the importance of attracting and engaging youth in discussions on security and disarmament. Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement

asserted that social networks, education, and awareness-raising are important to disarmament.

Saying that “disarmament education helps change the basic attitudes of people and policymakers with respect to peace and security,” Nepal highlighted the work of the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament for Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD), based in Nepal, saying that the regional centres “should be encouraged to disseminate information and develop educational modules” for various age and educational levels. Kazakhstan lauded the disarmament education work of UN Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and the Secretary-General’s Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters.

Other states noted the relevance of education to conventional weapons issues. Speaking about the need to universalise and implement the Arms Trade Treaty, Albania noted the importance of raising awareness of the dangers of illegal use and possession of arms. Similarly, Bulgaria spoke about increasing awareness of the ongoing threat posed by cluster munitions. States also reported to the First Committee on their disarmament education activities. Nepal reported that in partnership with the UNRCPD, it had “developed textbook content on peace and disarmament education for grade 8 to 10.” Mozambique said that it “conducts regular public awareness campaigns, seminars and workshops” regarding small arms and light weapons “to explain and promote public debate with all relevant stakeholders.” The EU said that it supported UNODA’s disarmament education financially, “including through a visit of the UN Disarmament Fellows to EU institutions in Brussels.”

Kazakhstan observed that states could not do disarmament education alone, saying that “it is obvious” that policymakers “need to enhance the engagement of the expert and scientific community and civil society in discussing all aspects of the disarmament and non-proliferation issues,” working in a “collective synergy with redoubled vigour to achieve what we all commonly aspire.” •

SIDE EVENT REPORT: BUILDING MOMENTUM FOR THE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Carina Draper | Pace University

On 30 October 2018, the permanent missions of Mexico and Austria, as well as representatives from the civil society organisation Peace Boat organised a side event called “Building Momentum for the Entry into Force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), and how the international community has received it.

“Give me back my father, give me back my mother, give me back my people, give me peace,” said Michiko Tsukamoto, a hibakusha, or atomic bomb survivor. She was 10 years old when the atomic bomb devastated Hiroshima. As she bravely told her story at the side event the devastating effects of nuclear weapons became clear, not only for those directly affected but also for those who carry on the stories of those that died. It was emphasised that the average age of many hibakusha is over 83, and so their wisdom and advocacy is not going to be around for much longer.

On the Panel beside Ms. Tsukamoto was the Permanent Representative of Austria to Geneva, Ambassador Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger, and the Permanent Representative of Mexico, Ambassador Juan Jose Gómez Camacho, as well as Peace Boat’s Youth Communicator, Ms. Mako Ando.

Both ambassadors commented with satisfaction on the fast pace of countries’ accession to the TPNW. Ambassador Camacho noted the importance of Civil Society, as it is one of the strongest pillars of the TPNW. Ambassador Camacho provided some clarity on the TPNW and its provisions, stating that the TPNW does not run contrary to nor substitutes the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), but instead, strengthens and complements it. As questions and comments were opened to the audience, the subject of youth involvement arose. Nuclear disarmament is not something that many youth are concerned about, mostly due to exclusion from dialogue. The Youth Communicator for Peace Boat commented, “Not many youth, even in Japan are interested. It is very difficult to raise awareness, and we still have the ability to listen to hibakusha, but not everyone gets involved. If only they (youths) had a direct opportunity, they would be able to change their mind from other young people (who are not concerned).” Ms. Mako stated the positive impact that Peace Boat has had on youth involvement, as it allows for young people to get involved directly with hibakusha and learn about nuclear disarmament. This programme, among others, helps to educate the next generation of advocates, diplomats, and world leaders by offering a global perspective on nuclear weapons as the Peace Boat sails around the world. •



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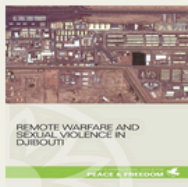
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Contributing organisations and campaigns to this edition:

Article 36
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Control Arms
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International Campaign to Ban Landmines
International Disarmament Institute, Pace University
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