

FIRST COMMITTEE MONITOR

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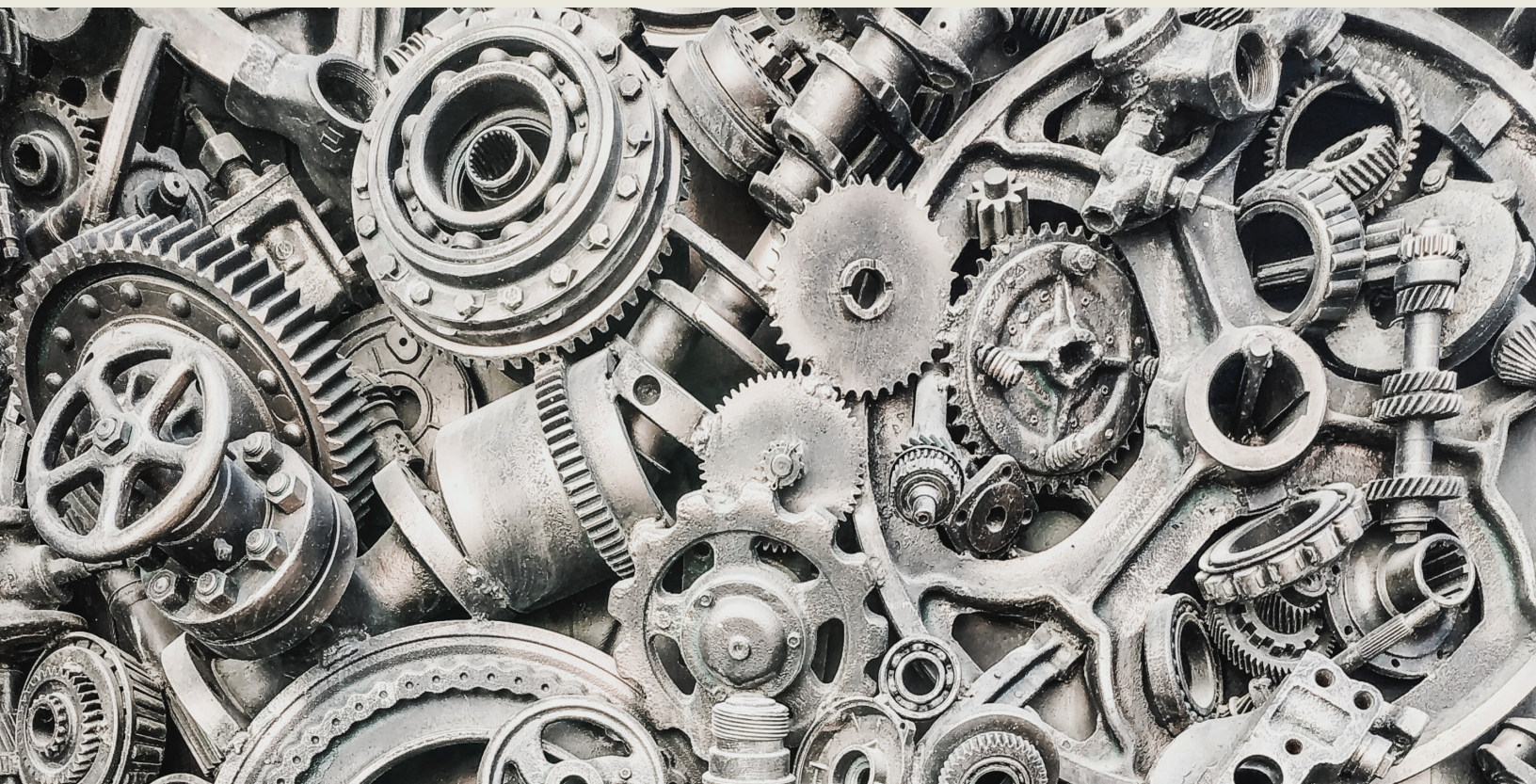


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EDITORIAL: DISMANTLING DISARMAMENT'S BLOCKADE

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

During the second cluster of First Committee thematic statements, delegations despaired about the state of the UN's disarmament machinery—the various standing forums in which disarmament deliberations are conducted. Or, more accurately, are not conducted. “The Conference on Disarmament (CD) has not agreed, approved, and implemented its work program in more than 25 years,” **Mexico** pointed out, arguing that the CD generates employment for the delegations in Geneva but does not work to fulfill its mandate. It suffers from brain death and its members are keeping it on life support, instead of giving it “the dignified burial it deserves for its past achievements.”

This is all that is left to say of the CD. The forum, which has worked hard to maintain a club-like atmosphere with limited membership and the exclusion of civil society, is far past its expiration date. WILPF, which used to be the only non-governmental organisation left paying attention to its work, finally stopped covering the CD in 2015. When we left, **we were explicit about why**: the degrading treatment of civil society, and even more importantly, because it was clear that the forum was completely disconnected from the outside world; that it had lost all perspective of the bigger picture of human suffering and global injustice, and was more interested in maintaining the structures that reinforced perpetual deadlock than it was in fulfilling its purpose of negotiating treaties.

WILPF is far from alone in seeing this. **Austria**, for example, highlighted the tendencies of certain states “to use procedural manoeuvres to delay, undermine or even prevent substantive exchanges and productive work.” Yet, the CD continues to exist. Incredibly, governments keep on attending plenary meetings and talking about a programme of work and how important the CD is to advancing disarmament. By this time, it must feel like being stuck in a Kafka novel, in which diplomats chase an ever-elusive work programme and have the same

conversations over and over again, while the world churns on outside the chamber.

The core problem, as Mexico explained, is that the CD operates under the “arbitrary rule of consensus, one of the worst practices of contemporary multilateralism.” Noting that consensus is an aspiration that should be pursued, Mexico argued that when it cannot be achieved, democracy is necessary. The narrative of those preventing forward movement is that the paralysis in the CD and other forums has to do with the “complex international security situation”. But in that case, Mexico asked, “how do we explain that other forums do work and produce results, even of a binding nature, among the same states that are represented on the CD?” This is about “simulation and deception,” argued Mexico. “There is no other way to say it.”

Consequences of inaction

The consensus-based blockade against action at the CD, and at the Disarmament Commission, and in the disarmament treaty bodies that operate by consensus such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, has serious real-world implications. It means that instead of disarmament and demilitarisation, instead of cooperation and collaboration, “security” at national, regional, and international levels is pursued exclusively through weapons, weapons, weapons, and for good measure, more weapons.

A cursory review of the thematic debate statements on “regional issues” at the First Committee paints a clear picture of the result:

The **Caribbean Community** noted that significant resources have been diverted away from development in its region, in order to address threats to security. “Inevitably, repurposing of already limited resources often has a negative impact on social, educational, and infrastructure programs and

creates an untenable burden for countries already suffering from debt overload and highly vulnerable to natural disasters.”

The Middle East, as **Iran** noted, has witnessed “several wars, massive foreign military buildups, the ensuing nightmare of extremism and terrorism, the dangerous accumulation of the most sophisticated weaponry, as well as aggression and power projections by various actors.”

Asia-Pacific, where everyone is already living under the uneasy situation of US military alliances and exercises in the region and the nuclearisation of the Korean peninsula, is now facing even more strain with the announcement of the Australian, United Kingdom, United States (AUKUS) nuclear-powered alliance.

Europe is also under strain, with tensions rising between Russia and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation members and due to the last few years of US-Russian dismantlement of arms control agreements.

It’s a lot to contend with, especially since borders are manufactured ideas that do not actually contain or constrain violence. What happens in one part of the world affects other parts. A nuclear detonation in one part of the globe would impact the entire planet; the rising investments in militarism likewise ricochet globally when countries persist in investing in more weapons and more war. The concepts of “national security” or even “regional security” make little sense in the face of nuclear war and climate chaos. The responsibility for each lies only with some countries, but the burden is shared by all.

Solidarity for security

Countless governments throughout this First Committee session have highlighted how the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the interconnectedness of countries and the importance of solidarity. These lessons must be applied to international security much more deeply—to “reassess our security analyses and refocus our

efforts around human and common security in the interest of all,” as Austria suggested. “We need to move away from the dangerous misconception that security can only be ensured by military and armament. The pandemic should be a wake-up call to lead us to a broader understanding of security and to better integrate disarmament instruments and measures into all efforts to build and maintain security.”

This should be a clarion call to all the UN’s structures and systems, especially those related to disarmament and demilitarisation. Serious work must be undertaken to implement the UN Charter’s Article 26 obligation for a system to regulate armaments and reduce military spending. Instead of pouring resources into keeping the CD on life support, the UN’s work on military spending and political economy should be revived to establish concrete mechanisms for reducing militarism and directing resources from weapons and war toward global social goods. New treaties to prevent war and conflict in cyber space and outer space, and to prevent the development of autonomous weapon systems and other new technologies of violence, must be agreed. Commitments against the use of explosive weapons in populated areas must be made, and the use of armed drones, landmines, cluster bombs, incendiary weapons, and chemical weapons must stop.

All of this—and more—is possible. But it is only possible through real work, not endless cycles of platitudes and laments delivered at annual conferences. Multilateral *action*, not performance, is required.

All militarised countries talk about the importance of dialogue. **China**, **Russia**, and the **United States** called for renewed engagement in multilateral diplomacy for arms control and disarmament. Yet they instead prepare for a multilateral arms race, which will inevitably destroy us all, either from the weapons themselves or from the waste of resources that could otherwise be spent dealing with the climate crisis and global poverty. We are running out of time. Stalemate is not an option. The governments who

see this, who do not profit from endless war but actually want to protect people and planet, have to get creative.

Surmounting the siege against disarmament

In the face of the ongoing blockade of the established disarmament forums, the international community has found a way to move forward. During the time that the CD has failed to adopt a programme of work, states, international organisations, and civil society have negotiated, adopted, and entered into force the Mine Ban Treaty, the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Arms Trade Treaty, and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Two of these were negotiated in ad hoc processes, two in the UN General Assembly. Ireland is currently leading a process to establish standards against the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. The First Committee has established several open-ended working groups to take forward key issues. Such “avenues have created space to give effect to the aspirations of a majority of States long frustrated elsewhere in the procedurally and often politically deadlocked disarmament machinery,” explained [South Africa](#).

What has made these alternative processes possible is the commitment of all involved to achieve meaningful results, not to simulate negotiations or give the impression of work. This has taken courage on behalf of diplomats and government officials, to stand up to those blocking progress and to proceed, sometimes under extreme pressure to stop. It has also required, in each and every case, a meaningful partnership with activists, organisers, survivors, and affected communities, which work tirelessly to help build capacity, awareness, knowledge, passion, and commitment.

“Despite our best efforts, States cannot achieve all that we set out to do alone,” said [Sweden](#). “Representatives of civil society, academia and industry ... help raise awareness, provide ideas, and push our work towards meaningful action that contributes to movement in the right direction.” Ireland likewise highlighted the valuable

contributions of civil society, noting that its “knowledge and expertise is essential in ensuring that disarmament machinery remains connected to emerging issues” and arguing that “inclusiveness must be at the forefront of our approach to the disarmament machinery.” Austria also called for the establishment of more inclusive processes that involve civil society and youth.

Yet, civil society remains locked out of UN Headquarters. While permitted in Geneva, we are barred in New York. In the Third Committee on Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Issues, [59 states delivered a joint intervention](#) opposing civil society’s continued exclusion from the work of the UN and calling for the allocation of adequate spaces for civil society representatives in the Committee’s in-person work. While no such statement has been delivered at the First Committee, some delegations have reiterated its call. [Costa Rica](#), which along with Denmark led the initiative in the Third Committee, argued at the beginning of this First Committee session that “civil society is a vital partner in this work. Continuing to exclude civil society representatives from the UN and preventing their full participation silences the voices of the people we serve, including the victims and survivors of armed violence.” Sweden likewise warned, “We must not let the pandemic become a pretext for restricting [civil society’s] continued participation. Dialogue and cooperation with civil society is central both inside and outside the UN. States carry a common responsibility to do what we can to curb the shrinkage of civil society space.”

The restrictions on UN access to ensure safety during the COVID-19 pandemic are important and must be maintained. But it is clearly possible maintain safety without compromising inclusivity: the UN Office in Geneva has done so. In New York, journalists and others have been allowed back in the building. The longer that civil society is refused access to UN Headquarters, the less meaningful and resilient the UN itself becomes. Yes, it is a gathering place for states, but states are there to represent—and be accountable to—the people of the world.

The **UN Charter** itself begins, “We the peoples of the United Nations”—not “we the states”. If the UN is to ever achieve its purported goals of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war, reaffirming human rights and dignity, establishing the conditions for justice and respect, and promoting “social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,” it cannot prohibit the people from

its chambers. And it can no longer allow those that profit from the scourge of war to dictate what security is or how to achieve it. This is a matter that must be decided by all—and one session at the First Committee, or the CD, or any other forum, is enough to understand the will of the majority is for all countries to lay down their weapons and invest instead in peace and planetary well-being.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Katrin Geyer with Ray Acheson | Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

In the third week of First Committee, a few states continued to refer to nuclear disarmament under the theme of “regional disarmament and security”. Most delegations taking the floor underscored the importance of nuclear weapon free zones (NWFZs), not as end in themselves, but as crucial building blocks for a world free of nuclear weapons. Particular attention was given to the challenges in the Middle East, including the fact that a NWFZ has not yet been concluded there, despite the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) 1995 resolution on the Middle East agreeing to establishment of a such a zone. Many delegations reiterated their calls for all relevant states to participate in the 2019 re-initiated process for a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) underscored the importance for nuclear-armed states to provide negative security assurances to all states that are party to NWFZs, and NAM and Indonesia called on all nuclear-armed states to ratify all NWFZ treaties. Cuba called on nuclear-armed states to withdraw their reservations from the treaties establishing NWFZs.

A handful of delegations also referred to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), including Poland and United Kingdom (UK), calling on Iran to return to compliance and to negotiations in Vienna. The Holy See observed the JCPOA’s complete restoration to its fully operational status is “the logical next step and is a key part of efforts to preclude conflict in the Middle East, particularly

the risk of further nuclear proliferation.” It further proposed that measures to address ballistic missile capabilities should be resolved once the nuclear situation has been stabilised. The United States (US) asserted that if Iran commits to “mutual return to compliance,” it will “provide sanctions relief in accordance with the terms of the deal.” The US expressed its concern about Iran’s failure to live up to the Joint Statement commitments with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Grossi from September, and its refusal to allow inspectors from the IAEA to reinstall monitoring equipment at Karaj. It urged Iran to continue cooperating with the IAEA.

Others continued calling for the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula, including the UK and Indonesia. The Holy See, Indonesia, and Poland urged for all parties to settle difference through peaceful means. The Holy See argued that “bringing the state of war there to an end would provide for a redirection of diplomacy to address current problems.” The US said it was prepared to engage in diplomacy with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), noting that its offer remains “without preconditions”. The US described its policy as “calibrated, practical approach that is open to, and will explore, diplomacy with the DPRK to make tangible progress that increases the security of the United States, our allies, and our deployed forces.”

The UK urged India and Pakistan to engage in nuclear dialogue, given the potential for a nuclear

crisis in South Asia. Meanwhile, Indonesia expressed concern at power projection assets, especially expressed through the new nuclear-powered alliance between Australia, UK, and US (AUKUS). Indonesia called on all partners of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to refrain from any actions violating the UN Charter, the NPT, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation objectives, and the ASEAN Charter.

A few delegations also highlighted particular nuclear-related concerns or processes. The Holy See underscored the risks of ever-increasing cyber technologies combined with the continued existence of nuclear weapons. It stressed the need “to ensure the security of technologies operating in cyberspace and to prevent interference with the command and control of weapon systems, especially nuclear weapons.” It further argued that “until such weapons can be eliminated, it is not only highly imprudent but deeply problematic to maintain systems in which an electronic intrusion into its controls might lead to the launch and detonation of a nuclear weapon.”

The US recalled its Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament (CEND) initiative, which aims to bring together a geographically and politically diverse group of states with and without nuclear weapons. It described CEND as “unique and valuable forum for states to develop practical recommendations.” Notably, it also recognised that arms control itself can and should contribute to improving the security environment.

Next to CEND, the US expressed its support to the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV), bringing together non-nuclear armed states and nuclear-armed states, to further understanding of nuclear disarmament verification.

In the third and final informal interactive exchange of this year’s First Committee, the Chair of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters reported on outcomes of discussions over the two past years, following a request of the UN Secretary-General to explore new approaches to revitalise nuclear disarmament and arms control. She shared the Board’s findings that states need to talk to each other

and identify common goals, language, and practices. This should be done by: enhancing transparency; building and sustaining trust and confidence; refraining from strategic nuclear competition; and reducing reliance on nuclear weapons in national doctrines, postures, and policies. She also urged for further exploring the links between evolving technological capabilities and the risks of nuclear weapons use, and proposed to establish a Group of Governmental Experts to review this topic and to develop practical ways to mitigate identified risks.

Resolutions

More resolutions on nuclear disarmament may be forthcoming.

L.1, “Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East,” contains only technical updates from previous years. The resolution urges further action on establishing this zone and to act in accordance with the spirit of such a zone in the meantime. It is typically adopted without a vote, though a vote was taken the last three years, at which Israel and the US voted no.

L.2, “Risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East,” contains only technical updates from previous years. It calls for Israel’s accession to the NPT and IAEA safeguards and for implementation of the 2005 and 2010 NPT outcomes related to the Middle East. This resolution is usually more controversial, with European states abstaining and Israel, the United States, and a handful others opposing.

L.3, “Reducing nuclear danger,” contains only technical updates. It calls for a review of nuclear doctrines and urgent steps to reduce the risks of unintentional and accidental use of nuclear weapons.

L.4, “Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world,” contains only technical updates from last year, including welcoming the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). It calls upon all states to acknowledge the humanitarian impacts and risks of a nuclear weapon detonation and makes a series of declarations

about the inherent immorality of nuclear weapons underlying the need for their elimination.

L.8, “Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction,” contains a few updates. Most of the preambular paragraphs (PP) that last year welcomed or noted particular developments now recalls them instead. PP13 has been updated to reflect the latest International Atomic Energy Agency conferences on nuclear security. Overall, the resolution calls on states to support international efforts on this subject and appeals to them to join the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

L.9, “Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Weapon,” contains only technical updates from last year. It reiterates its call on the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations on this subject.

L.11, “Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons,” contains only technical updates from last year. The resolution highlights the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and calls on all states to prevent any use or proliferation of nuclear weapons and to achieve nuclear disarmament.

L.14, “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 last tabled in 2019 by Iran. It contains only technical updates from that version, which reaffirms the validity of past NPT decisions and in particular the practical steps from past review conferences for the implementation of article VI.

L.17, “Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons,” contains a few updates from last year, including to reflect the current number of signatures and ratifications of the Treaty. The resolution welcomes the TPNW’s entry into force and calls upon states to join the Treaty and promote adherence to it. This year’s resolution has two new operative paragraphs (OP). OP6 confirms the date and venue of

the First Meeting of States Parties (1MSP), while OP7 invites non-states parties, UN entities, international and regional organisations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and non-governmental organisations, amongst others, to attend 1MSP.

L.19, “African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty,” contains only technical updates from last year. It calls upon all African states to join and for Protocol III states apply the Treaty to relevant territories.

L.23, “Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament,” is an annual Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) resolution that highlights the value of promoting 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons in furthering nuclear disarmament. It contains only technical updates.

L.20, “Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons,” reaffirms the need for negative security assurances and appeals to nuclear-armed states to work “actively towards an early agreement on a common approach” that could result in a legally-binding instrument. The resolution has only technical updates.

L.34, “Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas,” last adopted in 2019, contains a few minor updates, including reflecting the fact that the TPNW has now entered into force, as well as noting with concern the postponement of the fourth Conference of NWFZs and Mongolia due to COVID-19.

L.39, “Nuclear disarmament,” contains only technical updates from last year. The resolution remains focused on the CD and its failure to proceed with substantive work and urges nuclear-armed states to take effective disarmament measures.

L.40, “Nuclear disarmament verification,” requests the UN Secretary-General to hold additional sessions and informal intersessional consultative meetings of the group of governmental experts, established in 2020, to further consider nuclear disarmament

verification issues since these meetings could not take place earlier due to COVID-19.

L.42, “Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World,” last adopted in 2018, invites relevant actors to disseminate the Declaration and promote its implementation. It further calls on the UN Secretary General to submit a report on the progress of implementation of the Declaration. The resolution is updated to mark the 15th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia and the 30th anniversary of the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site in PP7, and to note the entry into force of the TPNW in PP8.

L.49, “Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty,” contains a few updates, including to reflect the increase in the number of states parties to the CTBT in PP5; reflect the increase in the establishment of certified facilities in PP10; and welcome, in a new OP7, the recent ratifications of Cuba and Comoros, asserting that each signature or ratification is a significant step towards the entry into force and universalisation of the Treaty. It also has a new OP9, welcoming the election of Robert Floyd as the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO).

L.56, “Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials,” marks the 30th anniversary of the Brazil-Argentina Agreement for the Exclusively Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy and highlights the work of the relevant Agency.

L.57, “Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty),” is a draft decision that recalls past resolutions on this agenda item. Earlier during this First Committee session, Malaysia expressed concern that a more substantive resolution could not be tabled.

L.58, “Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons,” is an annual resolution that underlines the “unanimous

conclusion of the International Court of Justice that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control” and calls on states “to immediately engage in multilateral negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control, including under the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.” The only update is to PP17, which now recalls instead of welcomes the adoption of the TPNW, but also now welcomes its entry into force.

L.59, “Joint courses of action and future-oriented dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons,” which is Japan’s annual fraught attempt to “bridge build” on nuclear disarmament issues, once again contains several substantive updates. This resolution has been altered by Japan every year since 2016, when it began watering down its former resolution “United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons” in an attempt to secure US support. Each year it is subjected to extensive paragraph votes because of its problematic contents, failure to recognise the TPNW and weakened references to NPT outcomes, and other concerns. See previous year’s First Committee Monitors for reporting.

This year’s version contains the following changes from 2020:

- A new PP4 has been constructed, which combines the end of last year’s PP3 with its PP4, “emphasizing the necessity for all States parties to comply with all of their obligations regarding nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation” under the NPT and reaffirming the importance of implementing the NPT commitments from 1995, 2000, and 2010.
- PP7 is the old PP15 and PP8 is the old PP16.
- PP10 is new. It recognises the importance of the decisions and agreements from the 1995, 2000, and 2010 NPT Review Conferences and reaffirms support for the establishment of a WMDFFZ in the Middle East.
- PP11, which advocates for the negotiation of a

fissile materials treaty, adds a note that not all NPT nuclear-armed states have yet declared a moratorium on fissile material production pending such a treaty.

- A new PP12 recalls that it has been 25 years since the opening for signature of the CTBT. The former PP about the importance of preventing further nuclear testing and calling on all states to sign and ratify the CTBT has been deleted.
- PP15 on the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty has been updated to welcome its extension.
- PP17 on the DPRK has been moved up and shortens the reference welcoming diplomatic efforts for denuclearisation.
- The former PP noting the importance of considering the possible impacts of developments in science and technology on arms control, disarmament, non-proliferation and international security" has been deleted.
- OP3(c) adds a reference to CD/1299 in reference to fissile material treaty negotiations.
- OP3(d) rearranges the order of the content from last year. It also deletes the call on states to declare their political will to adopt a moratorium on nuclear testing and to provide "transparency in activities related to nuclear-weapon testing, which may run counter to such moratoriums."
- A new OP5 reaffirms states' commitments to strengthening the non-proliferation regime in various ways.
- OP6, the old OP5, has been rewritten. It now "reaffirms the commitment to achieving the complete, verifiable and irreversible abandonment of all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes, as well as of all other existing weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges" of the DPRK instead of reaffirming "the commitment to strengthening the international regime for nuclear non-proliferation and to achieving the complete denuclearization" of the DPRK.



ICAN Article36

Zoom Briefing Event
Wednesday 27 October 2021
13.00-14.15 EST

ADDRESSING NUCLEAR HARM

NEW OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

This side event will explore the significance and opportunity presented by the obligations to address nuclear harm contained in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and what the first steps towards their implementation could entail, with perspectives from legal and policy experts, states party to the TPNW, and affected communities.

Registration (Zoom): <https://bit.ly/27oct-addressingnuclearharm>

PANELISTS	Bonnie Docherty	International Human Rights Clinic at Harvard Law School
	Zhangeldy Syrymbet	Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations
	Bernice Gutierrez	Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium
MODERATOR	Alicia Sanders-Zakre	International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

Filippa Lentzos | King's College London

The annual First Committee resolution on the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) became available this week. **L.35, “Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction”** only contains two technical updates. The first notes that there has been no increase in the number of ratifications of, and accessions to, the Convention since last year. The second encourages the upcoming meeting of states parties in November 2021 to agree on arrangements for the Ninth Review Conference next year.

L.54, “Secretary-General’s Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons” is a Russia-led resolution, co-sponsored by Nicaragua and Zimbabwe, to update the principles and procedures of the UN Secretary-General’s Mechanism (SGM) for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons. It is a revised version of a resolution introduced last year, co-sponsored by China, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, which faced **an unprecedented defeat**.

The new resolution has cut four of the nine operative paragraphs of last year’s version. It has introduced a significantly revised—presumably deemed more palatable—version of another of last year’s operative paragraphs. Two preambular paragraphs from last

year have gone, but the rest remain intact. A new preambular paragraph has been added. While the new resolution has gone through two rounds of heavily contested consultations, it does not appear that much of the feedback received has been taken on board, notably that the resolution undermines the SGM rather than strengthens it. It remains to be seen how much support Russia can mobilise from the silent majority in its efforts to get the resolution passed.

There was very limited discussion of biological weapons in the First Committee this past week. The exception was Kazakhstan. It spoke of the proposed International Agency for Biological Safety, which it had first introduced at the UN General Assembly last year. Kazakhstan noted that it had distributed a concept note to Geneva and New York missions in June this year that offered an overall vision of the mandate, objectives, and functions of the agency. Kazakhstan reported receiving positive feedback on the note at the BWC meeting of experts last month. If conditions permit, Kazakhstan said it would convene an international conference next year to discuss different approaches on how to create the agency. Based on that feedback, Kazakhstan aims to present “a collective vision of the future agency” at the BWC Review Conference next year.

Note about this and the next editions of the First Committee Monitor:

Some draft resolutions were not yet released by the Official Document System at the time of publication, thus not all resolutions or topics are covered in this edition.

Our next and final edition will be published once action on all draft resolutions has concluded.

You can find all resolutions and voting results on our website as they become available.

SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

amelie namuroy | International Action Network on Small Arms

As the thematic debates concluded this week, states continued to express how critical the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (UNPoA) is for controlling the devastating effects of the illicit trade, transfer, and circulation of small arms and light weapons (SALW). France and Switzerland both spoke of the importance of existing frameworks, such as the UNPoA, and the need to implement existing treaty obligations (such as the Arms Trade Treaty). States also spoke about the work of the UN regional disarmament centres.

Indonesia, speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), noted the importance of UN activities at the regional level to increase stability and security and that the continued maintenance of the three regional centres should be promoted. Brunei-Darussalam, speaking on behalf of the Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), also reaffirmed its support for the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD) in promoting regional disarmament priorities and fostering cooperation in the ASEAN region. Togo spoke about the work of the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC), noting its valuable work in reducing illicit SALW and welcomed a new project managed by UNREC focused on physical security in the management of weapons stocks that Japan has financially supported.

Resolutions

Cluster 4 (conventional weapons)

L.43, “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects” is an omnibus resolution tabled annually by Colombia, South Africa, and Japan. L.43 contains many substantive changes from last year’s resolution. The resolution adds a preambular paragraph which recognises that national control systems for the transfer of conventional arms contribute to the prevention

and eradication of the illicit trade in SALW and that states can integrate applicable policies and practices in SALW controls with a view to strengthening the implementation of the UNPoA.

A new operative paragraph (OP) 3 on the effective management of SALW emphasises the need for states to “redouble national efforts to provide for the safe, secure, comprehensive and effective management of stockpiles” in order to prevent, combat, and eradicate the diversion of SALW.

OP8 is also new and endorses the outcome document of the Seventh Biennial Meeting of States (BMS7). OP10 reflects the decision that the Eighth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS8) on the UNPoA will convene from 27 June-1 July 2022 in New York City at the United Nations Headquarters.

OP2 “emphasises the need for the equal, full and effective participation of women in all decision-making and implementation processes relating to the Programme of Action and its International Tracing Instrument”.

OP13 encourages states to consider the recent developments in manufacturing, technology, and design in particular with regards to polymer and modular weapons, and encourages states to strengthen normative frameworks and cooperation between law enforcement agencies to prevent unauthorised recipients from acquiring SALW.

OP14 (previously OP10), is also new and focuses on international cooperation and assistance to effectively implement the UNPoA and the need for national ownership of programmes, as well as noting the need for international cooperation to include improved funding arrangements, technology transfer, and adequate training and support programmes.

OPs 32, 33, and 34 are all new paragraphs. OP32 calls upon the UN Secretariat to develop a good

practice document on marking practices of polymer and modular weapons. OP33 seeks the views of member states to enhance international cooperation and to present recommendations for consideration during BMS8. OP34 requests the Secretariat to present funding for a fellowship training programme on SALW in order to strengthen technical knowledge and expertise in areas related to the implementation of the UNPoA.

L.15, “Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them” does not contain any substantive changes from last year. The United Nations Secretary General’s (UNSG) report *Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects* (A/76/284) was submitted in response to two requests of the General Assembly, contained in last year’s resolution 75/56 on assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them and resolution 75/241 on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. The UNSG’s report focuses on implementation of these previous resolutions and was released August 2021. The report, in part, provides a summary of the outcome of BMS7. It points out that agreement was reached at BMS7, most notably on ensuring that international humanitarian law and international human rights law would be taken into consideration in national small arms and light weapons transfer decisions; that states would undertake export risk assessments and include authenticated end user and/or end-use certification and effective legal and enforcement measures. The strong language on the highly gendered nature of small arms and light weapons in the BMS7 outcome document was also noted. States reaffirmed the importance of accounting for the differing impacts of the illicit trade on women, men, girls, and boys and encouraged the collection of data disaggregated by sex, age, and disability for evidence-based policymaking.

The report also included reports on the work of the Coordinating Action on Small Arms mechanism;

the implementation of the UNSG’s Agenda for Disarmament; and follow-up action on other initiatives, such as the support of the United Nations for the African Union’s “Silencing the Guns by 2030” initiative; gender-responsive arms control policies, programmes, and initiatives; and updates on major small arms and light weapons programmes undertaken by other United Nations bodies.

L.47, “Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus”

integrates the recommendations made by the Group of Governmental Experts on Problems Arising from the Accumulation of Conventional Ammunition Stockpiles in Surplus (GGE on ammunition) which delivered its final report in September 2021. The resolution takes into consideration the dangers posed by unplanned explosions at munitions stocks sites and the diversion of ammunition from stockpiles to the illegal market and recognises that the lives of civilians have been negatively impacted as a result. L.47 encourages states to consider ammunition management as an intrinsic part of their actions for achieving relevant targets of the Sustainable Development Goals related to the reduction of illicit arms flows. The resolution prompts states to develop voluntary national action plans on the secure management of conventional ammunition.

Further, the resolution establishes an open-ended working group to elaborate a set of political commitments in order to address existing gaps in ammunition management, without prejudice to national legal systems addressing national ammunition ownership, possession, and use. The open-ended working group will meet for two five-day sessions in 2022 and one five-day session in 2023. L.47 recognises the need to encourage the involvement of both women and men in ammunition management practices and policies. L.47 also acknowledges the importance and usefulness of existing instruments, programmes, and groups such as the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG), the SaferGuard Knowledge Resource Management programme, the Ammunition Management Advisory Team, and the Open-ended

Working Group to Negotiate an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Cluster 6: regional disarmament and security

L.30, “Regional disarmament” does not contain any substantive changes from last year. L.30 stresses that sustained efforts are needed to make progress on the entire range of disarmament issues.

L.31, “Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels” does not contain any substantive changes from last year. L.31 recognises the crucial role of conventional arms control in the promotion of regional and international peace and security. In the UNSG’s report (A/76/92) following up on last year’s resolution on this subject, a summary of the responses of states who shared their views on the subject was provided. Six states provided information (Albania, Cuba, Czechia, Portugal, Serbia, and Ukraine). Albania, in part, shared information on the work it has undertaken to develop a road map for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse, and trafficking of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition in the western Balkans. Albania stated that the purpose of this road map is to serve as a guiding and consensual document, developed and owned by the regional authorities, for achieving a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition in the western Balkans. Cuba stated that a fundamental principle should be that conventional arms control is based on respect for, and the recognition of, national control measures and that states should be primarily responsible for the implementation of measures for the control of their weapons. Portugal stated that it has implemented a number of changes to its national laws in relation to firearms, including developing stricter rules for museums with firearms, sport shooters, and firearm collectors, and has established technical specifications for marking firearms and their essential components.

L.32, “Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context” does not contain any substantive changes from last year. L.32 emphasises that the objective of confidence-building measures should be to help strengthen international peace and security. The resolution also encourages the promotion of bilateral and regional confidence-building measures to avoid conflict.

Regional centres

L.18, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific” contains some substantive changes from last year’s resolution. In 2020, the resolution highlighted the work of the Centre as part of the 18th United Nations-Republic of Korea Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Issues (held in Seoul, 13-14 November 2019); a training workshop for states of Southeast Asia on the [MOSAIC Module 04.10](#); and a project providing technical and legal assistance to Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste toward the implementation of the UNPoA, among others. This year, the resolution underlines the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 in South Asia and Mongolia, as well as a capacity-building training for States of Asia and the Pacific in preparing and submitting online national reports on the implementation of the UNPoA.

L.21, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa” contains substantive changes compared to last year’s resolution. A paragraph has been added to the resolution which “calls upon Member States and other bilateral and multilateral stakeholders to further enable the

Regional Centre to provide adequate assistance to African Member States on arms control and disarmament from a human security perspective notably in the following areas of arms control: prevention of violent extremism, youth and peace and security, and women and peace and security.” In OP7, the reference to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons, and on Their Destruction has been deleted.

L.38, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean” contains limited substantive changes. In one of the preambular paragraphs, the resolution now refers to the “implementation” of the *Roadmap for Implementing the Caribbean Priority Actions on the Illicit Proliferation of Firearms and Ammunition across the Caribbean in a Sustainable Manner by 2030* (“Caribbean Firearms Roadmap”) to prevent and combat the illicit trafficking in arms and ammunition instead of its “elaboration”. Furthermore, in OP2, which focuses on welcoming the proposals made by the countries of the regions in the areas of peace and disarmament, prior language about nuclear disarmament, confidence-building measures, arms control and limitation as well as transparency has been deleted.

L.28, “United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament” does not contain any substantive changes from last year.

Informal exchange

During the informal exchange that took place on 21 October, the Chairperson of the GGE on ammunition provided his report back on the GGE’s work. Other briefers included Ms. Melanie Regimbal, Director of UNLIREC; Mr. Yuri Kryvonos, Director of UNRCPD; and Mr. Anselme N. Yabouri, Director of UNREC.

Mr. Markus Bleinroth of Germany, Chairperson of the GGE on ammunition, spoke extensively of the work of the GGE that concluded its work in September 2021 and delivered a report that was adopted by consensus. Germany convened six consultations throughout 2018 and 2019, which explored multidimensional challenges with a particular focus on the dual challenges posed by the diversion of ammunition and unplanned explosions. Following this informal consultative process, the GGE met for its first formal session in 2020 before the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted the Group’s work. The final session was held from 7-10 September 2021. The GGE noted applicable existing frameworks and commitments as well as overarching issues such as cooperation and assistance at the regional and global

levels. The GGE also elaborated practical measures to address safety and security of ammunition at each stage of ammunition management. The GGE also recommended the establishment of a comprehensive framework and a set of political commitments on ammunition. He concluded by saying that he hopes the final report will result in global action to address the challenges associated with ammunition. The recommendations listed in the report have been transposed into the resolution on ammunition (L.47), so that its adoption will signal the acceptance of such on the part of all UN member states.

Ms. Melanie Regimbal highlighted some of the work led by UNLIREC on SALW. She stated that 15 CARICOM states and the Dominican Republic have received support to develop national action plans as part of the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap. Ms. Regimbal also talked about a pilot training project on combating arms trafficking and the technical guidelines UNLIREC has provided on securing arms depots to prevent the diversion of SALW and its ammunition.

Mr. Yuri Kryvonos underlined that the UNRCPD’s priorities were to contribute to building national capacities, empowering women, and reducing illegal arm flows and gun violence. Mr. Kryvonos highlighted the work of the regional centre in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Papua New Guinea where workshops on the integration of gender considerations into policies and actions to fight the misuse and abuse of SALW took place earlier this year. Mr. Kryvonos also mentioned IANSA’s contributions to this work.

The Director of UNREC, Mr. Anselme Yabouri, stated that UNREC continues to assist member states and provides support to initiatives like “Silencing the Guns”. Mr. Yabouri also stated that the Centre puts emphasis on addressing the issue of stockpiles of ammunition management and security. The director highlighted the scope of the European Union projects that are being implemented in Africa, including the one dedicated to gender mainstreaming in small arms control, which have exceeded their original implementation scope.

CLUSTER MUNITIONS

Aaron Lainé | Cluster Munition Coalition

This year's UN First Committee draft resolution **L.41 on the Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM)** was tabled by the United Kingdom as President of the Tenth Meeting of States Parties to the CCM. It is co-sponsored by all the states represented on the Coordination Committee of the Convention, namely Afghanistan, Australia, Austria, Chile, Iraq, Mexico, Montenegro, Namibia, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Philippines, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Zambia.

Aside from technical updates, the draft resolution retains most of the important components from previous iterations, apart from a couple amendments that slightly weaken the text.

Operational paragraph 2, which stresses the importance of implementation and compliance with the CCM, including through the application of relevant action plans, now includes the qualifier "as appropriate" at the end.

The resolution also notes, in preambular paragraph 14, the outcome of the second Review Conference of States Parties to the CCM held in Geneva on 25–27 November 2020 and 20–21 September 2021. It also notes the adoption of the Lausanne Declaration "Protecting Lives, Empowering Victims, Enabling Development" and the Lausanne Action Plan 2020–2026 to support the full and effective implementation of the Convention. In previous iterations, the paragraph included "with satisfaction" at the beginning, but that was left out in this version.

Last year, the CCM resolution was adopted without a negative vote for the first time ever, sending a clear message from the international community of the condemnation of the use of these inhumane weapons. The Cluster Munition Coalition calls on all states to vote in favour of this year's resolution, to help strengthen the global norm against cluster munitions and reiterate the devastating humanitarian consequences of their use, which has no place in our world today.



ARMED DRONES

Alejandra Muñoz | PAX

Only a handful of states included references to armed drones in their statements during the general and thematic debates of this year's First Committee: Costa Rica, Yemen, Armenia, Cuba, and the Holy See. As in previous years, no resolutions have been proposed on armed drones this year.

Costa Rica urged the development of international norms and regulations around the use of lethal force with drones. It reflected on how almost 20 years after their first use in situations outside armed conflict, armed drones are now routinely used by both state and non-state actors, including for counter-terrorism purposes. It highlighted the obligation of states to respect human rights and international law in the implementation of counter-terrorism policies.

Costa Rica also seconded the recommendations issued last year by the [United Nations \(UN\) Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Arbitrary or Summary Executions](#), including calls for more regular reporting on drone use to UN bodies, including the Human Rights Council; the development of and commitment to robust standards of transparency, oversight and accountability; the undertaking of effective measures

to control drone proliferation through export and multilateral arms control regimes; and an open discussion on the legal challenges posed by targeted killing operations.

Costa Rica further expressed its concerns around the growing use of drones for counter-terrorism purposes in domestic law enforcement settings. It urged that all capacity building and technical assistance from the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact should integrate human rights and due diligence policies.

Similar to last year's First Committee, Armenia and Yemen raised concerns about the use of armed drones in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh and the Yemeni conflict, respectively.

Concerns around the growing use of drones were also noted by the Holy See, stressing the need to "address the ethical necessity of preserving human responsibility" in the use of armed drones and lethal autonomous weapons systems. Cuba called for regulations to be put in place for the use of "weapons with some degree of autonomy," especially military drones.

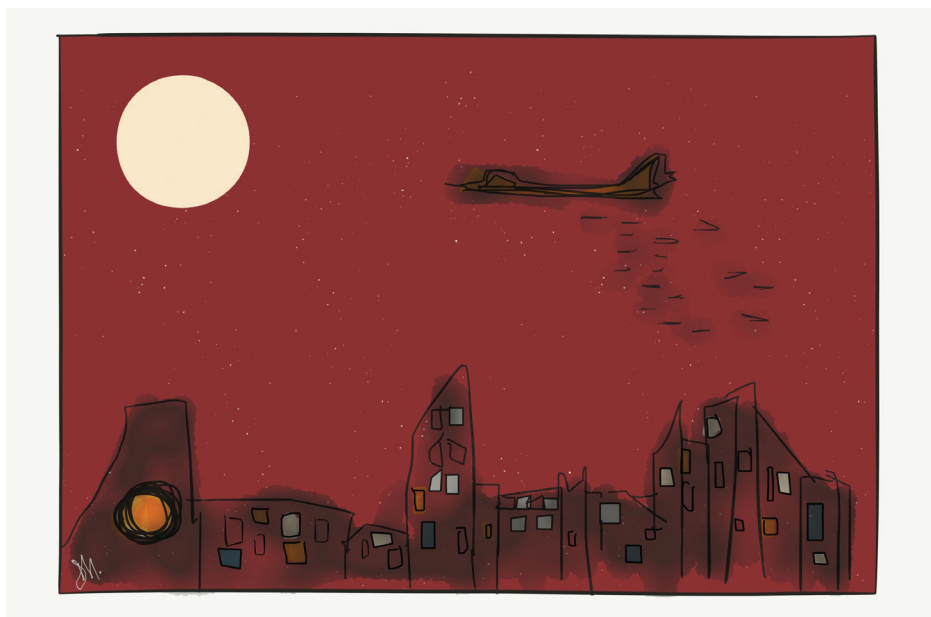


Image: Dimity Hawkins

AUTONOMOUS WEAPON SYSTEMS

Dr. Catherine Connolly | Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

In its statement to the First Committee this week, Ecuador argued that artificial intelligence (AI) is a challenge to international security, to transparency, control, and proportionality, and to responsibility and accountability. As such, Ecuador said, merely regulating trade in autonomous weapon systems (AWS) isn't enough. Ecuador called for the negotiation of a binding instrument on AWS, with a prohibition on weapons without sufficient human control. Pakistan noted that existing norms, rules, and regulations "continue to be outpaced by the introduction of new and emerging technologies to various types of weapons," and said that "new technologies afford new means of war and therefore heightened risks and threats." Within the arms control landscape, Pakistan argued that the absence of normative progress on autonomous weapon systems presents substantial risks, with the development, deployment, and use of such systems creating dangerous consequences for regional and international peace, security, and stability.

Cuba repeated its call for the prohibition of completely autonomous lethal weapons and the regulation of partially autonomous weapons. Switzerland said that new rules and measures should be elaborated to prevent systems that would be unable to comply with international humanitarian law (IHL), and argued that other AWS should be regulated, in particular through setting "the required type and degree of human control, noting that the latter is context-dependent." Switzerland conveyed its hope that the GGE would reach an understanding in the area of human control.

Australia welcomed the advances made in discussions on lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS), and stated that it looks forward to further exchanges on the issue within the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on LAWS. Switzerland expressed its desire that the upcoming Sixth Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Review Conference will adopt a new mandate for the GGE to develop a robust and comprehensive framework for AWS, to ensure compliance with international law, taking into account ethical considerations.

Resolutions

L.12, "Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects," notes "with satisfaction" the discussions on LAWS held by the GGE, and welcomes the technical decisions by the High Contracting Parties to the Convention pertaining to the GGE on LAWS.

L.6, "Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament," notes the discussions on various dimensions of emerging technologies under the framework of the CCW and recalls "the discussions and progress" made by the GGE on LAWS "during its sessions held from 2018 to 2021". It calls on states "to remain vigilant in understanding new and emerging developments in science and technology that could imperil international security."

CYBER PEACE AND SECURITY

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

Around 40 delegations addressed issues of cyber peace, security, and information and communications technologies (ICTs) in statements delivered during the second phase of the First Committee's thematic debate. Despite the brevity of remarks due to time limits, statements reflected ever-deepening nuance, understanding, and clarity of position that mirrors the rising importance and dialogue accorded this subject by the First Committee in recent years.

First Committee cyber processes

Most references naturally touched on the First Committee-established cyber processes: the [first Open-ended Working Group on ICTs \(OEWG I\)](#), which concluded its work in March 2021, and the [sixth Group of Governmental Experts \(GGE\)](#) on responsible state behaviour in cyberspace, which concluded work in May 2021. When the OEWG and GGE were established in 2018, it was amid heavy politicisation and regret over what many saw as an unnecessary bifurcation of First Committee work on cyber issues, given the close similarities in the two groups' mandates and agendas. As was stressed in a briefing provided last week by the GGE and OEWG chairpersons, much effort was put into ensure complementarity between their outputs and avoid redundancy.

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM), European Union (EU), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Algeria, Hungary, Canada, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Australia, Indonesia, Estonia, Czech Republic, Hungary, United Kingdom (UK), France, Colombia, Russia, and Ethiopia, among others, welcomed the outputs and conclusions of both groups, while the Non Aligned Movement (NAM) and Bangladesh took note of them and Austria and Poland referred to them. Egypt and Thailand welcomed the conclusions of OEWG I. Philippines lauded the coordination between the Groups.

Some delegations highlighted aspects of the Groups' reports. Estonia took note of the practical proposals to establish national points of contact and computer emergency response teams (CERTs). The United Kingdom (UK) described the reports as adding "valuable layers of additional understanding to the consensus framework" and Austria noted the guidance they provide. Thailand also noted that the reports help to elaborate on the normative framework while sharing its belief that assistance through capacity-building, as outlined in the OEWG report, is "key to enable Member States with different levels of capacity to effectively uphold them".

France, Czech Republic, Netherlands, and Canada noted the reports as reinforcing the existing UN framework of 11 voluntary norms of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace. Estonia, Brazil, and Colombia observed that the reports build on many years of work.

In the context of the processes, Canada and Estonia affirmed that the agreed norms and international law are sufficient to guide state behaviour but both recognised that more work is needed to deepen understanding on how international law applies. Both states, along with CARICOM, Austria, Australia, Switzerland, and the Czech Republic, urged implementation of the existing agreed norms while the Czech Republic indicated this need not preclude the development of additional norms over time. Estonia underlined the value of the [official compendium of the GGE report](#) that includes voluntary national contributions on international law. It encouraged states to publish their views and exchange on this. Switzerland reminded that international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law, applies in cyberspace and must be respected, a point echoed by Estonia, Brazil, and Netherlands. The Netherlands and Bangladesh additionally referenced the

applicability of the UN Charter. Australia shared that the GGE report represents a step forward, providing clarity on what state behaviour should look like.

A few other states still wish to go further than a normative framework, however.

Iran expressed hope that the **second OEWG (OEWG II)**, which will commence work in December 2021, can accommodate concerns of the whole UN membership, a task that “can be realized through the settlement of the unresolved issues from the previous OEWG, developing further international legal norms and rules, and finally developing a legally binding instrument.”

Cuba said legally binding instruments are required to prevent the militarisation of cyberspace.

NAM called for the intensification of efforts towards safeguarding cyberspace from becoming an arena of conflict and said that the development of any international legal framework to address such issues should be pursued within the UN. Indonesia stated that norms, principles, rules, and legally binding frameworks in cyber space must be pursued.

China said formulating universally accepted rules and norms are a pressing task for now. Viet Nam suggested there should be common agreements on behaviour in cyber space at regional and national levels, in accordance with international law.

With respect to work ahead, ASEAN signalled its pleasure that Ambassador Burhan Gafoor of Singapore was elected Chair of OEWG II. The Group of Arab States, CARICOM, China, Cuba, Algeria, Netherlands, Brazil, Thailand, Egypt, UK, Nepal, Colombia, among others, variously welcomed or expressed intention to participate in OEWG II.

Programme of Action

A potential bridge between states who want a cyber treaty and those who would like to focus on implementing and applying existing norms and law is a proposal for a politically binding programme of

action (UNPoA) on state behaviour in cyberspace. This proposal was first put forward by Egypt and France in the context of OEWG I and is in the process of being further developed.

France delivered a **joint statement** from the 53 co-sponsors to the cyber UNPoA proposal. The statement explained co-sponsors understand a UNPoA as a “permanent, inclusive and action-oriented instrument aimed at advancing the concrete cooperation against the malicious use of ICT.” It further described the main objective of this proposal as facilitating the implementation of the (agreed) consensual framework for a responsible behaviour of states in the use of ICTs, including by supporting capacity building actions; good practices exchanges; and promoting a substantial multi-stakeholder dialogue with civil society, academia, and private actors, noting it is also “their responsibility to contribute to the fight against malicious threats related to ICT.”

Many UNPoA co-sponsors expressed support for the UNPoA proposal through national or regional statements, including the EU, Canada, Egypt, Netherlands, Austria, Estonia, Czech Republic, Switzerland, Colombia, Australia, and France. Costa Rica highlighted that it is time to establish a permanent forum to consider cyber issues, implement norms, and to create accountability mechanisms. Egypt additionally described the UNPoA as a mechanism to “examine the possible developments of further norms pending an agreement on launching negotiations on a legally binding instrument.”

Most of these statements reinforced the vision of a UNPoA as action-oriented, with an emphasis on norms implementation and capacity-building as well as the involvement of non-governmental stakeholders. Variation exists in how it is being described, however, with some states using the term “mechanism” and others “forum,” for example.

Support for a UNPoA is strong and the delivery of a detailed co-sponsors statement at the First Committee sends a clear signal of the intention to

move forward. The path to get there is not entirely clear, however. It is complicated in part by the premature establishment of OEWG II during the 2020 First Committee session, **opposed by many at the time** because OEWG I was still in progress. During the March 2021 OEWG I session, it became evident that some member states would like to make the OEWG the primary “home” for cyber issues and thereby constrain or embed the creation of a UNPoA within that. Many UNPoA supporters want to avoid that situation, however. This is in part because of concerns about the OEWG II’s lengthy timeline but may also be due to **lingering suspicions** that some states see the OEWG as a springboard for a cyber treaty or other legal instrument.

For their part, the UNPoA co-sponsors outlined that “inclusive and open consultations” could take place within the OEWG II, but that they could also take place “in other venues and forums” and could also include the opportunity to hear the views of non-governmental organisations. Egypt said that it looks forward to the further elaboration of this proposal in an open and inclusive manner, primarily within the new OEWG, with the participation of all stakeholders. France, Colombia, Canada, Poland, and Estonia reinforced the importance of non-governmental stakeholders.

2021 resolution

But the even bigger story at First Committee this year is that the US and Russia have come together to co-sponsor a single resolution on ICTs. Russia had been the ICT resolution penholder since 1998, creating five of six GGEs, but disagreement over content of the draft 2018 resolution led to the US tabling its own resolution that year. The US-led resolution ended up creating the sixth GGE, while the Russia-led 208 resolution created the OEWG I. Thus, in 2019 and 2020, there were multiple resolutions on this subject, some of which triggered paragraph voting, as our **2020 coverage outlines**.

As its title implies, draft resolution **L.13, “Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of**

international security, and advancing responsible State behaviour in the use of information and communications technologies” is an at times awkward yet efficient marriage of the former “duelling cyber resolutions”. It has several preambular paragraphs (PPs) which, inter alia, stress the use of ICTs for peaceful purposes; recall that a number of states are developing ICT capabilities for military purposes; express concern about use against critical infrastructure; underline the importance of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; and recall efforts and guidance provided by work and reports of the GGEs and OEWG. PP 10 stands out in its effort to bring together the diverse views of member states regarding the limitations, nature, and role of the normative framework vis-à-vis calls for additional norms or binding obligations, by “noting the possibility of future elaboration of additional binding obligations, if appropriate.” There is not any reference to the human impact of cyber operations.

L.13 has seven operative paragraphs (OPs). OP1 and OP3 correspond to the final report of the OEWG, by “recognising” it and encouraging states to be guided by it. OP2 “welcomes” the final report of the GGE. OP4 “supports” OEWG II and acknowledges its mandate while OP5 underlines that the OEWG II should take into account “past outcomes, be consensus-based, and results-oriented.” OP6 invites member states to continue to “inform” the UN Secretary-General of their views on the subject of ICTs—these national submissions constitute the basis of the annual UNSG’s report on the subject, but often does not benefit from a significant number of submissions. Perhaps to improve that, OP6 includes two guiding questions for states to consider however it’s noteworthy that OP6(a) refers to the strengthening of “information security,” a term traditionally favoured by China and Russia. Finally, OP7 is the standard paragraph to keep this issue on the agenda of the 77th UNGA session.

While the unification is a positive signal of progress, it was noticeable that two lead sponsors presented the resolution in very different ways. The **US statement** was brief, outlining general content

and urging all states to join consensus in adopting it. In contrast, **Russia** spoke at length about the resolution's content. It indicated that the single resolution came about through its own initiative but noted the support from other member states. Russia highlighted the resolution's "strategic significance," the adoption of which would allow states "to draw a line under the period of parallel existence of two platforms on international information security within the UN and to fulfill the aspiration of the global community to return to a single track negotiation process on these issues."

The EU, South Africa, Ecuador, Australia, Brazil, Czech Republic, France, Netherlands, and Hungary, among others, welcomed or recognised the joint resolution.

Threats

Some delegations used the opportunity of their statements to highlight cyber-related threats. The NAM expressed concern with illegal and malicious use of new ICTs and reiterated the need to prevent cyberspace from "becoming a theater of military operations." The EU observed that the cyber threat landscape continues to evolve and is increasingly misused to conduct malicious cyber activities.

Ireland stated that "reprehensible cyber attacks against medical and health care facilities during pandemic" highlight need to build cyber resilience. Brazil, Republic of Korea, and Thailand, among others, variously noted the enhanced reliance on ICTs during the pandemic or described increase in attacks during this time.

Iran was more specific in stating that the US has not only "started militarizing cyberspace, but it has also begun carrying out multiple cyberattacks," and named Israel as a perpetrator of attacks against Iran. Georgia called out Russia for having implemented numerous "massive cyber attacks" against its public and private institutions.

Cuba reiterated concern over US cyber strategy, which, it said, has since 2018 authorised the use of

offensive cyber weapons and operations including in carrying out preventive attacks to deter adversaries. Cuba rejected the hostile use of ICTs for the purposes of subverting the legal or political order of states, and in particular the use of digital platforms to promote a false impression of life in Cuba and thereby justify the US' "regime change" doctrine.

China observed, "A few countries pursue a strategy of deterrence attack, and introduce military alliance and ideological differences into cyberspace." It argued that certain states abuse the "national security concept" to suppress foreign companies, fragment the global supply chain, and undermine global development and cooperation.

Algeria condemned the use of spy software against officials, citizens, and journalists around the world and expressed concern over the manipulation of ICTs and cyber attacks on critical infrastructure.

The Holy See, Indonesia, Czech Republic, and India, among others, spoke of operations targeting critical infrastructure, with Thailand additionally highlighting critical information infrastructure (CII). Indonesia and Czech Republic reminded of the potentially devastating humanitarian consequences of such operations, a point underscored by the final report of OEWG I.

The Holy See pointed out, "A cyber tool may not look like a gun or a bomb, but its malicious use can be even more destructive on civilians, as seen in attacks on critical infrastructure such as medical facilities, energy systems and water supplies." It may have been the only delegation to connect cyber to kinetic weapons, noting that:

There is even greater reason to ensure the security of technologies operating in cyberspace and to prevent interference with the command and control of weapon systems, especially nuclear weapons. Until such weapons can be eliminated, it is not only highly imprudent but deeply problematic to maintain systems in which an electronic intrusion into its controls might lead to the launch and detonation of a nuclear weapon.

NAM, Russia, Nepal, India, Iran, Cuba, and Ethiopia referred to the use of ICTs by terrorist groups or for terrorism purposes, with India underscoring the need for member states to better address this and NAM highlighting the related misuse of social media. The Group of Arab States highlighted increased exploitation of ICTs by non-state actors and criminals; while Philippines mentioned transnational cybercrime.

Regional and national initiatives

ASEAN described multiple regional initiatives: the creation of a Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee; a Regional Action Plan on the Implementation of the Norms of Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace; and the adoption of a cyber security concept paper by the 15th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting. Indonesia referenced the work being undertaken by ASEAN member states. Malaysia announced it has launched a Cybersecurity Strategy for 2020–2024, which outlines five strategic pillars as guiding principles to enhance its national cyber security management, alongside a National Cyber Security Policy, which comprises the network information systems of critical sectors of the country.

China referenced its Global Initiative on Data Security and said that it has released a joint Cooperation Initiative on Data Security with the League of Arab States.

Estonia referred to its hosting of the first-ever UN Security Council open debate on cybersecurity, held under its presidency in June 2021.

Canada stressed the importance it accords to practical confidence building measures and capacity building and noted the support that it has provided to capacity building projects in the last six years.

Human-centric approaches

OEWG I saw the evolution of a growing push for more human-centric approaches to international cyber security. While this has been met with some resistance in the context of the OEWG, it enjoys deepening support and understanding, which was reflected in some First Committee statements.

For instance, Costa Rica recognised the human rights impact of international cyber operations, and urged states to refrain from using cyber security-related laws, policies, and practices as a pretext to violate human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Costa Rica also called for the recognition of the differentiated impact of cyber operations on marginalised people, women and girls, and people of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. Canada underlined that securing an open internet “requires investing in gender equity and understanding the gendered impact of cybersecurity issues.” It referenced the research it had supported on the subject of gender and international cyber security, and contributions to the Women in Cyber fellowship programme.

Nepal, Austria, Malaysia, Viet Nam, among others, highlighted the role of ICTs in promoting socio-economic development and many states stressed the general benefits of ICTs.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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

During the second portion of the thematic debate, delegations referenced science and technology in varying ways. Many references were in the context of cyber security or autonomous weapons, but a few states treated this as a distinct area of work.

Switzerland outlined the “great potential” for technological developments to aid in disarmament and international security by enhancing dialogue, building trust, fostering verification, improving crisis management, or increasing situational awareness in armed conflict. It also acknowledged the new challenges that technology brings. Going forward, Switzerland said it will place particular emphasis on addressing these challenges multilaterally and support activities undertaken to this effect in the context of the UN Secretary General’s disarmament agenda and by UNIDIR.

India introduced its traditional resolution on this topic. **L.6, “Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament”** contains only technical updates in 2021. It has been adopted by consensus for the last four years and India expressed the hope that this will be the case again this year.

The **2020 resolution** requested a report of the UN Secretary-General (UNSG) on the subject: “Current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts” (**A/76/182**). The report, released in July 2021, provides an overview of scientific and technological developments of relevance to weapons, means or methods of warfare and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts, as well as developments in relevant intergovernmental forums. This includes artificial intelligence and autonomous systems; digital technologies; biology and chemistry; space and aerospace technologies; electromagnetic technologies; and materials technologies.

The report also addresses the implications of emerging technologies for nuclear risks and for human rights. In the area of nuclear risks, the report underscores certain technologies “are introducing elements of unpredictability at a time of international tension.” It further indicates that concerns about the impact of emerging technologies “are driving risk-generating behaviour such as arms racing” and that “the nexus between nuclear weapons and emerging technologies potentially introduces dangerous ambiguities that could drive escalation and miscalculation. Strategic ambiguity results from a wider array of non-nuclear strategic attacks, for example cyberattacks, and the prospects for a nuclear response.”

Regarding human rights, the report takes note of the work of the UN human rights community to address “the implications under international human rights law and international humanitarian law related to various emerging weapon technologies, including armed drones, lethal autonomous weapon systems, less lethal weapons and ICTs.” It highlights issues of transparency and accountability, arbitrary killings, the right to life, and risks of heightened discrimination.

The report contains five recommendations, most of which encourage further or ongoing research, collaboration, and integration of technological perspectives into arms control or disarmament fora. Given its relevance to a wide number of UN processes across a spectrum of weapons issues, one of the recommendations stresses the importance of all relevant treaties and disarmament bodies devoting time to keeping up to date “with all relevant work undertaken in other processes and bodies that address issues connected with developments in science and technology.”

The report also recommends that “UN bodies and entities continue to encourage multi-stakeholder

and geographically equitable engagement, including by industry and other private sector actors, through formal and informal platforms.”

Pakistan highlighted the consequences that would arise from the development, deployment, and use of new categories of weapons when integrated with existing ones. The increasing salience of technology to arms poses several challenges, it noted.

China and India both highlighted the right of states to the peaceful uses of technology, with China asking how to strike a proper balance between sustainable development and security, alongside non-proliferation and peaceful uses.

In this context, China shared that it has tabled a new resolution, **L.55, “Promoting International Cooperation on Peaceful Uses in the Context of International Security.”**

China explained that the draft resolution “reaffirms the international community’s consensus on non-proliferation, highlights the significance of safeguarding legitimate rights of all states to peaceful uses, and urges all member states, without prejudice to their non-proliferation obligations, to take concrete measures to promote international cooperation for peaceful purposes.” It hopes this draft resolution “will be conducive to implementing the NPT, BWC and CWC in a more comprehensive and balanced manner.”

The draft resolution’s preambular paragraphs (PPs) recall the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), while also affirming support for multilateral treaties “whose aim is to eliminate or prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons.” Other PPs stress the importance of the exchange of technologies for peaceful purposes and benefits and/or role of technology, including in relation to development. PP12 express concern about “undue restrictions on exports to developing countries of materials, equipment and technology,” while the following PP emphasises that non-proliferation control agreements be transparent, open, and not impose any restrictions on access to materials, equipment, and technology, citing their role in sustainable development.

L.55 contains four operative paragraphs (OPs). OP1 urges member states to take concrete measures to promote international cooperation on materials, equipment, and technology for peaceful purposes and not maintain any “incompatible” restrictions. OPs 2 and 3 request the UNSG to seek the views and recommendations from member states on this subject and submit a report to the UNGA in its 77th session in 2022. The draft resolution is currently co-sponsored by Belarus, Burundi, Cameroon, China, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kiribati, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic, Vanuatu, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe.

DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Laura Varella | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Throughout this week's debate, at least six delegations spoke about the link between disarmament and development. Statements tended to converge around the themes of military expenditure, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the need to use resources to address the new challenges in the fields of development.

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was among the groups that urged states to reduce their military spending. It expressly mentioned the principle of "undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments" and called on all states to redirect their resources to address new challenges in the fields of development, poverty eradication, and the elimination of the diseases that afflict humanity, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) also stressed that using already limited resources to address security threats in the region has a negative impact on social, educational, and infrastructure programs, creating a burden for countries that are already suffering from debt overload.

Austria highlighted that despite the substantive health and economic challenges of the past year, global military spending continued to rise. It urged: "We need to move away from the dangerous misconception, that security can only be ensured by military and armament. The pandemic should be a wake-up call to lead us to a broader understanding of security and to better integrate disarmament instruments and measures into all efforts to build and maintain security."

Sweden also spoke about the importance of a "holistic approach" to global security challenges, in which disarmament and non-proliferation are put in a wider perspective and better adapted to the complexities of current international security

environment. It stated that the connection made with sustainable development by the UN Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament can help break silos and put common issues on a broader context.

Togo mentioned the 2030 Agenda, in particular the goal to reduce violence in all its forms throughout the world. It stressed the premise that no harmonious and sustainable development is possible without peace and highlighted the importance of the support by the Centre to the African Union Commission in the implementation of the Agenda 2063 and 2030.

India addressed the relationship between technology and development, stating that it is aware of the benefits as well as the challenges posed by possible malicious use. It stated its belief that "international cooperation in the peaceful uses of science and technology should be promoted through relevant means, including technology transfer, sharing of information and exchange of equipment and materials". It further highlighted that technology with military applications must be regulated, keeping in mind "legitimate defence requirements" of all states and non-proliferation concerns.

Resolution

As noted last week, NAM has tabled its annual resolution, **L.24, "Relationship between disarmament and development."** It urges the international community "to devote part of the resources made available by the implementation of disarmament and arms limitation agreements to economic and social development, with a view to reducing the ever-widening gap between developed and developing countries." It also reiterates its invitation to member states to provide information regarding measures adopted to reduce the ever-widening gap between developed and developing countries.

Reports

The United Nations (UN) published a report on last year's resolution on this topic ([A/76/88](#)). It indicates that the UN undertook several measures throughout the year to implement the resolution, such as the development and update of the terms of reference of the UN Coordinating Action on Small Arms in order to better reflect the need to mainstream disarmament efforts in the field. It further described initiatives to strengthen the disarmament and development linkages at the country level, like pilot scoping missions to Jamaica and Cameroon during the first half of 2021 within the framework of the Saving Lives Entity fund. In addition, five countries and the European Union (EU) submitted information regarding measures and efforts adopted to implement the resolution, which are included in the report.

Cuba reinforced its commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation and outlined its budget expenditures related to sustainable development (24 per cent of the national 2021 budget is being dedicated to education and 28 per cent for public health and assistance).

Mexico also outlined its budget in the area of development and presented data about the campaign "Yes to Disarmament, Yes to Peace", which was implemented in 2020 and seeks to help reduce the high rates of violence by raising awareness among the population about the risks of having firearms and ammunition.

Ireland informed about "A Better World", its overseas development programme, and about initiatives in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control. This includes its leadership on the consultations to agree on a political declaration on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

Albania outlined its defence budget, which was focused on improvements in the modernisation of equipment, improvements in training infrastructure, increases in operational capability, and support for training and exercises.

Colombia mentioned it has adopted measures to implement the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

Finally, the EU outlined several initiatives undertaken in the last years, such as Council Decision (CFSP) 2019/538 in support of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW); the Council Decision (CFSP) 2019/97 in support of the Biological Weapons Convention; and several other measures to address the challenges posed by anti-personnel landmines and explosive remnants of war and small arms and light weapons.

Other reports mandated by 2020 First Committee resolutions also address the relationship between disarmament and development. The report [A/76/129](#) addresses measures taken to fulfil resolution 74/24 regarding the reduction of military budgets. The document notes that throughout 2021, 40 governments submitted information about military expenditures for the latest fiscal year.

Additionally, the [report](#) about the activities of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean also highlights initiatives undertaken from July 2020–June 2021. According to the document, during this period the Centre undertook over 70 technical, legal and policy assistance and capacity-building activities, reaching some 4,500 authorities and partners in the region in support of their efforts to implement disarmament, arms control, and non-proliferation instruments. Many of these activities were related to sustainable development, such as the initiatives regarding small arms and light weapons in the region. In the same sense, the [report](#) on the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, and the [report](#) on the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific also outlined the activities undertaken by those bodies.

ENVIRONMENT AND DISARMAMENT

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

Only a few delegates raised the topic of environment in the context of disarmament during the second cluster of First Committee thematic statements.

The Caribbean Community connected the dots between military spending and environmental protection and climate mitigation. It argued that the resource diversion to “address threats to security” takes away from mitigating impacts of natural disasters and other challenges “for countries already suffering from debt overload.”

Viet Nam underscored the importance of implementing environmental norms in the field of disarmament. It argued that these norms have been further strengthened by the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), including provisions on environmental remediation.

The Chair of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, in the interactive informal exchange, recalled that nuclear weapons threaten the environment and ecosystems, and that this urgent issue requires the attention of everyone.

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) also emphasised the importance of observing environmental norms in the preparation and implementation of disarmament and arms limitation agreements. But the lack of updates to its resolution (L.16, see below) is regrettable, as there is considerable scope for rejuvenating this text to promote environmental mainstreaming in the First Committee and beyond, highlighting both the linkages between weapons and environmental harms, and acting as means of gathering positive practice from states.

Resolutions

Please note more resolutions with references to the environment may be forthcoming.

L.4, “Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world,” contains the same language as last year with regards to environmental references. Preambular paragraph (PP) 5 recalls resolution A/RES/50/70, stressing the “detrimental environmental effects of the use of nuclear weapons,” while operative paragraph (OP) 3(b) calls for discussions, decisions, and actions on nuclear weapons to focus on the effects of these weapons on both humans and the environment.

L.11, “Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons,” highlights the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, including on the environment, and calls on all states to prevent any use or proliferation of nuclear weapons and to achieve nuclear disarmament.

L.16, “Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control,” tabled by the Non-Aligned Movement, has only technical updates. It calls for recognition of agreements adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and other relevant agreements, in the drafting and implementation of arms control agreements, underscoring the environmental effects of nuclear weapons.

L.20, “Prohibition of the dumping of radioactive waste,” while expressing grave concern about the use of nuclear waste to states’ national security, regrettably does not refer to the environmental impacts of radioactive waste.

L.32, “Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context,” states that resources released by disarmament can be devoted to economic and social development and to the protection of the environment for the benefit of all peoples. It only contains technical updates.

GENDER AND DISARMAMENT

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

During the second cluster of First Committee thematic statements, many delegations continued to underscore their commitment to mainstreaming gender into the work of the First Committee and beyond, including Canada, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

Ireland announced that as Chair of the Disarmament Impact Group, it will continue to include gender perspectives across all disarmament efforts. Sweden explained that in line with its feminist foreign policy, it believes that applying a gender equality lens will improve peace and security, making it more durable. It said it was encouraged by the increasing number of resolutions that include gender perspectives.

The United States (US) reiterated its commitment to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda while Ireland called for integration of disarmament in the WPS agenda.

Participation

Austria, Colombia, Ecuador, Ireland, France, Nepal, Netherlands, the Philippines, Thailand, Sweden, and the US underscored the importance of the equal and full participation of women in disarmament, peace, and security. Ireland said that the meaningful participation of women and men “must become the norm.” Ireland also asserted that the inclusion of a diversity of voices leads to more efficient and effective policies.

While equal participation was a concern even before the pandemic, Austria observed with regret a decrease of women participating in this year's First Committee. Canada also regretted the continued gender imbalance at First Committee, arguing that “we are thus missing important voices and perspectives at the table.”

Beyond First Committee, states referred to the current state of (un)equal participation in other

disarmament fora and processes. A few delegations, including the President of the Conference on Disarmament, Netherlands, Mexico, the United Kingdom (UK), and the US regretted the fact that not even a technical amendment in the Conference of Disarmament's (CD) rules of procedure could be agreed upon to make them gender neutral. The US noted that this failure is “a sad statement on the CD's ability to work effectively.”

Canada said it was pleased that the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on developments in the field of information and communications technologies recognised the importance of women's participation. It recalled its support for the “women in cyber fellowship programme,” enabling over 30 women diplomats to participate in the OEWG negotiations.

Nepal was pleased that despite limitations posed by COVID-19, the UN Regional Center for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD) continued its activities through virtual format with an increasing number of women and youth participants.

Ireland expressed its commitment to integrate gender perspectives at the upcoming Review Conference of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and announced that it will “champion diversity of voices” across all pillars of the NPT.

Gendered impacts

Canada called on states to commit to developing better understandings of the gendered impacts of weapons, including by collecting and sharing age- and gender-disaggregated data on the impacts of weapons. This can help governments to create informed policies and to respond to victims' needs effectively.

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) recalled that “lockdowns and stay-at-home orders during the COVID-19 pandemic have led to disturbing increase

in armed domestic violence.” CARICOM explained that the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament, and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) undertook reviews of small arms laws with domestic violence provisions in 22 Latin American and Caribbean States, concluding “with recommendations to restrict the ability of convicted perpetrators of domestic violence to acquire or renew firearms licenses.” CARICOM further informed that UNLIREC will use findings from its research in an online course on the prevention of domestic armed violence.

In the informal interactive exchange, the director of UNLIREC added that it implemented additional workshops to security and justice sector officials about how to conduct firearms investigations through a gender lens, so to help reduce impunity of armed violence against women. Similarly, the director of the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific explained that in the last year, the Centre held a regional webinar on the gender dimensions of small arms, in collaboration with the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA).

In terms of cyber security, Costa Rica called for “the recognition of the differentiated impact of cyber operations on marginalized people, women and girls, and people of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions.” It argued that “this impact should be recognized at the Security Council’s open debate on Women, Peace and Security,” held 21 October, as well as in the UN Secretary-General’s report on this topic.

Canada also raised gender in the context of cyber security, and informed that it funded research on gender aspects of cyber security.

Despite these positive references to the importance of gender in disarmament, it is regrettable that this year’s First Committee did not see a joint statement on gender, as was delivered in 2019 and 2018. Support for this statement rose from 60 states in 2018 to 79 states in 2019.

Resolutions

Please note more resolutions with gender references may be forthcoming.

L.4, “Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world,” continues to call for greater attention to the impact of a nuclear weapon detonation on women and the importance of their participation in discussions, decisions, and actions on nuclear weapons in operative paragraph (OP)3(b).

L.12, “Convention on prohibitions or restrictions on the use of certain conventional weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects,” emphasises as in previous years the importance of including perspectives of women, men, boys, and girls in considering issues related to the Convention and its Protocols.

L.16, “Compliance with non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament agreements and commitments,” last tabled in 2017 by the United States, includes a new OP4, calling on states “to include and empower women, including through capacity-building efforts, as appropriate, as full, equal and meaningful participants in the design and implementation of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control efforts.”

L.18, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific,” welcomes in PP6, as in previous years, efforts by the Regional Centre to promote the role and representation of women in disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control activities. Since 2020, it has new language in preambular paragraph (PP) 5, welcoming work by the Centre “in support of the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 5 ... in particular target 5.2 to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls, target 5.5 to ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership.” It expresses its appreciation to the Centre for its work in its project “for States of South and South-East Asia on gun violence and illicit small arms trafficking from a gender perspective” in PP3.

L.21, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa,” has kept the same language relating to women’s role in disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control from the 2018 resolution and, in OP6, welcomes efforts by the Regional Centre to promote the role and representation of women in disarmament activities.

L.25, “Implementation of the Convention on the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines and their destruction,” reaffirms its determination to put an end to these weapons killing or injuring women and girls. It has retained the same language from last year that calls for the inclusion of gender aspects in mine action.

L.31, “Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels,” recognises for the fourth time in its PPs the “importance of equitable representation of women in arms control discussions and negotiations.”

L.35, “Convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of bacteriological (biological) and toxin weapons and on their destruction,” includes for the third time language in PP9 that encourages “equitable participation of women and men in the framework of the Convention.

L.36, “Youth, disarmament and non-proliferation,” first adopted in 2019, recalls that the full and effective participation of men and women is essential for sustainable peace and security.

L.38, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean,” has kept the same language, recognising the Regional Centre’s important role in promoting women’s participation in the implementation of the nexus between sustainable development and disarmament. It also welcomes the Centre’s activities to promote the “equal representation of women in all decision-making processes” in disarmament.

L.41, “Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions,” has previously addressed the impact of cluster munitions on women and recognised the importance of women’s meaningful participation in disarmament processes related to the Convention. Since 2019, it includes stronger language, recognising the gendered impact of cluster munitions and calling for “adequate, gender- and age-sensitive assistance to victims of cluster munitions.”

L.43, “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects,” has a new OP12, emphasising the need for equal participation of women in all decision-making and implementation processes relating to the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons (SALW) and the International Tracing Instrument. It continues in its PP8, as in previous years, to reaffirm the need for states to mainstream gender dimensions into states’ implementation efforts.

L.46, “The Arms Trade Treaty,” recalls the adoption of action-oriented decisions on gender and GBV by the CSP5 in OP13. It also reminds that states parties agreed to review progress on these two aspects on an ongoing basis and encourages states to ensure the full and equal participation of women and men to advance within the scope of the Treaty. The resolution has also kept language taking into account the negative impact of conventional arms and related ammunition on women and girls and calls upon states “to address the link between conventional arms transfers and the risk of serious acts of gender-based violence and serious acts of violence against women and children.”

L.47, “Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus,” continues to recognise, in PP2, the need to encourage the full involvement of both women and men in ammunition management practice and policy.

L.52, “Reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours,” continues to recognise, in PP19, “the importance

of the full involvement and equal participation of women and men in discussions on reducing space threats through responsible behaviours and the need to assess the possible differentiated impacts of such threats.”

L.59, “Joint courses of action and future-oriented dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons,” continues to note, in PP18, “that efforts to

encompass different generations, areas of the world and genders in disarmament and non-proliferation education underscore efforts and create momentum towards achieving a world without nuclear weapons.” It also continues, in PP21, to reaffirm “that the equal, full and effective participation of both women and men is one of the essential factors for the promotion and attainment of sustainable peace and security.”

YOUTH AND DISARMAMENT EDUCATION

Mandi Karpo, Nicki Eichenholtz, Vanessa Keeley, and Matthew Breay Bolton
Pace University International Disarmament Institute

This week, the Republic of Korea (ROK) tabled its biennial resolution **L.36, “Youth, disarmament and non-proliferation.”** The resolution encourages the international community “to promote the meaningful and inclusive participation of young people in discussions in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation” by “developing and implementing policies and programmes for young people to increase and facilitate their constructive engagement,” including “education and capacity-building.”

“My delegation strongly believes that the engagement with the young generation can lead to valuable contributions in reviving the disarmament machinery,” said the ROK representative. Since the 2019 version of the resolution ([A/RES/74/64](#)) passed by consensus, ROK asked First Committee for “continued support” and invited “all member states to join as a cosponsor.”

This year’s draft text includes elements that extend beyond the 2019 version of the resolution. Most notably, it requests the UN Secretary-General to “seek the views” of member states, the UN, international organisations, and civil society on “promotion of youth engagement and empowerment activities in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation” and to submit a report to the General Assembly in 2023. This year’s text also highlights

“the dedicated digital platform Youth4Disarmament,” as well as “token grants and awards supported by voluntary contributions.” It notes the “formal plenary meeting on youth and disarmament by the Conference on Disarmament on 12 August 2021.”

Several delegations highlighted the importance of youth participation and disarmament education in their statements to First Committee. Hungary expressed “support” for “early inclusion and participation of youth in the work of the disarmament machinery as their perspective brings fresh views to the matter.” It noted that “high quality education” is a “key requirement to make tangible progress in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.”

India stated that it looked forward to further deepening youth engagement in disarmament. Ireland highlighted the work of the Youth Group of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO). Austria and Nepal also expressed appreciation for the contributions of youth and civil society to the disarmament machinery.

Other resolutions under consideration by First Committee include provisions on youth and/or disarmament education.

L.23, “Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament,” calls on the international community to engage in “educational and public awareness-raising activities about the threat posed to humanity by nuclear weapons.”

Similarly, **L.44, “Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments,”** recommends “disarmament education” to “increase awareness among civil society of the risks and catastrophic impact of any nuclear detonation.”

L.49, “Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty,” notes “the contribution of diverse and inclusive participation in building and sustaining momentum for the universalization and entry into force of the Treaty” including by the CTBTO Youth Group.

L.59, “Joint courses of action and future-oriented dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons,” notes that “efforts to encompass different generations, areas of the world and genders in disarmament and non-proliferation education underscore efforts and create momentum towards achieving a world without nuclear weapons;” welcomes the visits of leaders, youth and others to Hiroshima and Nagasaki; and encourages all states to:

facilitate efforts on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation education, inter alia, efforts in which the young generation can actively engage, including through dialogue platforms, mentoring, internships, fellowships, scholarships, model events and youth group activities, as well as to raise awareness of the realities of the use of nuclear weapons, including through, among

others, visits by leaders, youth and others to and interactions with communities and people, including the hibakusha (those who have suffered the use of nuclear weapons) who pass on their experiences to the future generations.

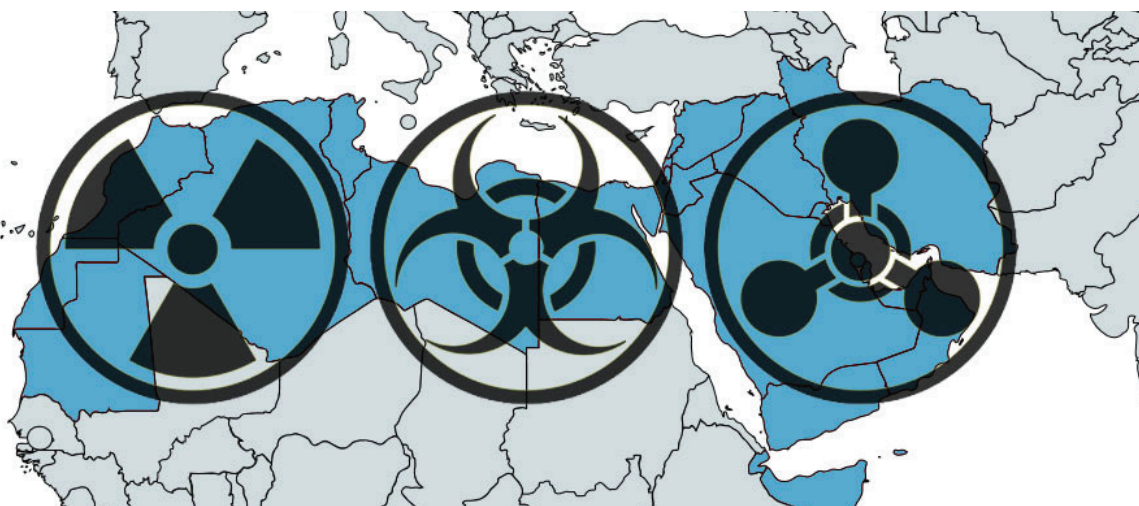
L.28, “United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament,” reaffirms the role of the three United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in “educational programmes that promote regional peace and security and that are aimed at changing basic attitudes with respect to peace and security and disarmament.”

Similarly, **L.18, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific,”** welcomes “youth-focused outreach activities undertaken by the Regional Centre.”

L.21, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa,” calls on the international community to provide “adequate assistance to African Member States” on “youth and peace and security.”

L.38, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean,” recognises “the importance of information, research, education and training for peace, disarmament and development in order to achieve understanding and cooperation among States.”

L.43, “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects,” requests the UN Secretariat to “present funding and administrative arrangements for a dedicated fellowship training programme on small arms and light weapons.”



Invitation to a UNGA First Committee Side Event

Achieving the Possible

A REGIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR A WMD FREE ZONE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Date: Wednesday, October 27, 2021

13:30 New York | 18:30 London | 19:30 Berlin, Cairo | 20:30 Moscow, Tel Aviv | 21:00 Tehran

The **Permanent Mission of Ireland to the UN in New York** in collaboration with the **Middle East Treaty Organization** is delighted to invite you to a **UNGA First Committee side event**. The discussion will focus on the current process towards realizing the Zone, a new model for a **Draft Treaty**, which includes a **regional layer of verification**, and the need for a positive and practical narrative.

Speakers:

Ambassador Jim Kelly, Deputy Permanent Representative of Ireland to the UN in New York
Tariq Rauf, Former head of the Verification and Security Policy Coordination Office at the IAEA
Mona Saleh, Doctoral Researcher, German Institute for Global and Area Studies
Sharon Dolev, Executive Director, Middle East Treaty Organization
Leonardo Bandarra, Programme Associate, Middle East Treaty Organization
Emad Kiyaei, Director, Middle East Treaty Organization

Moderator:

Paul Ingram, Executive Director, Emergent Change

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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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