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Update for the General Assembly First Committee

Committee Overview	2
Recent Developments	2
Annotated Bibliography.....	3
Bibliography	4
I. The Role of Science and Technology in International Security and Disarmament.....	7
Recent Developments	7
Annotated Bibliography.....	8
Bibliography	9
II. Global Nuclear Disarmament.....	11
Recent Developments	11
Annotated Bibliography.....	12
Bibliography	13
III. Increasing Women’s Role in Disarmament and Non-Proliferation.....	15
Recent Developments	15
Annotated Bibliography.....	16
Bibliography	17



Committee Overview

Recent Developments

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly First Committee concluded its 71st session in November 2016 after a session that addressed a broad range of international security and disarmament issues.¹ The session had a high level of constructive participation and cooperation, adopting over half of the draft resolutions and decisions by acclamation.² Topics under debate included the situation in Syria, prohibition of the use of chemical weapons, developments on international security telecommunications, managing conventional weapons, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), among other pressing issues of international security.³ Of the 69 draft resolutions and decisions sent to the General Assembly Plenary, 68 were adopted as resolutions.⁴ Of particular note was the adoption by acclamation of resolution 71/30 on the “Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons,” which requested all states to work towards an early agreement on a legally binding nuclear elimination instrument.⁵ The General Assembly Plenary also adopted related drafts on the International Court of Justice’s advisory opinion on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, as well as broad recommendations on women, disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control.⁶

During the session, the First Committee adopted several draft resolutions intended as follow-up documents to previous disarmament decisions, including the 2016 report of the Secretary-General on “Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security” and the tabled draft resolution L.54 on the “Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament,” which detailed individual Member States’ progress on cybersecurity issues.⁷ The themes of state accountability and arms control at the regional and sub-regional levels were further emphasized through the adoption of the General Assembly First Committee resolution L.5, which serves as a follow-up to *The International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation* (2002), and the General Assembly First Committee resolution L.61/Rev.1, which supports the existing *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction* (1997).⁸ Both of these documents, as well as resolution 71/68 on “National legislation on transfer of arms, military equipment and dual-use goods and technology,” emphasized the current tension in the international community between promoting scientific and technological growth and limiting weapon capacities for the sake of regional and global security.⁹ Continuing a strong regional focus, the Assembly also adopted decisions

¹ UN DPI, *Adopting 68 First Committee Texts, General Assembly Addresses New Threats, Use of Banned Weapons, Urges Drive to Curb Arms Proliferation (GA/11866)*, 2016.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ UN General Assembly, *Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons (A/RES/71/30)*, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons: Report of the First Committee (A/71/447)*, 2016.

⁶ UN DPI, *Speakers Underline Atomic Energy Agency’s Key Role in Ensuring Nuclear Safety, Security, as General Assembly Considers Its Annual Report (GA/11875)*, 2016; UN DPI, *Addressing Arms Proliferation Risks, First Committee Approves 26 Texts, Including Draft Promoting Nuclear-weapon-free Middle East (GA/DIS/3566)*, 2016; UN DPI, *Adopting 68 First Committee Texts, General Assembly Addresses New Threats, Use of Banned Weapons, Urges Drive to Curb Arms Proliferation (GA/11866)*, 2016.

⁷ UN General Assembly, *Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security (A/RES/71/28)*, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament (A/C.1/71/L.54)*, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security: Report of the Secretary-General (A/71/172)*, 2016.

⁸ UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (A/RES/71/34)*, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Information on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms (A/RES/71/35)*, 2016; UN DPI, *Adopting 68 First Committee Texts, General Assembly Addresses New Threats, Use of Banned Weapons, Urges Drive to Curb Arms Proliferation (GA/11866)*, 2016.

⁹ Ibid.; UN General Assembly, *National legislation on transfer of arms, military equipment and dual-use goods and technology (A/RES/71/68)*, 2016.

on different regions' Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones.¹⁰ There were several drafts adopted on improving United Nations (UN) disarmament training, fellowship, advising, inclusion, and a focus on expanding the reach of UN regional centers for peace and disarmament in every region.¹¹ Of these regional bodies, there was a particular emphasis on prohibiting the development, production and stockpiling of bacteriological weapons, ballistic missiles, and conventional weapons considered dangerous, as well as inter-regional confidence-building mechanisms.¹²

The General Assembly Plenary deferred action until spring 2017 on two historic draft resolutions from the General Assembly First Committee.¹³ The first is draft resolution L.41 on “Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations” and the second is draft resolution L.65/Rev.1 on a “Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons,” both of which reflect the goals and recommendations of different international instruments.¹⁴ The General Assembly committed to hold a conference on negotiating the total elimination of nuclear weapons through a legally binding instrument in New York from 27 to 31 March and from 15 June to 7 July 2017.¹⁵ Proponents of this proposed treaty note that this Convention would set a strong international norm against nuclear weapons, and is achievable if modelled after the successes of previous similar instruments.¹⁶

During the plenary session and on recommendation of the General Assembly First Committee, the UN approved mechanisms to investigate into possible war crimes in Syria and called upon increased use of national policies to counter the threat posed by improvised explosive devices.¹⁷ The 71st session was a productive movement forward for disarmament affairs, with its notable emphasis on good neighborliness, stability, and sustainable disarmament during discussions likely to carry forward into the negotiations of the 72nd session.¹⁸

Annotated Bibliography

United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2016, December 5). *Adopting 68 First Committee Texts, General Assembly Addresses New Threats, Use of Banned Weapons, Urges Drive to Curb Arms Proliferation (GA/11866)* [Meetings Coverage]. Retrieved 7 January 2017 from: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2016/ga11866.doc.htm>

This meetings coverage of the General Assembly Plenary's adoption of draft resolutions and recommendations from the General Assembly First Committee is the most comprehensive

¹⁰ UN General Assembly, *African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (A/RES/71/26)*, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco) (A/RES/71/27)*, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East (A/RES/71/29)*, 2016; UN DPI, *Addressing Arms Proliferation Risks, First Committee Approves 26 Texts, Including Draft Promoting Nuclear-weapon-free Middle East (GA/DIS/3566)*, 2016; UN DPI, *Adopting 68 First Committee Texts, General Assembly Addresses New Threats, Use of Banned Weapons, Urges Drive to Curb Arms Proliferation (GA/11866)*, 2016.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² UN General Assembly, *Information on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms (A/RES/71/35)*, 2016; UN DPI, *Adopting 68 First Committee Texts, General Assembly Addresses New Threats, Use of Banned Weapons, Urges Drive to Curb Arms Proliferation (GA/11866)*, 2016.

¹³ UN DPI, *First Committee Sends 69 Texts to General Assembly, Concluding Session by Approving Drafts on Chemical Weapons, Improvised Explosive Devices (GA/DIS/3567)*, 2016; UN DPI, *Adopting 68 First Committee Texts, General Assembly Addresses New Threats, Use of Banned Weapons, Urges Drive to Curb Arms Proliferation (GA/11866)*, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations: Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.41 (A/71/661)*, 2016

¹⁴ UN DPI, *First Committee Sends 69 Texts to General Assembly, Concluding Session by Approving Drafts on Chemical Weapons, Improvised Explosive Devices (GA/DIS/3567)*, 2016; UN DPI, *Adopting 68 First Committee Texts, General Assembly Addresses New Threats, Use of Banned Weapons, Urges Drive to Curb Arms Proliferation (GA/11866)*, 2016.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Nuclear Test Initiative, *Proposed Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC)*, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (A/RES/2826 (XXVI))*, 1971; UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (A/RES/47/39)*, 1992.

¹⁷ UN DPI, *Adopting 68 First Committee Texts, General Assembly Addresses New Threats, Use of Banned Weapons, Urges Drive to Curb Arms Proliferation (GA/11866)*, 2016.

¹⁸ Ibid.



coverage of the approval of 68 drafts in the seventy-first session. In addition to providing key highlights from the session, this page provides briefly reports on the discussion and vote on each individual document, including its adoption process, and which Member States were opposed. There is also brief coverage of the Member States who spoke during the session, as well as links to all officially adopted documents, making this source a key starting point for updated delegate research.

United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2016, November 2). *First Committee Sends 69 Texts to General Assembly, Concluding Session by Approving Drafts on Chemical Weapons, Improvised Explosive Devices (GA/DIS/3567)* [Meetings Coverage]. Retrieved 7 January 2017 from:

<http://www.un.org/press/en/2016/gadis3567.doc.htm>

This meetings coverage document provides a full review of the General Assembly First Committee's work for the 71st session, including which draft resolutions and decisions were sent to the General Assembly Plenary for adoption. This page discusses all votes on draft resolutions, including which Member States abstained or voted against certain documents, as well as a brief review of the key aims of each draft. Delegates will find that this page provides a comprehensive summary of the work of the body from the 71st session, and will likely find the in-depth coverage of the discussion process prior to the approval of each document useful to understand the complicated process of international consensus-building.

United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. (2016). *The 71th General Assembly on Disarmament and International Security: First Committee Press Releases, Draft Resolutions, Statements, Secretary-General's Reports, and Side Events* [Website]. Retrieved 7 January 2017 from:

<https://www.un.org/disarmament/firstcommittee-71/>

This webpage is the entire list of relevant links, documents, and meetings coverage from the 71st session of the General Assembly First Committee on disarmament and international security. In addition to including all meetings coverage, press releases, and draft resolutions, this page also provides detailed advisory reports, relevant notes, and statements by Member States and organizations, organized chronologically. Delegates will likely find the list of Resolutions adopted by 71st session to be particularly useful, in addition to coverage of the thematic debates and links to presentations by non-UN representatives.

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United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons (A/RES/71/30)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the report of the First Committee (A/71/447). Retrieved 14 February 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/30>

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I. The Role of Science and Technology in International Security and Disarmament

Recent Developments

The 71st session of the General Assembly produced several resolutions, draft resolutions, and reports on scientific and technological innovations in weaponry and their application to international security.¹⁹ The General Assembly First Committee released a statement on 12 October 2016 on cyberspace and human security, outlining the threat cyber attacks pose, and the need to halt the militarization of the cyber realm.²⁰ In these recommendations, the need to prevent cyber attacks against individuals, governments, and organizations was emphasized, along with the need for greater discussion on its human rights impact.²¹ The General Assembly also adopted resolution 71/28 of 5 December 2016 on “Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security,” noting previous reports by the Secretary-General on the issue, and considering a reassessment of the role that information and telecommunications play in international security issues.²² The recommendations in this resolution further focused on developing national capacities to strengthen information security, promote international cooperation, and welcomed the work of the Group of Governmental Experts.²³

General Assembly draft resolution 171/L.58 of 13 October 2016 was tabled at the General Assembly, focused on “National legislation of transfer of arms, military equipment and dual-use goods and technology.”²⁴ This draft resolution focused on the role of mutual understanding and responsibility among Member States for the exchange of technological knowledge and developments, and also emphasized the connection between the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and new disarmament technology.²⁵ While the draft resolution was tabled for consideration at the 72nd session, this document represents key new developments in the framing of national responsibility for new weapons technology.²⁶

Several additional meetings were held during the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly, including consultations with relevant NGOs and think tanks on the role of science and technology, particularly discussion on the issue of unmanned aerial vehicles, armed robots, drones, and autonomous weapons.²⁷ On 3 October 2016, the General Assembly held a meeting to discuss autonomous systems and weapons, where concerns were raised by Member States on the development of technology in warfare, its legality, and the potential of needlessly harming human lives.²⁸ On the issue of space and technology, the General Assembly adopted resolution 71/448 against the militarization of outer space, which reiterated the need for peaceful uses of outer space during continued exploration.²⁹ Secretary-General António Guterres has also acknowledged that the disarmament of nuclear and other technologically advanced weapons will be a key focus throughout his term.³⁰

During the 2016 G20 Summit, greater cooperation on technology and information sharing was emphasized, along with the lawful access to technological capabilities for Member States.³¹ Tracking progress on implementation of the

¹⁹ UNODA, *Seventy-First Session of the General Assembly: First Committee Press Releases, Draft Resolutions, Statements, Secretary-General’s Reports, and Side Events*, 2016.

²⁰ UN General Assembly, *Statement on cyberspace and human security on 12 October 2016, in New York City*, 2016.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² UN General Assembly, *Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security (A/RES/71/28)*, 2016.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ UN General Assembly, *National legislation on transfer of arms, military equipment and dual-use goods and technology (A/RES/C.1/71/L.58)*, 2016.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

²⁶ *Ibid.*; UN General Assembly, *Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament (A/C.1/71/L.54)*, 2016.

²⁷ UN DPI, *With Armed Robots, Drones, New Weapons on Horizon, States must fill gaps in existing regimes to address fresh threats, First Committee Hears (GA/DIS/3559)*, 2016.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ UN General Assembly, *Prevention of an arms race in outer space (A/71/448)*, 2016, pp. 5-7.

³⁰ UN General Assembly, *Statement by Mr. António Guterres on his appointment by the General Assembly to the position of Secretary-General of the United Nations on 13 October 2016*, 2016.

³¹ G20 Summit, *G20 Action Plan on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2016.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been added as one of the top priorities for the G20 Summit in 2017.³² The second annual Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology, and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals (STI Forum) is scheduled for May 2017, where Member States hope to align technological innovation with the SDG implementation.³³ Moreover, the area of civil society, the 31st Conference of the Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AAAI), scheduled for February 2017, will promote research on artificial intelligence and scientific exchange of information.³⁴ These developments provide opportunities for innovative uses of science and technology to address disarmament and security concerns on a global scale.

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The G20 Action Plan on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is paramount and crucial when discussing the role of science and technology in security and disarmament. It sets the tone by outlining broad goals that must be achieved by the G20 in order to meet the 2030 Agenda. It will play a very big role in United Nations deliberations in the coming year, given that the STI forum will be held in May of 2017 and that a focus of the G20 Summit will be the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Moreover, the Action Plan recommends certain courses of action for Member States to consider prior to the deliberations, which can help deepen delegate's understanding of how international organizations are currently discussing this topic.

United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2016, October 21). *With Armed Robots, Drones, New Weapons on Horizon, States must fill gaps in existing regimes to address fresh threats, First Committee Hears (GA/DIS/3559) [Meetings Coverage]*. Retrieved 29 January 2017 from: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2016/gadis3559.doc.htm>

This provides coverage of the General Assembly First Committee's meeting on the use of unmanned aerial vehicles, drones, armed robots, and autonomous weapons. Several Member States questioned the legality of using such systems and pointed to the necessity of proper application of international law. However, the debate illustrates the nuances of the issue, including key disagreements between developing and developed countries, as many developing countries advocate against the use of such systems. Examining the use of the most recent technological advancements for national security, their application in various contexts, and the legality of these systems, as discussed in this source, will aid delegates in their understanding of the complexities of the topic.

United Nations, General Assembly. (2016). *Second Annual Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology, and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals (STI Forum) [Website]*. Retrieved 2 January 2017 from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017>

This website outlines the issues that will be examined during the second annual multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology, and innovation. It includes various reports, documents, and publications from last year's forum. The source will offer invaluable insight to delegates on the previous findings on science and technology, the effect that certain innovations have on national security, and it will outline some shortcomings that must be resolved for the future. It is one of the key events by the United Nations General Assembly on this topic, and becoming familiar with its content will be very beneficial for a comprehensive understanding of the issue.

United Nations, General Assembly. (2016, October 12). *Statement on cyberspace and human security on 12 October 2016, in New York City [Statement]*. Retrieved 28 January 2017 from: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/unoda-web/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/12-Oct-cyber.pdf>

³² G20 Summit, *Priorities of the 2017 G20 Summit*, 2016.

³³ UN General Assembly, *Second Annual Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology, and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals (STI Forum)*, 2016.

³⁴ AAAI, *AAAI-17 Program Overview*, 2016.



This is the only statement on cyberspace produced during the UN General Assembly's 71st session. It discusses the need for the protection of human rights in cyberspace, especially the freedom of speech and expression. It also speaks against the militarization of cyberspace, especially the utilization of hacking to gather incriminating and sensitive information against individuals, governments, corporations, and other entities. Delegates will find this source useful due to its focus on how technological advancement impacts security of the international community.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016, October 13). *Statement by Mr. Antonio Guterres on his appointment by the General Assembly to the position of Secretary General of the United Nations on 13 October 2016, in New York* [Statement]. Retrieved 5 January 2017 from: <http://www.un.org/pga/71/2016/10/13/statement-by-mr-antonio-guterres-on-his-appointment-by-the-general-assembly-to-the-position-of-secretary-general-of-the-united-nations/>

The statement by the new Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, sets the tone for his incoming tenure and the issues that will be prioritized in the coming term. He mentions the issue of security and conflict as one of his key focuses for his term. Greater focus on security and the protection of human rights was included and it is very important to be familiar with Guterres' statement given future technological development and innovation. The delegates should be familiar with this statement because it will help them to become familiar with the priorities of the Secretary-General in the next five years and the overall direction of the organization.

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United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament* [Report]. Retrieved 5 February 2017 from: <https://undocs.org/A/C.1/71/L.54>

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016, October 13). *Statement by Mr. Antonio Guterres on his appointment by the General Assembly to the position of Secretary General of the United Nations on 13 October 2016, in New York* [Statement]. Retrieved 5 January 2017 from: <http://www.un.org/pga/71/2016/10/13/statement-by-mr-antonio-guterres-on-his-appointment-by-the-general-assembly-to-the-position-of-secretary-general-of-the-united-nations/>

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II. Global Nuclear Disarmament

Recent Developments

Strengthening nuclear security through the United Nations (UN) saw more challenges in the last quarter of 2016, as missile tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) threatened disarmament and security efforts and recaptured attention on prioritizing global nuclear disarmament.³⁵ The UN Security Council issued a press release condemning the action and noted the grave implications that future ballistic missile testing has on international security tensions.³⁶ These concerns were underscored by the former Secretary-General's remarks to the Security Council on DPRK, condemning the continued interest in making technological advances in the pursuit of a military nuclear capability, and the threat it poses to regional security and the future of global non-proliferation.³⁷

The adoption of the General Assembly's 71st session agenda, while largely focused on sustainable development, brought attention to global nuclear disarmament by addressing a variety of concerns derived from the threat of nuclear terrorism, nuclear security, and nuclear non-proliferation, as well as continued support for regional and international confidence building measures and education.³⁸ Some of the most recently proposed actions for the General Assembly's 72nd session are to move forward on negotiating a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), as well as building confidence in disarmament verification.³⁹ In resolution 71/258 on "Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations," adopted on 23 December 2016, the General Assembly noted concerns over making progress on the legal aspects of implementing a nuclear weapon-free world, information transparency in regards to existing nuclear weapon stockpiles, and reducing the risk of an unauthorized or accidental nuclear detonation.⁴⁰ General Assembly resolution 71/67 on the subject of "Nuclear disarmament verification," adopted on 5 December 2016, seeks to establish clear disarmament verification mechanisms to foster confidence and promote compliance with binding disarmament agreements.⁴¹ This has been a longstanding concern of many nuclear weapon-equipped and non-nuclear Member States, and resolutions on disarmament verification should seek to satisfy transparency requirements while retaining or improving the effectiveness of the disarmament regime.⁴²

While the disarmament verification draft resolution has seen general support from Member States, the draft resolution on regulating fissile material production has nuclear weapon-equipped Member States, including the five permanent members of the Security Council, expressing dissatisfaction and noting their opposition to the discussion.⁴³ This presents the challenge of cooperating with these Member States, which bear the majority of the financial burden and risk for compliance, to create effective and equitable solutions that progress the creation of a nuclear weapon-free world while building confidence within the global community. General Assembly resolution 71/259, on the "Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices," contains a detailed explanation of the various legal factors influencing successful implementation of any type of fissile material treaty.⁴⁴ This resolution requests that the Secretary-General establish the preparatory group on a fissile material treaty, which would meet for two weeks in both 2017 and 2018 to consider and provide recommendations on the proposed FMCT.⁴⁵ The Secretary-General would then present a report to the General Assembly in its 73rd session.⁴⁶ The successful implementation of a fissile material cut-off treaty would tremendously

³⁵ *Arms Control Today: UN Struggles Over North Korea's Actions*, Arms Control Association, 2016.

³⁶ UN Security Council, *Security Council Press Statement on Democratic People's Republic of Korea's Failed Ballistic Missile Launch (SC/12557-DC/3665)*, 2016.

³⁷ UN Secretary-General, *Secretary-General's remarks to the Security Council on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*, 2016.

³⁸ UN General Assembly, *Provisional agenda of the seventy-first regular session of the General Assembly (A/71/250)*, 2016.

³⁹ UN General Assembly, *Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (A/RES/71/258)*, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Nuclear disarmament verification (A/RES/71/67)*, 2016.

⁴⁰ UN General Assembly, *Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (A/RES/71/258)*, 2016.

⁴¹ UN General Assembly, *Nuclear disarmament verification (A/RES/71/67)*, 2016.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*; UN General Assembly, *Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (A/RES/71/258)*, 2016; UN *Approves Start of Nuclear Ban Talks*, Arms Control Association, 2016.

⁴⁴ UN General Assembly, *Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (A/RES/71/259)*, 2016.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

benefit disarmament efforts by eliminating the new legal production of weaponized material, excluding production for use in peaceful applications. General Assembly resolution 71/259 proposes that the “Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices” should also be included in the provisional agenda for the 72nd session of the General Assembly.⁴⁷

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) held the International Conference on Nuclear Security from 5-9 December 2016, which hosted representatives from 139 Member States and 29 international and civil service organizations, to highlight global, regional, and national commitments to improve nuclear security.⁴⁸ The conference held six high-level scientific and technical sessions on broad themes within nuclear security, as well as over 30 technical meetings on “specialized scientific, technical, legal and regulatory issues concerning nuclear security.”⁴⁹ These included topics concerning the technical, physical, and cyber-security of nuclear facilities and mechanisms, public engagement on nuclear security, and international and regional nuclear security education.⁵⁰

A recent manifestation of this regional cooperation is shown in the Malaysia-Thailand Cross Border Nuclear Security Exercise, where experts from both Member States convened to collaborate on nuclear security issues and safety procedures.⁵¹ This exercise was also intended to test the effectiveness of both Member States’ nuclear security systems.⁵² Over one hundred various law enforcement and scientific and technical expert participated in the exercise, and it represents an effective regional level action to improve their nuclear security culture, a recommended area of improvement by the IAEA’s International Conference on Nuclear Security, and an important component to be considered with the proposed fissile material cut-off treaty’s verification options.⁵³

Annotated Bibliography

Dixit, A. (2016, December 13). Continue to Effectively Strengthen Global Security: International Conference on Nuclear Security Concludes. *IAEA Office of Public Information and Communication*. Retrieved 7 January 2017 from: <https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/continue-to-effectively-strengthen-global-nuclear-security-international-conference-on-nuclear-security-concludes>

This conference hosted numerous scientific and technical experts in the fields of nuclear technology and disarmament, as well as many Member States’ ministerial officials. The material discussed at this conference is not only valuable to delegates’ knowledge of the IAEA’s operational scope, but also links delegates to important documents produced by the conference that can guide their final research. The conference high-level meetings recommended evolving security mechanisms to meet dynamic threats to nuclear security, enhancing physical protection of nuclear material through cooperation with the IAEA and developing a robust nuclear security culture to combat external, insider, and cyber-threats. Some states noted the need to adapt regulatory strategies and policies to reflect the lifetime of the material and facilities they regulate.

International Atomic Energy Agency. (2016). *President’s Report: Commitments and Actions*. Retrieved 1 February 2017 from: https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/17/01/president_summary_final_2017.10.16.pdf

This report contains both the high-level meeting summaries and technical meeting summaries from the conference. These summaries detail recommendations on international legal instruments relevant to nuclear security, International bodies and initiatives like the IAEA and interaction with CSOs, as well as recommendations on enhancing the physical security of nuclear material and facilities to prevent and combat threats. The report also covered recommendations on security for other radioactive facilities as well as those outside of regulatory control. Finally, it makes recommendations on what Member States can do to improve their nuclear security culture, which is noted as a critical component in maintaining effective national nuclear security regimes.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Dixit, Continue to Effectively Strengthen Global Nuclear Security: International Conference on Nuclear Security Concludes, *IAEA Office of Public Information and Communication*, 2016.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ IAEA Office of Public Information and Communication, *Boosting Nuclear Security in South-East Asia*, 2016.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.; UN General Assembly, *Nuclear disarmament verification (A/RES/71/67)*, 2016.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *Nuclear disarmament verification (A/RES/71/67)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the report of the First Committee (A/71/450). Retrieved 3 January 2017 from: <http://www.undocs.org/A/RES/71/67>

Disarmament verification has also been a significant obstacle to universal ratification of non-proliferation proposals. Many non-nuclear Member States, as well as a few nuclear-capable Member States, have criticized the lack of assurances that all nuclear powers will be held accountable to disarmament regulations, timelines and quotas. This draft resolution supported by 26 Member States seeks to provide a clear picture of how Member States can function in their efforts to resolve these disarmament verification issues, which would build confidence with the global community in the Member States' disarmament efforts.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (A/RES/71/258)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the report of the First Committee (A/71/450). Retrieved 3 January 2017 from: <http://www.undocs.org/A/RES/71/258>

Nuclear-weapon equipped Member States have expressed opposition to the proposal of a fissile material cut-off treaty, which would limit all legal production of fissile material to non-weaponized/explosive platforms. This recent draft resolution to restart talks on pursuing implementation has already seen resistance from nuclear weapon-equipped Member States, and present delegates with the challenge of negotiating an equitable solution that the global community is confident will be carried out. Delegates will need to be aware of their Member States' position on the proposed treaty, as well as be knowledgeable to arguments made by those who oppose the treaty to facilitate the most efficient negotiations at the conference.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (A/RES/71/259)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the report of the First Committee (A/71/450). Retrieved 3 January 2017 from: <http://www.undocs.org/A/RES/71/259>

This resolution contains substantial information pertaining to the jurisdiction, limitations, and intent of the proposed fissile material cut-off treaty. Among other things, the treaty primarily seeks to limit the production of fissile material, the component required to maintain and trigger a nuclear reaction, to be globally restricted to non-weaponized applications only. It represents some of the latest work on the proposed treaty and will undoubtedly be very useful information for helping delegates to discern what implications the proposed treaty has for their specific Member State at the treaty's current state.

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United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (A/RES/71/258)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the report of the First Committee (A/71/450). Retrieved 3 January 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/258>

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (A/RES/71/259)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the report of the First Committee (A/71/450). Retrieved 3 January 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/259>

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III. Increasing Women's Role in Disarmament and Non-Proliferation

Recent Developments

The 71st session of the General Assembly produced a fruitful dialogue that addressed women's role in disarmament and non-proliferation matters among Member States.⁵⁴ General Assembly resolution 71/56 of 5 December 2016 on "Women, Disarmament, Non-proliferation and Arms Control" reiterates women's important, equal, and valuable role in reducing armed conflicts.⁵⁵ Beyond that, the body further encourages an effective network within the international community to continue capacity-building initiatives to increase women's participation in decision-making and execution of peace and security efforts.⁵⁶ On 18 October 2016, the Permanent Mission of Ireland and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) cohosted a side event panel discussion on "Gender and Nuclear Weapons" addressing current trends in international disarmament and non-proliferation.⁵⁷ The Permanent Representative for the Mission of Ireland to the United Nations (UN) in Geneva highlighted the important link between achieving disarmament and fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs,) which includes the promotion of greater women's participation in disarmament policymaking by investing in research and development, streamlining gender perspectives in policies, and emphasizing sustainable development.⁵⁸ Further, the Chief of Research at UNIDIR, Dr. John Borrie, pointed out that including a gender perspective is vital to understand the actors, process, and influence relevant to nuclear weapons policy.⁵⁹

The Security Council also engaged in productive discussions on streamlining gender perspectives in disarmament and non-proliferation practices.⁶⁰ In addition to reemphasizing the harm and severity of gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict zones, on 20 December 2016 the Security Council adopted resolution 2331 entitled "Maintenance of International Peace and Security," which further discusses initiatives Member States should take to actively engage women in disarmament matters.⁶¹ The Security Council recommends Member States collaborate with civil society organizations, especially grassroots women's organizations, to advocate for women's full civil rights in participating in high-level decision-making, as well as to incorporate gender expertise in disarmament and non-proliferation.⁶²

Other UN agencies also conducted significant programming and on-the-ground work to empower women to work towards disarmament and non-proliferation around the world. The Deputy Chief of the Peace and Security Section of the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), Nahla Valiji, attended the Security Council's Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security in October 2016 and exchanged expert opinions with other attendees.⁶³ Ms. Valiji shared a scholarly finding that a peace agreement is 35% more likely to last more than 15 years when women are involved in the decision-making process, which further confirms the significant role women play in international disarmament.⁶⁴ The creation of the Security Council's Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security aims to connecting on-the-ground reports to high-level analysis advancing women's role in disarmament efforts.⁶⁵

Finally, civil society organizations have achieved notable accomplishments in the second half of 2016. In Colombia, although the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) negotiated a peace agreement,

⁵⁴ UN DPI, *As General Assembly Concludes Debate on Nexus between Enduring Peace, Sustainable Development, Speakers Urge Discussion beyond Headquarters to Raise Awareness*, 2017.

⁵⁵ UN General Assembly, *Women, Disarmament, Non-proliferation and Arms Control (A/RES/71/56)*, 2016, pp. 1-2.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ UNODA, *Gender & Nuclear Weapons*, 2016.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ UN Security Council, *Security Council Resolutions*, 2017.

⁶¹ UN Security Council, *Maintenance of International Peace and Security (S/RES/2331 (2016))*, 2016, pp. 1-2.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

⁶³ Valji, *Expert's Take: Women's Meaningful Participation Still the Missing Ingredient in Peacebuilding*, 2016.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

there are still challenges and suppression in the society towards women's participation in security issues.⁶⁶ The Women's International League for Peace & Freedom (WILPF) Colombia connected with other local women's organizations in an organized campaign and stood in solidarity with the Colombian women to resist violence.⁶⁷ On 18 October 2016, WILPF also launched the expanded Security Council Scorecard on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), which features international and national actions on WPS related actions and initiatives to increase women's participation in disarmament.⁶⁸

Annotated Bibliography

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This is the most recent resolution adopted by the General Assembly on the report of the First Committee concerning the issue of women's involvement in disarmament. Beginning with highlighting previous milestone documents, the resolution then goes into detailed steps the international community can take to move the progress forward, which include strengthening UN system cooperation, continuing raising awareness of the impact of armed violence and the significance of women's involvement in non-proliferation. Delegates will find it one of the most valuable resources to understand the body's current position and progress, and further research their Member States' positions.

United Nations, Security Council, 7847th meeting. (2016). *Maintenance of International Peace and Security (S/RES/2331 (2016))* [Resolution]. Retrieved 28 January 2017 from: [http://undocs.org/S/RES/2331\(2016\)](http://undocs.org/S/RES/2331(2016))

As one of the UN agencies that produces the most policymaking and on-the-ground work concerning women's role in disarmament and non-proliferation, the Security Council's review of previous lessons learned and proposed future actions is a must read for delegates to gain a clear perspective on the current work of the UN. This resolution highlights the major challenges facing Member States, such as rising armed conflicts, violence against women and children, and different forms of discrimination against women, from which delegates could brainstorm proposals for future actions to overcome the obstacles. The second half the document contains a series of specific suggestions to Member States to conduct more effective efforts to address the issue. Studying this document will not only assist delegates' research of the topic, but provide another perspective on how different UN agencies work in addressing similar matters.

Valji, N. (2016, 25 October). Expert's Take: Women's Meaningful Participation Still the Missing Ingredient in Peacebuilding. *United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*. Retrieved 28 January 2017 from: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/10/experts-take-womens-meaningful-participation-in-peacebuilding>

UN-Women is the expert organ of the UN on women empowerment. Written by the Deputy Chief of UN-Women's Peace and Security Section, Nahla Valji, this is an expert briefing on the current stage of women's involvement in disarmament and relevant scholarly research on the potential benefits of increasing women's role in peacekeeping. By reading this article and looking into the past lessons learned and newly established initiatives within the UN, delegates should be able to link scientific studies to the significance of women's involvement in disarmament, as well as effective mechanisms that could be put into place in the future to accelerate the progress.

Women's International League for Peace & Freedom. (2016) *Despite the Loss of "Yes" in the Colombian Referendum, Women Continue to Resist and Promote Peace in Colombia*. Retrieved 28 January 2017 from: <http://wilpf.org/despite-the-loss-of-yes-in-the-colombian-referendum-women-continue-to-resist-and-promote-peace-in-colombia/>

⁶⁶ WILPF, *Despite the Loss of "Yes" in the Colombian Referendum, Women Continue to Resist and Promote Peace in Colombia*, 2016.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ WILPF, *Press Release: New Initiative to Boost Holistic Action for Women, Peace and Security*, 2016; WILPF, *WPS Scorecard*, 2016.

The peace negotiation in Colombia is a very recent event which provides a valuable case study on the challenges women face in defense of their own rights as well as getting involved in the peacekeeping process. This article provides a brief summary of the background of peace deal and the factors that prevent women from enjoying peace and being engaged in decision-making and non-proliferation. Delegates may use the Colombian example as a case study to assist in their research of the challenges, resources, threats, and opportunities present in engaging women in disarmament in conflict and post conflict areas.

Women's International League for Peace & Freedom. (2016). *WPS Scorecard* [Website]. Retrieved 28 January 2017 from: <http://peacewomen.org/scorecards>

Newly created by WILPF, this scorecard is an accountability measure for Member States' initiatives on Women, Peace and Security, as well as a valuable database for research. The scorecard provides detailed profiles of the Permanent Five of the Security Council, in which their actions on Security Council actions, women, peace, and security financing, international gender and human rights indicators, and peacekeeping operations are presented. Additionally, it also provides a comparison among the five permanent Member States. The WPS scorecard may provoke some brainstorming on effective accountability measure alternatives and database that may be helpful for future research and data sharing within the UN system in regards to women, peace, and security.

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Valji, N. (2016, 25 October). Expert's Take: Women's Meaningful Participation Still the Missing Ingredient in Peacebuilding. *United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*. Retrieved 28 January 2017 from: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/10/experts-take-womens-meaningful-participation-in-peacebuilding>

Women's International League for Peace & Freedom. (2016). *Despite the Loss of "Yes" in the Colombian Referendum, Women Continue to Resist and Promote Peace in Colombia* [Website]. Retrieved 28 January 2017



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