



Speakers in First Committee Decry Destructive Force of Indiscriminate Weapons While Some Defend Need for National Protection, Approving 11 More Drafts

Concerned that cluster munition remnants killed or maimed civilians including women and children, obstructed economic and social development, impeded post-conflict rehabilitation, and delayed or prevented the return of refugees and internally displaced persons, the First Committee (Disarmament and International Security) today approved a draft resolution urging all States outside the Convention on Cluster Munitions to join as soon as possible.

Also by that text, "L.49/Rev.1", among six approved in the Committee's cluster on conventional weapons, the General Assembly would stress the importance of the full and effective implementation of and compliance with the Convention, and express strong concern regarding recent allegations and evidence of the use of cluster munitions in different parts of the world.

That text, approved by a recorded vote of 130 in favour to 2 against (Russian Federation, Zimbabwe), with 40 abstentions, also would invite all States that had not ratified the Convention or acceded to it to provide, on a voluntary basis, information that could make the clearance and destruction of cluster munitions remnants and related activities more effective.

Also drawing debate in that cluster was a text on implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, "L.50". It was approved by a recorded vote of 159 in favour to none against, with 19 abstentions.

Further terms of that text would have the Assembly note with regret that anti-personnel mines continued to be used in some conflicts around the world, causing human suffering and impeding post-conflict development. It would also invite all States that had not signed the Convention to do so, and urged the one remaining State that had signed but has not ratified it to ratify without delay.

Also approved in the conventional weapons cluster was a draft on the Arms Trade Treaty, "L.54", by which the Assembly would call on all States that had not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty, and stress the full and effective implementation of and compliance with all its provisions.

Underlining the need to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms and to prevent their diversion to the illicit market, or for unauthorized end use and end users, including for terrorist acts, the text would encourage States parties to strengthen their cooperation with civil society, industry and relevant international organizations to ensure the Treaty's effective implementation. That draft was approved by a recorded vote of 150 in favour to none against, with 26 abstentions.

Acting without a vote on the conventional weapons, the Committee approved drafts on assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons, "L.6", and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, "L.24".

Convinced that, in the era of globalization and the information revolution, arms regulation, non-proliferation and disarmament problems were more than ever the concern of all countries in the world, the Committee approved a draft, "L.50", urging all interested States to take part in multilateral negotiations and to renew and fulfil their individual and collective commitments to multilateral cooperation.

Also by that text, among five approved in the cluster on other disarmament measures and international security, the General Assembly would reaffirm that multilateralism was the core principle in negotiations in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation with a view to maintaining and strengthening universal norms and enlarging their scope. It was approved by a recorded vote of 122 in favour to 4 against (Federated States of Micronesia, Israel, United Kingdom, United States), with 51 abstentions.

Acting without a vote in the cluster on other disarmament measures and international security, the Committee also approved texts on the observance of environmental norms when drafting and implementing disarmament and arms control agreements, "L.7"; the relationship between disarmament and development, "L.10"; objective information on military matters, "L.17"; and a draft decision on the role of science in the context of international security and disarmament, "L.22".

Prior to action, the representative of Mali delivered general statements on the conventional weapons cluster.

Speaking in explanation of vote before the vote on the conventional weapons cluster were representatives of Cuba, Morocco, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Armenia, Bolivia, Russian Federation and Nicaragua.

Speaking in explanation of vote after the vote on conventional weapons were representatives of India, Argentina, China, United States, Ecuador, Egypt, Libya, Poland, Syria, Republic of Korea, Austria, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mexico, Singapore, Cyprus, Latvia, Venezuela, Cuba, Pakistan, Iran, Morocco and Brazil.

The representatives of Sweden and Cuba delivered general statements before the cluster on other disarmament measures and international security.

The Committee will meet again at 10 a.m. on Thursday, 5 November, to continue its consideration of all draft resolutions and decisions before it.

Background

The First Committee (Disarmament and International Security) met this morning to continue taking action on all draft resolutions and decisions before it. For more information see [Press Release GA/DIS/3539 \(http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/gadis3539.doc.htm\)](http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/gadis3539.doc.htm).

Cluster 3, Outer Space

The representative of Japan began by expressing his condolences to victims of the Russian Federation plane crash over Sinai. He went on to explain Japan's abstention from the vote on "L.47", regarding the no first placement of weapons in outer space. Japan supported and had worked tirelessly to preserve the security and stability of outer space. Initiatives to develop mutual trust, in particular, transparency and confidence-building measures were important. Japan also placed importance on an international code of conduct in that area and, therefore, had voted in favour of "L.3" and become a cosponsor of "L.48". It was necessary to explore how the international community could preserve and enhance the long-term security of outer space, which could be achieved in a number of ways. With due respect for "L.47", Japan had concerns over the concept of no first placement, as that could have the same effect as declaring being the second or third to place weapons in outer space for States that had never even considered placing weapons in outer space in the first place. That could even encourage an arms race in outer space by spurring States to develop defensive capabilities to avoid being left behind. Japan was also concerned about anti-satellite weapon capabilities, which should be addressed by the international community.

The representative of India, in explanation of its support of "L.47", said that, as a major space-faring nation, India had vital developmental and security interests in outer space. It supported the objective of reinforcing the international legal regime to protect and preserve access for all and to prevent, without exception, the weaponization of outer space. While not a substitute for legally binding instruments, transparency and confidence-building measures could play a useful role. No first placement of weapons in outer space was an interim step, he said, reiterating however that it was no substitute for the conclusion of substantive legal measures.

Explaining his country's abstention on "L.47", the representative of Switzerland said that space systems had become a critical part of the infrastructure of all States. Switzerland supported the drafting of legally binding instruments to prevent an arms race in outer space. Political or confidence-building measures had an important role to play as well. A resolution about no first placement of weapons in outer space could represent a positive signal. The delegation commended "L.47" for integrating the fact that the long-term preservation of outer space required, not only not placing weapons there, but also broadly, ensuring that it did not become an arena for conflict. Nonetheless, Switzerland was concerned that no first placement was just one part of a broader spectrum of necessary measures needed to preserve outer space. The development of terrestrial systems that could attack space facilities, including tests of such systems, were a serious source of concern. That was perhaps even more urgent than the placement of weapons in outer space. Switzerland would closely follow the evolution of "L.47" and was available to look at conceptual ideas regarding the text to ensure that it evolved for broader support.

The representative of Iran, explaining his vote on "L.47", said that the text was in line with the objective of preventing an arms race in outer space. He commended the Russian Federation for promoting the objective in the United Nations. Article IV of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, which prohibited the placement of any objects carrying nuclear weapons or other kinds of weapons of mass destruction in orbit around the Earth. Preambular paragraph 5 of "L.47" reaffirmed the need for strict compliance with that article. He also placed importance on operative paragraph 5 of the draft resolution calling on States to commit themselves to the principle of no first placement pending an international agreement to prevent an arms race in outer space.

Cluster 4, Conventional Weapons

In a general statement, DIANGUINA DITYAYA DOUCOURE (Mali) said he was honoured to present the annual draft resolution "L.6" on behalf of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). That text included the same terms adopted by consensus last year. He urged the international community to support the effective implementation of the ECOWAS convention, which had come into force in September 2009. In substance, it sought to consolidate security in the region by strengthening regional efforts to reduce illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. As such, it reflected the resolve of many countries in the world to curb that issue, as those weapons had the sad reputation of being some of the most fearsome weapons of mass destruction. He encouraged those who had not yet done so to lend support to "L.6". He also supported the European Union in implementing its project seeking to combat the scourge of small arms and light weapons. He called for the implementation of a national action plan to effectively control the

trafficking of weapons, which would include drafting national instruments, holding awareness-raising campaigns, improving the management of State and non-State ammunition stockpiles and harmonizing existing international legal instruments.

Action

Speaking in explanation of vote before the vote, the representative of Cuba said her delegation would abstain on “L.54”, on the Arms Trade Treaty, because in order to have adopted that Treaty, a premature vote had been forced, which did not have the full agreement of all delegations. Some resolutions that were pertinent to the Treaty had been dismissed in that process. The text was characterized by many ambiguities, inconsistencies and a “lack of definition”, which created legal gaps. That meant that, overall, the treaty was ineffective. It also was unbalanced, favouring weapon-exporting countries, which had privileges that undermined other States. The parameters established by the Treaty were subjective and could be easily manipulated or sidestepped, or misused for political purposes. The Treaty also hampered the ability of States to acquire weapons for legitimate defence purposes, which was their right. In addition, the Treaty could not be effective given that it allowed weapons transfers to non-authorized, non-State actors, which were the key source of the illicit arms trafficking. Draft “L.54” welcomed the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty, overlooking the fact that not all Member States shared the same position on the Treaty. Operative paragraph 6 of “L.54” attempted to establish links between the Arms Trade Treaty and other conventional weapons-related treaties, overlooking the independent character of each one, which were stand-alone legal instruments.

Also speaking in explanation of vote before the vote, the representative of Morocco said her delegation would vote in favour of “L.50” to reiterate its commitment to the humanitarian goals of the Mine-Ban Convention. Morocco’s ratification of the second amended Protocol to the Convention in 2002 reflected its commitment to eliminating anti-personnel mines. Remarkable mine-clearance efforts were being made by the Moroccan authorities to assist victims, including in rehabilitation. Beginning in 2006, the Kingdom had submitted voluntary reports pursuant to the Convention’s article VII, and had continued to do so. The country’s accession to the Convention was a strategic goal linked to its territorial integrity.

The representative of Venezuela, expressing condolences to the Russian Federation for the air crash, explained his delegation’s vote on “L.54”, explaining that the country was committed to eradicating the illicit arms trade. His delegation was of the firm belief that stamping out that scourge required a robust multilateral regime backed by a balanced treaty. However, the spirit of the negotiations surrounding the Arms Trade Treaty, including the imposition of artificial timeframes for its premature adoption, prevented the holding of necessary in-depth discussions. The Treaty, as it was currently worded, lacked the necessary balance in its nature and its scope. Draft “L.54” did not address the serious problem of overproduction and stockpiling of conventional weapons by the major producers and exporters, nor did it acknowledge the right of all Member States to produce, export and import conventional weapons for their legitimate security needs. The Treaty also ignored the major risk imposed by the conventional weapons transfers to non-State actors, and, therefore, left a major legal gap at its heart. For those reasons, Venezuela had abstained on that vote in the General Assembly some years ago, and would once again be compelled to do so now on “L.54”.

The representative of Viet Nam said his delegation would abstain on “L.49/Rev.1”, on the Convention on Cluster Munitions. He reiterated consistent support for comprehensive disarmament, with high priority given to the complete and general elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Unacceptable harm was caused to civilians by cluster munitions, but a number of important obligations under the Convention were concerning. A disproportional level of responsibility for rehabilitation was laid on affected countries, many of which were developing countries. The deadline for clearance should be extended, because countries were not given enough time. Viet Nam had not yet joined that Convention, but was making efforts to clear remnants of war and offer assistance to victims. His Government had adopted a comprehensive national plan and enriched the national steering committee on bombs and mines. It was also partnering on 52 mine clearance projects in the 12 most affected provinces, over the next five years. Viet Nam was also committed to assisting victims in their social and economic reintegration into society.

Speaking in explanation of his vote on “L.54”, the representative of Armenia said he supported efforts to have a negotiated international instrument to regulate trade in conventional arms, prevent their diversion into illicit markets and their illegitimate use. The Arms Trade Treaty should have been adopted by consensus and have had all the major players on board to be effective. Armenia had concerns about the preamble, which needed to have balanced and non-restrictive references, including the right to people’s self-determination. He had serious concerns that the Treaty in its current shape had loopholes that would allow political speculation and prevent countries from legitimate access to relevant technologies. Hence, Armenia would abstain on “L.54”. Its position on the Treaty also applied to all other resolutions referencing that document.

The representative of Bolivia said that, unfortunately, it had seen that throughout negotiations on “L.54”, no consensus had been achieved, and its content had many shortcomings, also lacking precision. Bolivia was a pacifist State and the text’s current draft, if adopted, put global peace at risk. Thus, Bolivia would have to abstain from voting on it.

The representative of the Russian Federation expressed his thanks for the condolences and words of sympathy to the Russian people for the recent plane crash. He went on to explain his position on “L.49/Rev.1”, saying the Russian Federation agreed with the concern about the humanitarian impact of the arbitrary use of cluster munitions, and favoured developing international cooperation to prevent their use while also assisting civilian victims. The country upheld the standards of international law in all its aspects pertaining to such weapons. It had also actively participated in preparing a protocol to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, to provide specific, feasible and implementable limits to the production of those weapons. Those protocols should have covered all countries that developed, produced and

transferred cluster munitions, but the protocol was blocked. The current situation regarding the Cluster Munitions Convention was the result of unconstructive actions by a group of States that had undertaken activities undermining it. Therefore, the Russian Federation would oppose "L.49/Rev.1".

He went on to say that the Convention had been drafted without the participation of the main producers of cluster munitions and was not substantive in terms of dealing with the real problems pertaining to their use and the norms of international law. The Convention declared a ban on cluster munitions, but that was actually "a cynical attempt to warp the market" of those weapons. Those were "typical double standards" and he could not support such an approach. He added that "L.47" did not even name the countries that had talked about documented proof of cluster munitions use. The Russian Federation was categorically against solving problems in the Convention by publishing or producing alternative negotiations because of the lack of apparent consensus. There needed to be full participation in the negotiation. All the problems within that Convention were proof that a step had been taken in the wrong direction. Even more dangerous was that some were trying to present the Convention as an example for other areas of arms control. He questioned what would happen in negotiations in other areas if they proceeded without the major producers or owners of the weapons in question. He highlighted the need to work together and uphold standards of international humanitarian law.

Speaking in explanation of vote on "L.54," the representative of Nicaragua said his country was committed to combatting the illicit arms trafficking for the well-being of its people. To that end, his country was working to beef up its position to guard against illegal possession. He was aware of the scourge of illegal arms in Latin America, however, only a balanced treaty to combat that trade could be effective. His delegation would abstain on the vote on "L.54", because there was no mention in the text of the prohibition of transfer to non-State actors. There was also no reaffirmation of the rights of States to manufacture, import and export weapons for their defence. Additionally, there was no prohibition against transfers for regime change. The text used many terms that were difficult to objectively define, and did not make their understanding easier. His country was extremely concerned about the Arms Trade Treaty, which favoured exporting countries over importing ones. The main producers and exporters must comply with the Treaty, and every effort must be made to closely scrutinize producer-States to ensure the non-transfer of illicit weapons.

The Committee then turned to the draft resolution, introduced by Mali on behalf of ECOWAS, entitled assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them (document A/C.1/70/L.6). By its terms, the General Assembly would call upon the international community to provide technical and financial support to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations to help combat that illicit trade.

That draft was then approved without a vote.

Also acting without a vote, the Committee approved a draft resolution entitled problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus (document A/C.1/70/L.16), which would have the Assembly appeal to all interested States to determine the size and nature of their surplus stockpiles of conventional ammunition and whether those represented a security risk, as well as their means of destruction and possible need for assistance.

The Committee then took action on a draft resolution, introduced by Poland, entitled 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 (document A/C.1/70/L.24). By its terms, the Assembly would call on all States that had not yet done so to become party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its protocols, with a view to achieving their universality. It also stressed the importance of transparent and inclusive preparation for the Fifth Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention, to be held in 2016.

The Committee approved that text without a vote.

Next, action was taken on the draft resolution on the implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (document A/C.1/70/L.49/Rev.1), by which the Assembly would urge all States outside the Convention to join as soon as possible, and also express strong concern regarding recent allegations and evidence of the use of cluster munitions in different parts of the world.

That text was approved by a recorded vote of 130 in favour to 2 against (Russian Federation, Zimbabwe), with 40 abstentions.

The Committee next turned to a draft resolution, introduced by Belgium, Chile and Mozambique, entitled implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (document A/C.1/70/L.50), by which the Assembly would note with regret that anti-personnel mines continued to be used in some conflicts around the world, causing human suffering and impeding post-conflict development.

The draft was approved by a recorded vote of 159 in favour to none against, with 19 abstentions.

By a recorded vote of 150 in favour to none against, with 26 abstentions, the Committee next took action on the draft resolution on the Arms Trade Treaty (document A/C.1/70/L.54), by which the Assembly would call on all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty, and stress the full and effective implementation of and compliance with all its provisions. Underlining the need to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms and prevent their diversion to the illicit market, including for terrorist acts, the text would also have the Assembly encourage States parties to the Arms Trade Treaty to strengthen their cooperation with civil society, industry and relevant international organizations to ensuring the Treaty's effective implementation.

Speaking in explanation of the vote after the vote, the representative of India said that he had abstained on “L.50”. India supported the vision of a world free of landmines and their eventual elimination. However, those weapons also played a legitimate defensive role. India was a High Contracting party of Protocol 2 to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which took into account the legitimate rights of States with long borders. India was also observing a moratorium on the export of landmines and had taken related measures in accordance with humanitarian law, including, for example, providing rehabilitation assistance for victims. On “L.54”, he said it remained to be seen whether the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty would have a meaningful impact on the ground. India continued to keep the Treaty under review with respect to its defence and security interests, and had abstained from the vote.

The representative of Argentina said it had abstained on “L.49/Rev.1”. The prohibition contained in the Convention on Cluster Munitions was discriminatory in nature and not total or comprehensive, which could lead to a technological or military imbalance between States. It only covered 10 per cent of cluster munitions around the world. Joint military action could be carried out with countries that did use cluster munitions. The Convention dispensed with the notion of complicity when it came to participating in a prohibited or banned act. Argentina lobbied for a total ban of those arms, which should be carried out on a non-discriminatory basis. Against that backdrop, it had participated in the so-called “Oslo process” as an observer with that vision in mind. Argentina could not sign the Convention.

The representative of China, explaining the delegation’s position on “L.54”, said that he attached great importance to regional instability and humanitarian issues resulting from the illicit conventional weapons trade. China had participated in the Arms Trade Treaty negotiations, making contributions to advance it. It voted in favour of “L.54” to show its backing to the Treaty’s purposes and objectives and it was currently studying carefully the matter of acceding to the Treaty. However, China still had reservations about the way of adopting the Treaty through voting at the General Assembly. Current security situations in certain regions had also highlighted gaps in the Treaty.

The representative of the United States said his delegation had abstained on “L.49/Rev.1”. The United States was not a party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and was therefore not bound by its provisions. That resolution was only applicable to States parties, particularly the paragraphs calling for implementation. Cluster munitions provided key advantages against certain types of military targets. Although those weapons remained an integral part of his country’s defence capabilities, it was working to reduce civilian harm. Under the cluster munitions policy of the United States Department of Defence, those weapons, by the end of 2018, would only deploy with a 1 per cent unexploded ordnance rate or “UXO rate”. While the United States believed that the principles of humanity could provide an important paradigm, the Martens Clause of the 1899 Hague Convention on the rules of conflict was not a rule of international law that prohibited any particular weapon, including cluster munitions. The United States did not accept that the Convention purported to reflect customary international law.

He said his delegation had also abstained on “L.50”. As many were aware, the United States had announced a number of important changes to its anti-personnel landmine policy, whereby it would not purchase munitions that were not in compliance with the Mine-Ban Convention. Nor would it use anti-personnel landmines outside the Korean Peninsula, or encourage or assist anyone else from doing so outside the Korean Peninsula. That measure represented the important humanitarian aims of that Convention. Even as his country took the steps announced last year with regard to those weapons, the urgent situation on the Korean Peninsula precluded it from changing its landmine policy there at present. His country would continue to make diligent efforts to find solutions that would ultimately allow it to accede to the Mine-Ban Convention, while still maintaining its alliance commitments to the Republic of Korea. Meanwhile, the United States was the single largest supporter of humanitarian mine action, providing over \$1 billion in aid in that field since 1993. It would continue to support that important work in addressing the humanitarian impact of anti-personnel landmines.

The representative of Ecuador said his country had been a supporter of the Arms Trade Treaty but regretted that the text, which was finally adopted in 2013, contained various shortcomings. That was particularly true when it came to imbalances between importer and exporter countries. There was also a lack of mention on the core principles of international humanitarian law and on the transfer of weapons to unauthorized non-State actors. For those reasons, his country had abstained in the vote to adopt the Arms Trade Treaty, and this morning had abstained on “L.54”. Ecuador’s authorities intended to study the Treaty with a view to acceding to it in the future.

The representative of Egypt joined other delegations in expressing condolences to the Russian Federation for the air crash, and said his country would exert all efforts in investigations. His delegation had abstained on “L.50”, owing to the imbalanced nature of the Mine-Ban Convention, which had been concluded outside the United Nations’ framework. Egypt had imposed a moratorium on its own ability to procure and export landmines long before the Convention, which did not impose any legal responsibility for the removal of mines placed on territories by other States, making it almost impossible for some countries to meet the Treaty’s obligations on their own. This was particularly true in Egypt’s case, which still had millions of landmines placed on its territory by other States since the Second World War.

On “L.54”, he said Egypt was well aware of the illicit trafficking in weapons and would exert all efforts to combat it. Nevertheless, Egypt had abstained today on the Arms Trade Treaty draft, “L.54”, because the Treaty was neither universal nor inclusive, and neglected the consensus principle, thereby setting a negative precedent.

The representative of Libya, explaining the vote on “L.24” and “L.50”, said that his country had voted in favour of those texts but had some concerns. With regard to “L.50”, Libya was not a State party to the Convention, and the Libyan interim Government was not in a position to sign the Convention at present. Libya shared the international community’s humanitarian concerns about their tragic consequences to human life and to the environment, and their impediment to development. It had suffered from mines and remnants of war since the Second World War. However, the Convention had neglected to address the damage inflicted on States because of the explosive remnants of war

resulting from occupations, or whose territories served as the stage for fighting between foreign countries. It also did not provide for mines placed by colonial States nor require those colonial States to remove the mines placed in the territory of other States. In the past, Libya had abstained on that resolution, but had now voted in its favour. Libya had joined consensus on “L.24”, on the Convention on Conventional Weapons, however, it felt the text did not give due consideration to States affected by mines, which included his own. Nor did it address all the mines that dated back to the Second World War. Further, it did not place adequate responsibility on States that had placed those mines for compensating the victims.

The representative of Poland, speaking on behalf of Greece, Estonia, Finland and his own country, explained the group's abstention on “L.49/Rev.1”. He supported and would continue to support addressing the humanitarian and security impact of conventional weapons, especially cluster munitions, and halting their use especially when those were directed at innocent civilians. The countries supported the humanitarian goals of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. At the same time, they believed that humanitarian concerns should be balanced with security concerns and military and defence needs. The most competent framework was the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which included the main producers, possessors, users and non-users of such weapons. The group supported that Convention and remained disappointed at the failure of the Geneva discussions.

Speaking in explanation of his vote on “L.54”, the representative of Syria said that it had been at the forefront of States seeking to regulate the arms trade because of the risks of the illicit trade and the impact on international peace and security. The best example of that risk was the suffering of his country from tragic events stemming from the illegitimate use of arms by parties known to all. Syria sought to arrive at a balanced Arms Trade Treaty, and not to establish a convention that would just be used to pressure other countries, as was the case with other similar instruments. Syria was never against the Treaty and if it was consensually applied, it could have been a great achievement. But, in its current form, the Treaty served the interests of some States at the expense of others. It also did not take into view the positions of States including Syria. It neglected the proposal by some States, including his own, to include a reference to foreign occupation and the right to self-determination for people under occupation, including under Israeli occupation. Nor did it include language prohibiting the transfer of weapons to terrorist organizations. Therefore, Syria had abstained from voting on “L.54” and reiterated its reservation to all paragraphs in all resolutions that included references to the Arms Trade Treaty.

The representative of the Republic of Korea said that it had abstained from “L.49/Rev.1”. He fully shared the humanitarian concerns related to the use of cluster munitions, but the unique security situation on the Korean Peninsula had prevented his country from joining the Convention on Cluster Munitions. While that was regrettable, it was undertaking efforts to relieve humanitarian problems related to cluster munitions and it called for the development of alternatives to those weapons. On “L.50”, he sympathized with the Mine-Ban Convention, but was not able to join it owing to the security situation in his region. That did not mean, however, that the Republic of Korea was less concerned about mine-related problems; it was committed to mitigating the suffering those caused and called for tight controls. His country was implementing all of its relevant obligations under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons including Protocols 2 and 5. His Government had contributed more than \$8.7 million since 1993 towards mine clearance efforts and victim assistance and would continue to contribute to international efforts.

The representative of Austria said that, as a supporter of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the delegation had voted in favour of “L.49/Rev.1”. He emphasized that States parties to that Convention had strongly condemned the use of those weapons by any actor. That was a central element of its spirit and was indispensable for its implementation. He would have liked to have seen that reflected in the resolution.

The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea said his delegation had abstained on “L.50”. While his country shared the humanitarian concerns expressed therein, his country was not able to give up the use of mines due to the unique security situation on the Korean peninsula, in keeping with its right to self-defence.

Explaining her country's position on “L.49/Rev.1”, the representative of Mexico said that the use of those weapons was a war crime, and her delegation had voted in favour of the resolution. However, she regretted that the clause in the text condemning cluster munitions by any actor had been eliminated.

The representative of Singapore expressed her country's support for “L.49/Rev.1” and “L.50”. Singapore would continue to endorse attempts to stop the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines, especially when directed at innocent civilians. However, a blanket ban on all types of landmines could be counter-productive.

The representative of Cyprus, explaining the delegation's abstention on “L.49/Rev.1”, said that Cyprus attached great importance to restrictions and prohibitions of weapons that were excessively injurious or that had indiscriminate effects. Cyprus was a State party to all protocols to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, and was in full compliance with the European Union's standards and regulations. Cyprus had signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions in 2009, and the relevant legislation had been forwarded to parliament in 2011. However, the ratification was still in process, due to considerations related to the abnormal security situation on the island. His delegation hoped that the issues could and would be resolved, so that it could ratify the Convention and vote in favor of the resolution in the future.

The representative of Latvia, explaining her delegation's abstention on “L.49/Rev.1”, said that her country supported the goals of the Convention and shared the concerns relating to the disastrous consequences of the indiscriminate use of certain cluster munitions. However, the humanitarian view should be balanced with security concerns. Latvia neither

produced, used nor stored cluster munitions. It was not currently a State party to the Convention, but that position could be revisited.

The representative of Venezuela said he had voted in favour of "L.49/Rev.1", because, despite not being a party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, it closely identified with its spirit. He reiterated the reasons why Venezuela had not acceded to that Convention, recalling that when it was adopted, it contained significant and revealing exceptions. It left aside the latest technology used in such weapons, and there had been no updates to the Convention to cover such technology. A significant quantity of cluster munitions currently used in today's armed conflicts fell outside the scope of the Convention. Thus, it was neither comprehensive nor particularly effective.

Speaking in explanation of the vote on "L.16", the representative of Cuba said he had requested the resolution's co-sponsors to reconsider preambular paragraph 3, which welcomed the provisions of the Arms Trade Treaty. That Treaty did not enjoy the support of all Member States. Maintaining that reference in text was an unfortunate decision and did not contribute to the needs of States to address ammunition stockpiles. Cuba applied a very stringent ammunition control regime, commensurate with its national defence and security needs.

He said he had voted in favour of "L.49/Rev.1" because it adequately captured Cuba's own position in favour of the prohibition and complete elimination of cluster munitions and condemnation of their use. Their injurious and indiscriminate effect was incompatible with international humanitarian law. However, Cuba's support for the resolution did not imply a change in its well-known concerns with regard to ambiguities and inconsistencies in the Convention on Cluster Munitions. It would continue to address those concerns in the appropriate forums. On "L.50", Cuba had abstained. It entirely shared the legitimate humanitarian concerns of the use of mines, and, as a State party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, including its second additional protocol, it fully abided with all its mine-related provisions. It was not possible for Cuba to renounce mines altogether, because of the need to preserve its sovereignty and territorial integrity. It would support efforts that struck a balance between humanitarian and security issues and that sought to reduce the indiscriminate and irresponsible use of mines. All countries that could do so should provide technical and financial support for mine clearance and victim rehabilitation.

The representative of Pakistan said he had joined the consensus on "L.16" on the accumulation of conventional weapons stockpiles in surplus, and had worked towards its goals. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe represented a good model of a comprehensive approach. The larger stockpiles of conventional armaments were maintained by the major military Powers, which should take the lead in assessing the surplus. It might not be possible to have a definition of surplus stockpiles, but some guidelines could be provided based on previous work.

Pakistan had abstained on "L.49/Rev.1", he said, adding that the Convention on Cluster Munitions had been negotiated outside the United Nations system. As a matter of principle, Pakistan did not support such efforts for concluding important treaties, especially those related to arms control. The strength of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons lay in the delicate balance it struck between humanitarian concerns and security considerations of States. Cluster munitions were legitimate weapons with military value in Pakistan's regional context. They could be looked at differently from States that enjoyed a peaceful neighbourhood. He welcomed efforts to mitigate their negative consequences. Pakistan had never used those weapons in any military conflict and was strongly opposed to their use against civilians. He supported efforts for improving their reliability so the issue of remnants could be addressed.

He went on to explain his vote on "L.50", saying that mines played a significant role in the defence of many countries. Pakistan continued to pursue the objective of a universal and non-discriminatory ban, which took into account the legitimate defence requirements of States. Pakistan needed to guard its long borders, unprotected by natural obstacles, and needed to use mines. The objective of the total elimination could best be promoted by making available non-lethal and cost-effective alternatives. Pakistan was a party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons protocol that regulated the use of landmines in external and internal conflicts, and it continued to implement that. It had actively contributed to mine clearance efforts in several countries and enjoyed a unique record of having clearing all minefields after three wars in South Asia.

Pakistan, he said, had voted in favour of "L.54", because of the present death and destruction caused by the misuse of conventional weapons in several parts of Africa, Middle East and Asia. The early resolution of issues with the Arms Trade Treaty, such as lack of definitions, would be vital in making the Treaty effective. Even as Pakistan continued its national review of the Treaty, the instrument's success and universality would be assessed on its non-discriminatory implementation, in particular, strict adherence by States parties.

The representative of Iran said that he had abstained on "L.54" because the Arms Trade Treaty suffered from significant legal deficiencies and loopholes. The political and commercial interests of certain arms-exporting countries had prevailed over the fundamentals of international law. The crime of aggression was the most fundamental such principle. The Treaty had not prohibited arms transfers to countries engaging in foreign occupation. Coming from a region in which the Israeli regime committed acts of aggression, this was unacceptable to Iran.

He went on to dissociate from the consensus vote on "L.6" for preambular paragraph 15, and from "L.16" for preambular paragraph 3. Iran had exercised flexibility and joined consensus on those resolutions as a whole but that action should not be interpreted as favour on those paragraphs.

Turning to "L.49/Rev.1", as a general principle, Iran participated in all efforts within the framework of United Nations aimed at the impact of conventional weapons. But those efforts should be transparent and include the participation of all States. Negotiations on disarmament issues dealt with important issues, and required a balanced and comprehensive approach. They also required a consensual decision-making procedure to ensure the right of each State

to security, so that no State or group of States could gain advantage over another. That could only be done through the United Nations disarmament machinery. The process leading to the Convention on Cluster Munitions bypassed the United Nations disarmament machinery and disregarded the interests of many States. All States had a vital interest and right to participate on an equal footing in those multilateral discussions. Such a process should not be encouraged nor promoted by the United Nations General Assembly. Iran abstained on "L.49/Rev.1" because of its substantive nature and its calls for the implementation of the Convention, as Iran did not participate in its negotiations and was neither a party nor signatory.

The representative of Morocco said he had intended to abstain on "L.49/Rev.1", but had accidentally voted in favour.

The representative of Brazil, explaining his delegation's abstention on "L.49/Rev.1", said that his country had supported efforts to address cluster munitions at the United Nations and had actively participated in negotiations in the framework of the Group of Governmental Experts on that Convention. Brazil had not participated in the Oslo process and thought there were serious loopholes in the Convention. Brazil had never used cluster munitions, and not being a party to the Convention did not mean that it did not abide by international humanitarian law with regard to such weapons.

Cluster 5, Other Disarmament Measures and International Security

ANNIKA THUNBORG (Sweden), in a general statement on behalf of a number of countries, said the group would join consensus on "L.45" on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, but felt that international deliberations on cyber-space issues needed to continue to evolve so that a great common understanding could be reached globally. She welcomed the adoption by consensus of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts appointed by the Secretary-General in 2014, and encouraged States to build on that work. It was crucial that the Internet remained open, facilitating a free flow of information in cyberspace. The rights of individuals offline also needed to be protected online, including the right to privacy and to assembly and association. Those were the foundation of a democratic society. This year, the Human Rights Council had appointed a special rapporteur on the right to privacy.

The increasing dependence on information technology, she said, had brought new challenges. Security in an increasingly connected world depended on maintaining information flows. Security in cyberspace could only be tackled effectively by cooperation between States, as well as with the private sector. She affirmed that the right of States to use information and communication technologies, she said, adding that it was essential for them to ensure international peace and security.

JUANA ELENA RAMOS (Cuba) said that environmental norms and standards needed to be duly taken into account when it came time to negotiating treaties on arms control. As raised in "L.7", all States must observe environmental norms when it came time to draft resolutions for arms control. Disarmament and development were two of the major challenges before humanity, and the billions of dollars spent on military was unacceptable, as that could instead be used to combat poverty and foster peace and sustainable development.

Action

Acting without a vote, the Committee approved a draft resolution, introduced by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, on the observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control (document A/C.1/70/L.7). By its terms, the Assembly would reaffirm that international disarmament forums should take into account the relevant environmental norms in negotiating agreements on disarmament and arms limitation.

The Committee next took action on a draft resolution, also introduced by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, on promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation (document A/C.1/70/L.9), which would urge all interested States to take part in multilateral negotiations on arms regulation, non-proliferation and disarmament in a non-discriminatory and transparent manner. That draft was then approved by a recorded vote of 122 in favour to 4 against (Federated States of Micronesia, Israel, United Kingdom, United States), with 51 abstentions.

Acting without a vote, the Committee next approved a draft, also introduced by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, on the relationship between disarmament and development (document A/C.1/70/L.10), by which the Assembly would stress the central role of the United Nations in the relationship between disarmament and development, and urge 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.

Also acting without a vote, the Committee approved a draft entitled objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures (document A/C.1/70/L.17), by which the Assembly would recommend the guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters to all Member States for implementation.

It next approved, without a vote, a draft decision, introduced by India, on the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament (document A/C.1/70/L.22).