

# FIRST COMMITTEE MONITOR

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# MILITARISM AND EROSION

Ray Acheson | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

As First Committee delegates worked their way through thematic debates on outer space, cyber security, disarmament machinery, and other issues last week, concerns about the international rules-based order remained high. These concerns spilled into the commencement of action on resolutions on Friday, where many delegations flagged in particular Japan's annual disarmament resolution, which it has been increasingly weakening since 2016, for undermining this rules-based order. But last week's discussions highlighted that it is not only the existing rules and norms that are under threat: when what has been agreed upon in the past is no longer seen as relevant or applicable by certain parties, how can new rules and norms related to new weapons or environments be credibly developed?

There is a significant challenge in trying to build a rules-based order in the virtual world or outer space while the rules here on Earth are disintegrating, being pulled apart thread by thread. While this international order, made up of various treaties and agreements collectively negotiated and tested over time, has always encountered issues of non-compliance and normative challenges, we do seem to now be witnessing a more concerted unweaving of this system. Built by the victors in the wake of a global conflict, this system is under now direct threat from those very states, which are led by governments threatening to build the capacity for and embark upon new conflicts using new weapons in new spaces.

Within First Committee discussions about cyber space or outer space, there is tension between those who push forward with a presumption of militarism—that both will inevitably be warfighting domains—and those who seek to avoid conflict and violence in either space. France, for example, adopted a doctrine earlier this year “for using its defensive and offensive cyber warfare capabilities.” Meanwhile Malaysia urged that the weaponisation of cyber technologies “should be rejected, as it risks

triggering a new arms race between nations,” while Austria warned, “Fighting malicious cyber activities ... must not serve as a pretext for tightening control over citizens/users and thereby undermining basic human rights such as the right to privacy and the freedom of expression.”

This multifaceted issue requires us to safeguard against militarism. The unending cycle of support of weapons and war does not need to be, and must not be, transported into cyber space and outer space. If we tacitly or actively accept weaponisation of more and ever more technologies and environments, we will only exacerbate the violent conflict, human rights violations, and threats to societal and planetary survival that we already face.

In the meantime, we also need to safeguard against the restrictions on militarism we have already built. On Friday, Algeria, Austria, Brazil, Ireland, Liechtenstein, and Mexico raised concerns that Japan's resolution on “future-oriented dialogue” for nuclear disarmament reinterprets, limits, or places conditions upon past agreements. In the midst of the current geopolitical situation and erosion of the international rules-based order, Liechtenstein warned that we must call for unequivocal support for past agreements, while Austria said it cannot accept any resolutions that seek to backtrack or question existing obligations. It is vital this approach is maintained throughout action on First Committee resolutions and in relation to all other forums for disarmament and international security—including the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference next year. Our world is on fire. The least that those working for disarmament can do is preserve the norms and implement the agreements we already have, while collectively shaping additional constraints and preventing the creation of new domains and tools of violence.



# NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Katrin Geyer | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

States continued to refer to nuclear weapons last week under various thematic clusters. In addition, action on nuclear-related resolutions began on Friday. Explanations of vote on the resolutions adopted on Friday, and action on further nuclear resolutions, will continue this upcoming week.

Under the cluster of "Other disarmament measures," Japan reiterated the need to provide quality disarmament education that fosters critical thinking to facilitate dialogue and the bridging of political differences. It observed that this was necessary to "break the current stalemate and advance nuclear disarmament." Ecuador recognised the effective role of civil society in advancing disarmament efforts, and said that this was reflected in the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize which was awarded to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).

In the "Outer space" cluster, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) expressed concern at the abrogation of the Anti-Ballistic-Missile Treaty and the impact this could have including in relation to a potential increase of the number of nuclear weapons.

Under the cluster of "Regional disarmament and security," many delegations such as the NAM, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Arab Group, Cuba, Myanmar, Indonesia, Venezuela, Malaysia, and Iraq, amongst others, referred to nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZs) as vital tools for nuclear disarmament. Some welcomed the conference on NWFZs to be held at the margins of the 2020 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference. The United States (US) said that ASEAN's continued efforts to preserve its region as a NWFZ is vital in addressing regional threats and criticised "China's expanding nuclear arsenal, estimated to more than double in the next decades." The US argued that China is developing new low-yield nuclear weapons and nuclear-armed hypersonic missiles and it refuses "to engage in substantial dialogue on nuclear arms control."

The Arab Group, and Iraq, Algeria, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), reiterated the urgency of creating a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East (WMDFZ). They expressed their hope for the conference to be held in November 2020 to advance towards a legally binding instrument establishing a WMDFZ in the Middle East. The Arab Group and Iran encouraged all relevant parties to the region to participate in good faith, and underscored yet again the dangerous implications of Israel's refusing to join the NPT. Others, such as the United Kingdom (UK), Venezuela, Malaysia, and Indonesia, reiterated their support to the process. The UK recognised its responsibility as a co-convenor of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

ASEAN called for the resumption of denuclearisation efforts in the Korean peninsula. The UAE welcomed the recent positive steps of high-level talks. It called on the Democratic People's Republic (DPRK) to return to the NPT, sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and to abide by relevant resolutions.

Cuba repeated its concern about US' withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran. Indonesia called on all parties to the agreement to continue upholding their obligations.

Under the topic of "Disarmament machinery," various states expressed concern about the lack of political will to advance nuclear disarmament in the Conference of Disarmament (CD). Cuba and the Arab Group observed that this is the main reason for the CD's deadlock. Iran argued that some nuclear-armed states mask their lack of political will to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work with technicalities. Pakistan argued that certain countries are only prepared to advance "a partial non-proliferation measure" in the form of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) without addressing existing stocks, which it argued "will make no contribution to nuclear disarmament."

The NAM underscored the importance of the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV) to enhance public opinion in favour of nuclear disarmament. Egypt also called SSOD-IV a “landmark event” to address the stalemate in nuclear disarmament.

Cuba and Iran expressed hope that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) will revitalise negotiations in the CD. The Arab Group called the adoption of the TPNW a “historic and important development,” which constitutes the first binding instrument prohibiting and therefore delegitimising nuclear weapons.

France said it was “extremely concerned about the growing trend towards polarized debates on nuclear disarmament.”

## Resolutions

Note: There are still more states waiting to explain their votes on the resolutions below. These will be reported upon in the next edition of the *First Committee Monitor*. The following reporting on explanations of vote (EOV) is not necessarily comprehensive.

**L.1, “Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East,”** was traditionally always adopted without a vote. However, last year for the first time, a vote was requested, as it was this year. The resolution was adopted with a vote of 172-6-2. Israel and the US voted against it, while Cameroon and the UK abstained. The US explained that while it endorses some key elements in the resolution, it cannot support it this year as it is divisive and does not support inclusive dialogue. The US urged the sponsors to reengage neighbours to find an acceptable path forward, and expressed its hope that the resolution can be adopted by consensus in the future once the relevant parties have adopted a constructive approach. Iran expressed its support for the resolution and observed that while resolution hasn’t changed some delegations have chosen to break the three-decade long consensus on it. It urged the resolution’s

co-sponsors to delete PP9 and OP4 referring to peace negotiations in the Middle East because such negotiations do not exist.

**L.2, “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East,”** was adopted with a vote of 151-6-22. Canada, Israel, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, the US, and Palau voted against the resolution. A separate vote was held on PP5 and PP6, which were retained by 159-3-5 and 163-3-4, respectively. The paragraphs recall decisions of the 1995 and 2000 NPT Review Conferences. Pakistan, as a non-state party to the NPT, explained that it voted against these two PPs but voted in favour of the resolution as a whole.

The US explained its vote against the resolution, noting that the resolution is politically motivated and aimed at singling out one state in the Middle East. It observed that this only drives divisions and distracts attention from the real security risks in the region. Israel noted that the resolution distorts the truth and fails to confront the real risks of weapons of mass destruction in the region. Iran explained its support for the resolution, arguing that it reflects the concern of the majority of states that Israel, as the only non-party to the NPT, is the source of nuclear proliferation in the region.

**L.4, “Follow-up to nuclear disarmament obligations agreed to at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons,”** was adopted with a vote of 110-43-20. A separate vote was called on PP6, which was retained by 109-5-50. Pakistan said that because it is not a party to the NPT, it abstained from the resolution as a whole, and from PP6 because of its references to the NPT.

**L.6, “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 118-0-63.

**Draft decision L.11, “Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices,”** was adopted with a vote of 177-1-4. Pakistan voted against the decision,

while the DPRK, Israel, Syria, and Iran abstained. Israel said that the ability of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) to address security concerns is questionable, especially in the Middle East where several states have a poor record of compliance with treaty obligations. Iran noted that any FMCT must cover past, present, and future production of fissile material and has to provide for the elimination of stocks. It lamented that the resolution reflects an old and limited mandate for the Treaty. Pakistan reiterated its long-standing position that an FMCT would undermine the security of a select few by freezing asymmetries in existing stocks of fissile material. China maintained that a comprehensive balanced plan in Conference on Disarmament and the negotiation of FMCT under the Shannon mandate is the only way forward. China said that moratoriums on fissile material production cannot be verified and can weaken the motivation to negotiate a treaty.

**L.12, “Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons,”** was adopted with a vote of 119-41-15. Two separate votes were called on OP5 and OP6, retained by a vote of 108-40-13 and 109-26-23, respectively. OP5 calls upon states to promote the Treaty through contacts, outreach, and other means. OP6 requests the UN Secretary-General to report to the UN General Assembly at its 75th session on the status of signature, ratification, acceptance, approval, or accession of the Treaty.

Austria introduced the resolution in a general statement, noting that a clear majority of states have decided that the status quo is not acceptable in light of nuclear weapons’ humanitarian impact. Cuba welcomed the resolution and called on all states that haven’t yet done so to ratify as soon as possible. Iran expressed its support for the resolution and observed that the TPNW complements the NPT.

In a joint statement, France, the UK, and the US expressed their opposition to the Treaty, asserting that “nuclear deterrence is essential to international security” and that the TPNW “denies this reality.” Israel said that it voted against the resolution as it has “deep reservations” about this initiative. Pakistan also explained its vote against the resolution, arguing

that undiminished security can only be achieved through a consensus-based process involving all relevant stakeholders. It argued that the TPNW doesn’t meet those requirements, and reaffirmed that Pakistan is not bound by the Treaty. Sweden said that it abstained from the resolution as it has concerns about certain shortcomings of the Treaty. It reminded that the Swedish government announced that it would not sign or ratify the Treaty in its current form but that it will seek to become an observer state once the Treaty has entered into force.

**L.13, “Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons,”** was adopted with a vote of 136-14-27. In a joint statement, France, the UK, and the US explained that they voted against the resolution as a focus on the international security environment is the only way to humanitarian and security imperatives. China said that while it understands the legitimate concerns of the international community about the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, it voted against the resolution. It argued that its no-first-use policy is the best practice for implementing the humanitarian concept.

**L.14, “Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco),”** was adopted without a vote.

**L.17, “Reducing nuclear danger,”** was adopted with a vote of 117-49-14. Pakistan explained that while it had supported the resolution in the past, it abstained this year as the resolution’s sponsor relies on continuous expansion and modernisation of nuclear and conventional weapons arsenals.

**L.18, “Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons,”** was adopted with a vote of 115-50-15.

**L.19, “Nuclear disarmament,”** was adopted with a vote of 117-40-22. Three separate votes were called on PP32, OP12 and OP16. PP32, retained by a vote of 108-38-14, welcomes the adoption of the TPNW. OP12, retained by a vote of 144-4-17, underlines outcomes and commitments from the 2000 NPT Review Conference. OP16, retained by a vote of

157-1-10, calls for the immediate commencement of the negotiation of an FMCT in the Conference of Disarmament.

**L.20, “Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments,”** was adopted with a vote of 132-32-17. A vote was called on five paragraphs. PP4, welcoming the UN Secretary-General’s Disarmament Agenda and its implementation plan, was retained with a vote of 133-1-29. PP12, welcoming the adoption of the TPNW, was retained with a vote of 110-37-12. OP15, calling for the universalisation of the NPT, was retained with a vote of 153-4-7. OP24, welcoming the TPNW and calling for further effective legally binding measures to advance nuclear disarmament, was retained with a vote of 111-36-12.

**L.21, “Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world,”** was adopted with a vote of 129-37-12. A separate vote was called for PP11, which recalls the adoption of the TPNW, was retained by 111-32-16.

**L.22, “Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas,”** was adopted with a vote of 142-5-30. A separate vote was called for OP6, which was retained by 135-2-30. The OP welcomes steps taken to conclude NWFZ treaties, including steps taken towards the establishment of a NWFZ in the Middle East. In a joint statement, France, UK, and US reiterated their complaint that it “is contradictory to propose simultaneously the establishment of a” NWFZ that would be composed largely of the high seas and also say it would be consistent with applicable principles and rules of international law, arguing that this would contradict the freedom of the high seas.

**L.24, “Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty,”** was adopted with a vote of 177-1-4. A separate vote was called for PP4, which was retained by 160-0-10. It stresses the urgency of the Treaty’s entry into force. A separate vote was also called for PP7, recalling the recommendations of the 2010 NPT Review Conference relating to the CTBT, which also was retained by 168-0-5.

India, Israel, Pakistan, the US, and Syria abstained from this PP. Israel explained that while it voted in favour of the resolution as a whole, it opposes language contained in PP7, OP1 and OP6. The DPRK affirmed that it has made sincere efforts to place a moratorium on nuclear weapon tests and intercontinental ballistic missile launches but argued that the resolution distorts the nuclear issue of the Korean peninsula. It disregards the root causes the DPRK’s nuclear programme and said that the resolution only fuels confrontation and animosity. Brazil said that it voted in favour in light of its continued support for the CTBT’s entry into force but regretted continued reference to UN Security Council resolution 2310 of 2016 which it argued is counterproductive to the Treaty’s entry into force.

**L.26/Rev.1, “Nuclear disarmament verification,”** is yet to be adopted. The resolution has been revised since it was analysed in last week’s *Monitor*. In OP1, language was deleted that “takes note with satisfaction of the conclusions and recommendations contained ... adopted by consensus” in reference to the report adopted by consensus by the GGE on nuclear disarmament verification.

**L.31, “Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament,”** is yet to be adopted. In a joint statement, the UK, the US, and France explained they will vote against the resolution because they believe it is insufficiently linked to the NPT and because it supports the TPNW, which they oppose.

**L.36, “African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty,”** was adopted without a vote. Spain reiterated its position that it will not join protocol III as requested by the resolution because it does not contain any measure that Spain, as a denuclearised country, hasn’t already adopted.

**L.37, “Prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes,”** was adopted without a vote.

**Draft decision L.41, “Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty),”** was adopted without a vote.

**L.47/Rev.1, “Joint Courses of Action and Future-oriented Dialogue towards a without nuclear weapons,”** was tabled by Japan in replace of its usual resolution, “United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons”. The resolution has been revised since it was analysed in last week’s Monitor:

- PP7 has minor linguistic updates and includes additional language supporting the commencement of FMCT negotiations in accordance with the document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein.
- PP9 replaces the risk of nuclear weapons being used “due to” miscalculation or misunderstanding with “either by”.
- PP10 has been re-arranged slightly, now recalling the effective role of nuclear disarmament verification “in assuring compliance”.
- PP12 replaced the reference to “nuclear” disarmament, non-proliferation and international security with “arms control,” disarmament, non-proliferation and international security.
- PP15 has a small linguistic update.
- PP16 has been slightly re-worded but keeps the same meaning.
- OP1 has been slightly revised linguistically.
- OP3 has a new addition. It encourages the following, “inter alia,” as joint courses of action.
- In OP3(f), “nuclear” has been added before “disarmament and non-proliferation education.
- OP5 has a small linguistic update, having moved down two lines the reference “of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea”.

In its introduction of the resolution, Japan said that the text reaffirms states’ commitment to nuclear disarmament obligations and to put them into practice for the 10th Review Conference of the NPT.

Japan argued that the resolution supports efforts to reach common ground on nuclear disarmament.

The resolution was adopted with a vote by 148-4-26. A vote was called for twelve paragraphs in the resolution.

PP2 was retained by 148-4-26. It reaffirms the NPT as essential foundation and stresses that disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy are mutually reinforcing.

PP4 was retained by 158-2-7, reaffirming the importance of implementing agreed commitments under previous NPT Review Conferences.

PP8 was retained by a vote of 155-2-8. It calls for the immediate commencement of negotiations for an FMCT.

PP16 was retained by a vote of 150-3-9 welcomes recent diplomatic efforts in the Korean peninsula.

PP18 recognises the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from the use of nuclear weapons. It was retained by a vote of 147-0-18. Algeria said that despite concerns that the paragraph doesn’t reflect agreed outcome language from the 2010 NPT Review Conference it voted in favour to retain it. Ireland said it abstained from this paragraph as the reference to humanitarian consequences is insufficient. It also regretted the lack of a gender perspective in the resolution.

PP19 welcomes the visits of leaders, youth and others to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It was retained by a vote of 155-2-5. Russia and China voted against this paragraph. China noted that while it has sympathy for the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it is more meaningful to learn from history to prevent the same from happening in the future instead of “oral propaganda” and invitations to visit these two cities.

OP1 was retained by a vote of 133-7-20. Algeria noted that while it voted in favour of this paragraph,



it doesn't not cover NPT obligations or steps and actions agreed upon by previous NPT Review Conferences. Liechtenstein underscored that in light of the current geopolitical situation, there is a need to call for the unequivocal support for past agreements, especially as agreed upon in NPT outcome documents. It therefore perceives OP1 to be unacceptable as it doesn't recommit nuclear-armed states to previously agreed obligations. Brazil noted that language in OP1 suggests that a world free of nuclear weapons is contingent upon the easing of international tensions which is not in line with Article VI of the NPT and other NPT commitments. It observed that it is also at odds with PP14 that recognises that nuclear disarmament and the international security environment are mutually reinforcing.

OP3(c) was retained by a vote of 146-3-15. It calls for a moratorium on fissile material and the "deepening of substantive discussions" on an FMCT.

OP3(d) was retained by a vote of 133-5-21. It calls the eight remaining annex 2 states to "make every effort, including maintaining all existing moratoriums.... and declaring their political will to do so...to sign and ratify the [CTBT]"

OP3(e), calling on states to make practical contributions towards nuclear disarmament verification, was retained by 139-2-20.

OP3(f) was retained by 151-2-8. It deals with nuclear disarmament education and awareness raising.

OP5 was retained by a vote of 149-3-10. It reaffirms commitment to the denuclearisation of the DPRK. The DPRK observed that the resolution does not intend to engage in dialogue towards a world free of nuclear weapons and said that "Japan is not in a position to poke its nose" into the Korean peninsula nuclear issue.

Algeria explained that it abstained from the resolution as a whole as well as multiple paragraphs as it defers from agreed language. Mexico said that it could not support the resolution as states must meet international obligations and commitments without conditions, and the resolution doesn't refer to all commitments. It asserted that the resolution's language cannot be considered to be a substitute for NPT agreements. Brazil also expressed its deep concerns with some elements of the resolution, and argued that it wasn't conducive to promoting common understandings, reinterpreting or limiting past agreements. Ireland said it could not support the resolution as certain elements are reinterpreted and the resolution places conditions upon previous NPT outcomes and commitments. Liechtenstein also explained that it cannot support the resolution but appreciates Japan's efforts. It stressed that the resolution cannot be a basis for or guidance to work for the 2020 NPT Review Conference. Liechtenstein further criticised that the resolution suggests that a moratorium on nuclear testing is sufficient, instead of calling for remaining states to join the CTBT. It therefore abstained.

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## ARMED DRONES

Foeke Postma | PAX and Allison Pytlak | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

A diverse set of countries, including Jamaica, India, the Netherlands, Ecuador, and Namibia, mentioned the risks posed by uncrewed aerial vehicles (UAVs) during various thematic clusters.

Peru said that as part of its UN Security Council presidency in July, it drew attention to the issue of drones. It said the regulation of drones is imperative and that it advocates for a transparent, multilateral process that focus on transfer, proliferation, and use. Ecuador stated its disapproval of the continued development and use of UAVs. India mentioned UAVs under the umbrella of addressing the security issues posed by rapid technological developments.

Jamaica announced that its Ministry of National Security has drafted a policy on the importation of drones on the basis of the high risk to public safety and potentially devastating impacts. Namibia noted that military drones are incompatible with international humanitarian law (IHL) and that a protocol on them is needed.

The Netherlands committed itself to respond to the rapid development and proliferation of UAVs by continuing its contribution to the development of International Standards on the Export and Subsequent Use of Armed Unmanned Aerial Vehicles. With the German delegation, the Stimson Center, and PAX, the Netherlands also hosted a side event to discuss the increased proliferation and use of armed drones, and the need for more transparency and state responsibility for their use and export.

As noted in an earlier edition of the *First Committee Monitor*, civil society has been trying to raise the priority of this issue in First Committee and other fora like the Arms Trade Treaty, for years. The 2019 joint civil society statement delivered by PAX was endorsed by more than 30 organisations. It noted, "The rules-based international order is already under strain. Without action to address these concerns and curtail the use of remote violence, further deterioration of established norms can be expected."

## SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Rose Welsch | International Action Network on Small Arms

Delegations continued to raise issues related to small arms and light weapons (SALW) throughout various thematic debates last week. During the portion of First Committee dedicated to regional disarmament, Ms. Mary Soliman, Chief of the Regional Disarmament, Information and Outreach Branch of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), provided a briefing on the work of UNODA's Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean over the past year. Ms. Soliman reported that the Regional Centre in Lima (UNLIREC) helped destroy nearly 1,000 pieces of light weapons ammunition, trained law enforcement to mitigate the diversion of weapons

and ammunition, and enhanced the capacity of private security personnel in weapons stockpile management. To boost implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Centre worked with South American youth community leaders to conduct surveys on engagement with SDG 16 through a specially developed mobile app. The Center also worked with national arms control and regulating authorities in South America and the Caribbean to develop gender-sensitive approaches to armed violence reduction, and collaborated with civil society to counter violence against women.

The Regional Centre in Kathmandu (UNRCPD) collaborated with the World Customs Organization's

Asia-Pacific Security Conference on Countering Terrorism, where it addressed issues related to the prevention of illicit trafficking in small arms and ammunition. The Regional Centre in Togo (UNREC) is implementing projects in support of the African Union's "Silencing the Guns by 2020" and of the Kinshasa Convention. The Centre is also supporting a number of governments in strengthening their physical security and stockpile management efforts to improve control over their arsenals and prevent diversion of weapons to illicit markets. The Centre will continue to focus on these activities in the coming year to combat violence exacerbated by the use of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in conflict zones, said Ms. Soliman. The Centre, she noted, can also offer technical assistance in the prevention of violent extremism, cross-border cooperation, community violence reduction initiatives, and peace education.

The European Union (EU) said it cooperates closely with UN regional centres, regional, and sub-regional organisations, and provides support for SALW control in South East Europe and the Western Balkans. The EU said it also supports the African Union's "Silence the Guns by 2020" initiative. Its assistance has helped to improve physical security and stockpile management in existing conventional arms and ammunition depots in the Central African Republic and the Sahel region, and collect and destroy arms and ammunition across West Africa, the EU stated. In July 2019, the EU Council adopted a new decision in support of Africa-China-EU civil society dialogue on preventing the diversion of arms and ammunition in Africa. The EU stated that it has also entered into partnership with the League of Arab States on capacity building in arms control and countering the illicit trafficking of conventional arms. In Latin America, the EU said it contributes to the enhancement of small arms control capacities of several Latin American and Caribbean, including in the areas of stockpile management, training, and legislation. Japan also announced that its commitment to providing more than half a million dollars to UNREC for a SALW project, and said it hoped others will join its efforts.

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) said it's committed to confronting the illicit trade in SALW and noted that its Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) is working to increase the capacity of states to combat it. CARICOM also reiterated the importance of synergies in disarmament and arms control and underscored its support for UNLIREC's holistic focus on gender and Agenda 2030, in particular SDG 16. CARICOM noted that UNLIREC worked in collaboration with Germany and Jamaica to host a regional seminar in Jamaica on conventional ammunition management in preparation for the work of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) that will convene in 2020 to examine conventional ammunition issues.

During the Disarmament Machinery portion of First Committee, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) provided a briefing on its activities. In 2018, UNIDIR adopted a three-year strategic research agenda that includes supporting national and regional policies and frameworks for weapon and ammunition management, and integrating conventional arms control into multilateral and national conflict prevention. UNIDIR reported that its workstream on weapon and ammunition management (WAM) focused primarily on West Africa. In cooperation with national partners, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and United Nations bodies, UNIDIR conducted country assessments and established baselines for the development of road maps in three states—Burkina Faso, Liberia and Niger—to strengthen WAM in line with regional and international standards and guidelines.

To support member states in implementing their UN Programme of Action on Small Arms (UNPoA) and Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) commitments, UNIDIR also reported that it convened a series of brainstorming meetings to explore the role of private sector actors in mitigating the risk of diversion in arms transfers; in enhancing the tracing of illicit SALW; and in strengthening reporting on the conventional arms trade.

## OUTER SPACE

Jessica West | Project Ploughshares

**D**eterioration of the outer space security environment was on display at First Committee this week. China, Russia, and the United States (US) exchanged accusations about the deployment of weapons in space or against space-based systems, while the European Union (EU), United Kingdom (UK), Mexico, and Pakistan highlighted a series of threats including anti-satellite (ASAT) tests and jamming as well as the capability to threaten objects in space more generally. Although pointing to a “certain country,” Iran’s assessment that “weaponisation is no longer a risk but a real fact” captures the urgency of discussion.

Prevention of an armed race in outer space (PAROS) is the core focus of the First Committee and the Conference on Disarmament. As noted by China, the PAROS resolution has received overwhelming support for almost four decades, including favourable statements this year from the Non-Aligned Movement, the African Group, the Arab Group, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Common Wealth of Independent States (CIS), and the EU. Resounding support was expressed for the work of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) tasked with identifying practical measures to advance PAROS. Although a consensus document was not adopted, a presentation by the Chair, Brazilian Ambassador Patriota, indicated that discussions had been “deeply substantive” within a “constructive atmosphere” that contributed to the development of key concepts, narrowing differences, and identifying avenues for future work. The impact of this process is evident in the increased specificity of statements including Egypt’s call for a legal agreement to prohibit not just weapons in space, but armed attacks against space-based systems, that can be “verified using a diversified set of tools supplemented by transparency measures.”

While many states continue to support the draft treaty Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force Against

Space Objects (PPWT) proposed by Russia and China, including South Africa, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Cuba, Algeria, and Myanmar, dissenting voices such as Germany insist that it has insufficient scope and is lacking in verification. Still others see this entire discussion as outdated. Australia insisted that there is no gap in the existing legal framework that needs mending. Rather than preventing weapons, the US urged focus on risk reduction through efforts to reduce misinterpretations and miscalculations, offering examples of initiatives alongside the UK, such as increasing lines of communication. Such proposals are more closely aligned with voluntary rules of behaviour reflected in the set of 21 guidelines on the long-term sustainability of space activities (LTS) adopted by the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) in 2018.

Indeed, a broad spectrum of support was expressed for the LTS guidelines and their role as a transparency and confidence-building measure (TCBM), including by the EU, US, Switzerland, Brazil, South Korea, Italy, and Japan. In a right of reply, however Russia maintained that the advancement of such TCBMs, while the mandate of COPUOS, is not the work of the First Committee, which is tasked with arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation. Minding this gap, the First Committee and the Fourth Committee, under which COPUOS is mandated, held a joint session that included insistence by both Thomas Markram, Deputy High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and Simonetta Di Pippo, Director of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, that greater implementation of existing security and transparency measures can aid in face of growing military activity. They were joined by a panel discussion featuring Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan, Distinguished Fellow with the Observer Research Foundation; Diane Howard, Chief Counsel for Space Commerce at the United States Department of Commerce; and Cynda Collins Arsenault, Co-founder and President of the Secure World Foundation.

Despite insistence by Russia, Mexico, and others that TCBMs cannot replace legally-binding measures, enthusiasm for the LTS process is spurring new ideas for practical arms control measures in space. Notably, support is growing for an agreement that would restrict the intentional creation of debris through ASATs; voices included ASEAN, Italy, Switzerland, the EU, Germany, France, Australia, and South Africa. This convergence of views is positive, but progress will require additional outreach.

Bangladesh rightly asserted that “developing countries should have equal opportunities to voice concerns and perspectives in defining future rules of the road for outer space.” More bluntly, Pakistan issued a reminder that current patterns of technological power in space won’t last for ever, and that this time, developing countries will no longer carry the burden of non-proliferation. In time, concern with weapons may be *à la mode* once again.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Allison Pytlak | Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

India introduced draft resolution L.16, “Role of Science and Technology in the context of International Security and Disarmament,” during the other disarmament measures cluster. In its introduction, India provided a history of the resolution in the First Committee, which it tabled for the first time in 1997 in recognition of the fact that the “interface between the emerging technologies and their implications on international security is of vital importance, especially in view of the realities of development which call for a synergy with science and technology.” India noted that the resolution has been adopted by consensus for the last two years.

India also reported back on two activities undertaken as a result of the 2018 resolution: the submission of a new report from the UN Secretary-General (UNSG) on recent developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts and the convening of a one-day seminar on the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament by UNIDIR in Geneva. India explained a prime take-away from the seminar was interest in conducting more opportunities to foster dialogue between policy-makers, practitioners, diplomats, technocrats, governments, and the private sector.

As a result, the 2019 resolution proposes that member states organise events such as conferences,

seminars, workshops, and exhibitions at national, regional, and international level. Other operative paragraphs request an updated report from the UNSG and encourages the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters to “continue its discussions on current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts.” The preambular paragraphs recognise the relationship between technology and disarmament; acknowledge the rights of states to transfer technology for peaceful uses; and notes science-based exchange and dialogue that occurs in the context of the International Atomic Energy Association; the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention; the Chemical Weapons Convention; bodies that relate to outer space; and the process on lethal autonomous weapons within the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. The 2019 resolution includes new co-sponsors: Angola, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Finland, Malta, Norway, Portugal, and Singapore.

Also relevant to this topic was Switzerland’s statement announcing the March 2019 launch of the Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator Foundation, which brings together the scientific and diplomatic communities to anticipate the consequences of technological advances on society and politics.



## CYBER

Allison Pytlak | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

References to cyber security and/or information and communications technologies (ICTs) dominated the “Other disarmament measures” thematic cluster. Virtually all of the more than 30 delegations that delivered statements on this topic welcomed the establishment of the UN’s open-ended working group (OEWG) and its sixth group of governmental experts (GGE). These were established by resolutions adopted in First Committee last year amidst some controversy and breaking of traditional consensus on the issue, as Brazil highlighted in its statement this year.

Singapore, Switzerland, Brazil, Japan, Bangladesh, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Indonesia, Australia, United States (US), Russia, and Spain, among others, urged that the two processes work in complementary manner, a message reinforced in the briefings delivered by the chairpersons of the two processes on progress to date. The OEWG had its first substantive session in September in an atmosphere that was acknowledged as constructive or encouraging by Montenegro, Switzerland, Netherlands, and Austria, among others. It is now preparing for an informal intersessional in December that will enable inputs from relevant industry and civil society. The GGE has had several regional consultations and its first formal session will convene in December, following one informal consultation open to the UN membership.

A primary difference between the two processes is their level of openness—all UN member states can participate in the OEWG, whereas the GGE only permits twenty-five states to attend. This sixth GGE does have more input mechanisms than previous iterations have, but states such as Pakistan, Iran, Indonesia, and Russia expressed preference for the more open format of the OEWG. Iran feels that the GGE is vehicle for a few powerful states to maintain the status quo by rejecting development of international legal norms, as this would limit their freedom in developing offensive capabilities.

China suggested creating, in the long run, an open, inclusive, and permanent process within the UN framework.

Philippines, Estonia, Montenegro, Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria, Spain, and Mexico, among others, emphasized the subject of inclusivity, usually in reference to the potential for non-governmental stakeholders to contribute to the processes. This was possibly in response to non-ECOSOC organisations being categorically denied access to the September OEWG session.

Beyond procedure, delegations came prepared with ideas for how the OEWG and GGE could focus their work. Pakistan looks to the OEWG to develop a “common understanding for further normative efforts to preserve cyber space from becoming a theatre of conflict”. The Republic of Korea believes that the OEWG can serve as an opportunity to build common understanding and provide practical guidance on implementation of agreed rules and norms. The US said it sees these as two opportunities to refine critical guidance and universalise the principles set out by earlier GGEs. Austria would like the OEWG to find a link to the work of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and the open-ended expert group on cyber crime.

France said the GGE should help develop norms and recommendations on responsible behaviour of states identified by previous GGEs. Many delegations referenced the work of the five previous GGEs, in particular the recommendations of their 2010, 2013, and 2015 consensus reports. These reports affirmed the applicability of international law to cyber space and articulated recommendations of norms of state behaviour in cyber space, among other things. Indonesia, Japan, the Netherlands, and others welcomed that the overriding sentiment in the September OEWG session was to affirm that these past findings present a baseline for current and future work and should not be disregarded. Austria

noted that guiding principles have been useful in other areas of UN work and that more needs to be done to outline how each country will apply already articulated norms.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Brazil, Australia, Estonia, France, Slovenia, Switzerland, Japan, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Spain, Mexico, Austria, and Venezuela affirmed that international law applies to cyberspace was affirmed. These countries variously cited the UN Charter and international humanitarian law as sources of relevant law. The United Kingdom and France invited other member states to outline how they interpret international law as applying to cyber space. International human rights law (IHRL) was less frequently cited but Estonia, France, Malaysia, Austria, and the UK, among others, indicated that their vision of safe, secure, free cyber space is one where individual rights are protected. Austria warned, "Fighting malicious cyber activities ... must not serve as a pretext for tightening control over citizens/users and thereby undermining basic human rights such as the right to privacy and the freedom of expression." Iran said that IHRL could be materialised only when the values of individual societies can be ensured.

Other took a different or more nuanced view of legal applicability. The Philippines noted that the international community has seen a number of multilateral instruments emerge in this area, which are sometimes cooperative and other times competing. Egypt said it is time to move forward in an inclusive and action-oriented manner to develop legally-binding rules, stating that non-binding measures are interim steps but do not provide security in the long term. Indonesia said it is ready to discuss further how existing international law applies "including the possibility of having a *lex specialis*, without pre-judging the outcomes of our discussion."

Statements tended to reflect richer substance and detail than in past years. The Philippines urged enabling an attribution mechanism. France outlined that it has recently adopted a doctrine for

defensive and offensive cyber warfare capabilities. This was further elaborated in a side event France sponsored on 30 October, reported on separately in this edition. Spain announced it has recently developed its National Cybersecurity Strategy, within the framework of its National Security Policy. The Philippines informed that it manages information security within the context of its National Cyber Security Plan, its National Security Strategy, and relevant national law. Its government's strategic actions are incorporated into its national strategy and Cyber Security Plan 2022. Malaysia will begin to implement a new strategy in 2020. Slovenia announced it is running a special digital diplomacy programme with a special focus on disinformation.

Slovenia also described regional best-practice sharing within the Western Balkan region. ASEAN reinforced the importance of regional collaboration, notably in the area of capacity building. Singapore, Republic of Korea, Japan, Austria, Spain and Netherlands highlighted capacity building as a priority area of work. The Republic of Korea, Japan, and the UK, among others, highlighted confidence building measures.

ASEAN, Switzerland, Montenegro, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and the UK underlined the many positive aspects of ICTs, not least for socioeconomic development. Others zeroed in on specific threats and concerns. Bangladesh noted the risk of ICTs being exploited for weapons of mass destruction proliferation by terrorists or other "unauthorised" entities. Montenegro said that while the risks used to come from just hackers, there are now many kinds of malicious actors in cyber space, including criminals, terrorists, state, and non-state actors. Australia, Montenegro, and Indonesia, among others, highlighted hybrid warfare and/or threat escalation. Cuba described the malicious cyber operations that the United States has conducted against it and noted that the US 2018 Cyber Strategy authorises the use of "cyber weapons" for offensive operations. Iran referenced US cyber attacks and operations. Malaysia, Egypt, and Venezuela warned against the weaponisation or militarisation of ICTs and the potential for new arms racing.

## Resolutions

There are once again two resolutions on ICTs this year, led by the United States (L.49) and Russia (L.50).

An analysis of their contents follows, but it is worth noting that it is surprising there are two resolutions this year, given that the processes established by the 2018 resolutions are underway and not due to report until 2020 and 2021. Draft decisions could have been tabled as a formality to maintain the agenda items, but two highly substantive resolutions are unexpected and represent the potential for renewed polarisation and division, which could threaten the otherwise positive dynamics in the OEWG and GGE, as Brazil warned against in its statement during this cluster.

Much of the Russian statement in this cluster was about its rationale for tabling and elaborating draft resolution L.50, which largely describes the work and mandate of the OEWG. Their statement applauds the OEWG's open nature, but also urges consensus on this issue by having only one resolution. In its statement, Russia expressed frustration that another country would feel that there should be a second resolution in relation to the GGE, and that it views doing so as an "obvious tactic of division".

The US explained that as the OEWG and GGE "are two distinct but related processes, mandated by separate resolutions, and each with their own schedules and deadlines," it believes that it is appropriate the First Committee "to have two distinct but complementary texts ... to reflect that each of these processes have started their work."

### **L.49 "Advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security,"**

is the US-led resolution on ICTs and is intended as an update to the 2018 one. The preambular paragraphs (PPs) reference relevant past resolutions and work of earlier GGEs, including by outlining some of their specific recommendations and points of agreement. Operative paragraphs (OPs) call upon states to be guided by the recommendations of those GGEs; to

submit their views to the UN Secretary-General on an annual basis (which has been practice since 1998 and are used in the compilation on an annual report); and has two new paragraphs that both "welcome" and "note" the commencement of work of the current GGE.

### **L. 50 "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security,"**

is the Russia-led resolution on ICTs and is intended as an update of its annual resolution on the subject. Its preambular paragraphs, most of which are new, stress that it is in states' interest to promote peaceful ICT use; express concern that many states are developing military ICTs which increases the likelihood of their use in conflict; consider it necessary to prevent ICTs being used for criminal or terrorist purposes; and underline the importance of respect for human rights. A noteworthy insertion in the 2019 resolution is a reference to the role of the UN in developing common understandings "on the international legal regulation of the activities of States in the ICT field" (PP10), which may reflect the long-held Russian support for developing a cyber treaty. A new PP (12) stresses the "need to ensure the integrity and continuity of the negotiation process on the security in the use of ICTs under the auspices of the United Nations" and the first operative paragraph also welcomes the "Welcomes the launch of the negotiation process" in the OEWG, which matches how it described the work of the Group in 2018 but is somewhat unusual word choice in this context. The OP2 is also updated to take note of the GGE and encourage that they conduct work in a "constructive and pragmatic manner".

A revised version of this resolution was submitted on 31 October. It deletes the word "negotiating" in front of "mechanisms" in OP2 when describing the OEWG and GGE, so that it now reads, "Underlines that the Open-ended Working Group and the Group of Governmental Experts are important independent mechanisms under United Nations auspices...".

# GENDER AND DISARMAMENT

Katrin Geyer | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

This week, references to gender were made throughout the thematic clusters of “Other disarmament measures,” “Outer space,” “Regional disarmament,” and “Disarmament machinery.” The week culminated in a statement dedicated to gender, delivered by Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of 79 states. This is a considerable increase of states from last year's 60 putting on record their support for the inclusion of gender perspectives in the work of First Committee and beyond.

## Gender perspectives and gender mainstreaming

The Philippines called for the mainstreaming of gender issues in disarmament processes. Namibia, and Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of 79 states, highlighted that the UN Secretary-General's agenda recognises that gender perspectives make disarmament more effective. The joint statement argued that a gender lens allows governments to devise more sustainable, inclusive, consequential, and comprehensive policy solutions. South Africa argued that promoting a gender perspective “expands our knowledge and understanding of challenges, with a view to greater progress in disarmament.” Portugal made similar observations about the strengthening of the disarmament machinery when gender perspectives are included. The European Union (EU) and the joint gender statement welcomed the increase of gender considerations in First Committee resolutions. The Netherlands also welcomed the increasing attention to gender perspectives, which it said “justify our continued efforts.” In an explanation of vote, Ireland regretted the lack of a gender perspective in draft resolution L.47/Rev.1, “Joint courses of action and future-oriented dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons”.

## Gendered impacts

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) called for increased consideration to the impact of violence

on women, while Namibia and the joint gender statement underscored the gendered impacts of armed conflicts and the availability of weapons among societies. The joint gender statement explained that while men make up most of the direct casualties from the use of small arms and light weapons (SALW), these weapons are also used to facilitate acts of gender-based violence against women and girls, resulting in long-term physical, psychological, and socioeconomic impacts.

## Participation

Ecuador called for the involvement of women in all disarmament and arms control processes. Various participants underscored the UN regional centres' vital work in advancing women's participation in disarmament efforts. In her briefing, the Chief of the UN Regional Disarmament, Information and Outreach Branch stressed the important role of the UN's regional centres to promote women in peace and security. Peru informed that the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) seeks to do so in line with the UN General Assembly's resolution 65/69 on Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. CARICOM expressed support for UNLIREC's holistic focus on gender and Agenda 2030, particularly Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16.

ASEAN informed that its regional Mine Action Centre seeks to promote gender equality in work related to demining and explosive remnants of war.

Philippines, Ireland, Namibia, Spain, Australia, Portugal, Ecuador, South Africa, and the joint statement called for enhanced efforts to advance gender equality in arms control processes. Namibia stressed that “we must take into consideration the key roles that ordinary women, men, girls and boys can play” in disarmament. The Netherlands and Spain positively noted First Committee's increased



attention given to the need for equal participation. Ireland and the joint gender statement welcomed that for the first time, all key UN disarmament appointment positions are held by women.

The Philippines informed that on a national level, it continues to implement its National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), which supports the appointment of women in “strategic positions of leadership, especially in peace processes,” and said that women are involved both at the grassroots and policy-making levels in the Mindanao Peace Process. The Philippines also informed that the NAP ensures that the fight against the proliferation of SALW is gender-balanced.

Namibia and the joint gender statement recognised that as a cross-cutting issue, gender considerations are important for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the UN Security Council resolution 1325 on WPS.

Co-founder and president of the Secure World Foundation and Our Secure Future, Ms. Cynda Collins Arsenault, participated in the joint panel discussion of the First and Fourth Committee on possible challenges to space security and sustainability. She argued that in light of existing challenges to ensure security and sustainability in outer space, women's contributions are indispensable. She stressed that women can contribute to finding solutions to current impasses as they add unique value, perspectives, and approaches to space security and sustainability. Ms. Collins highlighted that the UN Security Council resolutions on WPS, as well as the UN Secretary-General Disarmament Agenda, have called for increased participation of women in disarmament. She observed that “aspiration is not the same as implementation,” and informed that the recent GGE on the prevention of an arms race in outer space was composed of only three women and 21 men, and that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space also just had one woman on its team last year.



Photo: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

## EVENT: PROMOTING A FREE AND OPEN CYBERSPACE

Allison Pytlak | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

The government of France organised a side event on 30 October that focused on how states and regional groups are applying international law to cyber space.

Tilman Rodenhauer of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) opened by explaining that the ICRC takes interest in this issue because of concern about how information and communications technologies (ICTs) can aggravate the humanitarian consequences of armed conflict. He highlighted the divisive issue of how and if international humanitarian law (IHL) applies in cyber space—while most states are in agreement that it does, others do not and believe that to accept IHL means to legitimise conflict in cyber space. This point has caused stalemate and breakdown within previous UN cyber experts groups. Mr. Rodenhauer posited that today's existing IHL rules and principles are adequate to regulate cyber operations—if understood and interpreted appropriately—and suggested this where states should focus their efforts. He used examples of technology and data to illustrate how a state could determine that an “attack” has occurred, triggering IHL, and how the principles of distinction and proportionality should be considered.

Emmanuel Bresson presented the new French cyber strategy and described how it was developed, noting that it is organised to keep offensive and defensive cyber operations distinct from one another, unlike some other countries. Mr. Bresson further outlined how the French government understands and will apply IHL to cyber space and operations therein, including on how to characterise an attack. He emphasised that for the French government, transparency in such processes, and in presenting interpretations of how international law is being applied to cyber space, makes the development of such doctrines acceptable. It views transparency in policy extremely important as more states are using ICTs and digital operations in combination with traditional military operations to achieve objectives.

The next two speakers illustrated regional work being undertaken within the European Union (EU) and Asia. Marketa Homolkova explained that EU work in this area is underpinned by regional confidence-building measures, cooperation, capacity-building, and commitment to applying the rules-based international order in cyber space. She highlighted relevant region-wide legislation and frameworks. In Europe, capacity-building is premised on conflict prevention in cyberspace; promoting cyber hygiene; reforms to improve security and resilience; and agreement on certain fundamental principles regarding the applicability of international law and the protection of critical infrastructure.

A representative of Singapore stressed similar points regarding cooperation and capacity building, noting how networks among Asian countries are networked and therefore share vulnerabilities. She explained that three years ago, the region was not especially focused on this issue but that has changed. Now, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is the only regional bloc to have formally subscribed to the eleven norms recommended by earlier UN expert groups on cyber security and Singapore is home to the ASEAN-Singapore Cybersecurity Centre of Excellence.

The discussion that followed touched on how UN cyber security processes can move toward more concrete implementation of already agreed norms as well as existing law; the challenges of attribution; and the need for common understandings.

## EVENT: NAVIGATING SPACE

Jessica West | Project Ploughshares

The sustainable use of outer space underpins global security, but governance measures to protect the security of this environment in face of rapidly changing uses and technical abilities are struggling. In partnership with civil society organisations Secure World Foundation and Project Ploughshares and with support from the Government of Belgium, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) hosted a day-long workshop to discuss cross-cutting issues relevant to both space safety and space security. Featuring interactive discussions with stakeholders from government, civil society, and commercial operators, participants considered political and technological disruptions to space activities as well as how new capabilities can inform multilateral discussions on the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS).

Opening with the launch of the 2019 Space Security Index, which tracks annual developments related to 17 indicators of space security encompassing safety and sustainability of the space environment, access to space by global actors, and the security of space-based systems, the workshop grappled with the central challenge of how to address the strategic, safety, and environmental implications of flourishing space activity. Rising military tensions loom large as states struggle to maintain security of space systems that are vital yet vulnerable to proliferating counterpace capabilities. Balancing this equation in the context of peaceful uses is the focus of the First Committee. If willing, it can learn from and leverage the process to adopt 21 guidelines on the long-term sustainability of space of activities (LTS) within the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UN COPUOS).

Momentum on transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) to promote safety and sustainability of space operations is engaging the private sector at a time when plans for tens of thousands of new satellites could wreak havoc. Pioneering firms such as Planet have committed to a zero debris policy while leveraging a constellation of small satellites to provide universal access to daily, global imagery of the Earth. Astroscale recognises the need for global policy and rules to support its pursuit of debris removal capabilities and servicing. But in the realm of security, both transparency and trust are sorely lacking. Technology can help. The availability of commercial space situational awareness data can reveal unusual on-orbit activities. New artificial intelligence tools can help to identify potentially harmful events in space from the noise of regular, global activity. In other words, it is possible to verify behaviour in the absence of trust.

But first we need to know what constitutes normal behaviour. The adoption of guidelines on anti-satellite tests (ASATs) and coordination of global space traffic are two concrete means to move forward on this. In addition to the LTS guidelines, private sector initiatives such as CONFERS, the Space Safety Coalition, and the Satellite Industry Association's Principles of Space Safety are informative. Indeed, private sector engagement is necessary for the advancement of new governance measures. But so too is the engagement of states on these issues. This is the hope of the joint panel discussion of the First and Fourth Committees on space security and sustainability, which occurred on Thursday, 31 October.

# FIRST COMMITTEE MONITOR

The First Committee Monitor is a collaborative NGO effort undertaken to make the work of the First Committee more transparent and accessible. The Monitor is compiled, edited, and coordinated by Reaching Critical Will, the disarmament programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).

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Reaching Critical Will

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

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

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