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Conflict Prevention, Effective Prevention of Illicit Trade in Conventional and Small Arms, and Total Elimination of Weapons of Mass Destruction

Report of the UA-MUNC Secretary-General

Introduction

1. Armed conflict, the illicit trade of conventional and small arms, and weapons of mass destruction poised to destroy on a global scale are all critical topics in the disarmament agenda. Currently, armed conflict displaces 20 people every minute, on average.¹ An estimated 800 million small arms and light weapons have been illicitly circulating over past years, 90 percent of which were responsible for armed conflict.² On the other hand, “growing concern”³ remains over nuclear testing and the threat of deploying nuclear weapons, also known as Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs). Such concerns stem from the estimated 15,000 nuclear weapons in existence.⁴ If used, they would have “devastating and unpredictable consequences,”⁵ according to the United Nations’ Secretary-General, António Guterres. Despite this concern, nuclear testing is not slowing down. Given today’s state of affairs, formulating a multilateral response through diplomacy and collective action is a pressing matter. In fact, the prospect of disarmament and preventing armed conflict is directly related to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 16: “peace, justice, and strong institutions.”⁶ Achieving this goal is a crucial step in eliminating rampant poverty, as any armament deviates USD 1.6 trillion in yearly government investment from development initiatives⁷ and potentially eradicates decades of economic progress. While the United Nation’s plight against disarmament and armed conflict dates back to the drafting of the UN Charter in 1945, both of the above issues remain unresolved. Therefore, the Disarmament and International Security Committee must take immediate preventive action against armed conflict, illicit trade of conventional and small arms, and weapons of mass destruction.

¹ Refugees, U. (2018). *Figures at a Glance*. [online] UNHCR. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>

² “Human Cost of Illicit Flow of Small Arms, Light Weapons Stressed in Security Council Debate | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases,” 2015

³ Un.org. (2018). *States Must Reach across Aisles, Summon Political Will Needed to Reduce Arsenals, General Assembly President Tells First Committee | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases*. Available at <https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/gadis3571.doc.htm>

⁴ “Un News – Treaty banning nuclear weapons opens for signature at UN,” 2017

⁵ Un.org. (2018). *Accidental Escalation of Tensions Could Spark Conflict on Korean Peninsula, Secretary-General Warns in Briefing to Security Council | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases*. [online] Available at: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sc13121.doc.htm>

⁶ United Nations Sustainable Development. (2018). *Peace, justice and strong institutions - United Nations Sustainable Development*. [online] Available at: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/peace-justice/>

⁷ “11 Facts About Global Poverty | DoSomething.org | Volunteer for Social Change,” 2018

Introduction to the Committee, its Jurisdiction and Mandate:

2. The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) is the first of the six main committees of the General Assembly. Also known as the First Committee, this body addresses conflict prevention, disarmament, and international security.⁸ It “considers agenda items referred to it by the General Assembly and prepares recommendations and draft resolutions for submission to the General Assembly plenary.”⁹ As the First Committee’s resolutions are not legally binding, Member States prefer to adopt them by consensus (i.e., without the need to vote). This ensures that their recommendations are implemented worldwide, as all States agree to them.¹⁰ As a result, around 80% of General Assembly resolutions are adopted by consensus,¹¹ turning suggestions into global decisions. Therefore, it is critical to engage with the viewpoints of all nations.
3. It is also crucial to understand that, while the First Committee focuses on “disarmament, global challenges, and threats to peace,”¹² it cannot order military or peacekeeping action or implement sanctions, unlike the Security Council. By contrast, DISEC makes recommendations to security policies worldwide.¹³ For this purpose, it collaborates closely with the United Nations Disarmament Commission, which constantly publishes research and reports, while providing occasional recommendations on armaments reduction.¹⁴ The Committee also works with the Conference on Disarmament, a forum to discuss disarmament policies located in Geneva.¹⁵ Moreover, DISEC makes its discussions and their outcomes available to the general public through UN Web TV, video archives, and UN PaperSmart.¹⁶ Over time, its agenda has shifted from preventing nuclear conflict at the height of the Cold War to eliminating weapons of mass destruction and mitigating other threats to global peace.¹⁷

⁸ *United Nations Handbook 2015-2016*, (2017), p. 24

⁹ *United Nations Handbook 2015-2016* (2017), p.12

¹⁰ “How Decisions are Made at the UN,” 2018

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Un.org. (2018). *UN General Assembly - First Committee - Disarmament and International Security*. [online] Available at: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/first/index.shtml>

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Un.org. (2018). *United Nations Disarmament Commission – UNODA*. [online] Available at: <https://www.un.org/disarmament/institutions/disarmament-commission/>

¹⁵ Unog.ch. (2018). *Where global solutions are shaped for you | Disarmament | An Introduction to the Conference*. [online] Available at: <https://www.unog.ch/80256EE600585943/%28httpPages%29/BF18ABFEFE5D344DC1256F3100311CE9?OpenDocument>

¹⁶ Un.org. (2018). *United Nations Disarmament Commission – UNODA*. [online] Available at:

<https://www.un.org/disarmament/institutions/disarmament-commission/>

¹⁷ “History of the General Assembly First Committee,” n.d.

Topic Background

The Nexus between Armed Conflict, and Poverty and Human Rights:

4. Armed conflict creates a self-feeding cycle of poverty and destruction. Not only does violence reduce economic opportunities for civil society, but it also drains state resources, both in preparation for, during, and after conflict. In turn, this generates poverty, insecurity, and social discontent, while weakening institutions. Thus, it allows for further destruction to occur.
5. It is imperative that Member States recognize that disarmament leads to the betterment of human rights. The proliferation of arms, on the other hand, contradict human rights instruments, as it results in further state investment to acquire or maintain weapons and protect citizens from an “undefined external military attack.”¹⁸ Nevertheless, the proliferation of arms does the opposite. In fact, according to the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), disarmament “will promote social progress and development and as a consequence will contribute to the attainment of full equality between men and women,”¹⁹ who are most affected by armed conflict. Analysis portrays the positive impact that women can have when admitted to the negotiation table.²⁰ However, women lack representation in the First Committee. Their inclusion may well change the discourse on the road to disarmament.
6. Furthermore, according to a recent report, “42% of the world’s impoverished population lives in conflict-affected areas.” If current trends continue, over 60% of the extremely poor (those living under USD 1.90 a day) will live in these regions by 2030,²¹ the deadline for the Sustainable Development Goals. Also, armed conflict “disproportionally affects children,” who “represent half of the poor yet are just one-third of the underlying population.”²² They “largely remain invisible victims.”²³ Considering that children will drive forward the global economy over the following decades, the above statistics evidence that preventing armed conflict is crucial to eradicating poverty and economically empowering the most vulnerable in society. Therefore, the Committee must “avert the outbreak of conflict,”²⁴ both by preventing the illicit trade of conventional and small arms and by eliminating weapons of mass destruction.

Definition of Conventional and Small Arms:

7. The United Nations defines conventional weapons as military equipment including, but not limited to, “armored combat vehicles, combat helicopters, combat aircraft, warships, small arms and light weapons, landmines, cluster munitions, ammunition, and artillery.”²⁵ As they are more encompassing than small arms, conventional weapons are the most common form of armament globally and the most frequently used in conflict. By contrast, small arms “range from clubs, knives and machetes to those weapons just below those covered by the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.”²⁶

¹⁸ Teixeira, 2003, p. 11

¹⁹ Borrie et al., 2016, p. 8

²⁰ Borrie et al., 2016, p. 28

²¹ World Bank. (2018). *Overview*. [online] Available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/overview>

²² “Child Poverty – UNICEF DATA,” 2018

²³ Leila Zerrougui, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2016

²⁴ “Conflict Prevention: General: I.O.L.D.C.,” 2018

²⁵ “Conventional Weapons – UNRCPD,” 2018

²⁶ “Small Arms and Light Weapons | International Peace Bureau,” 2018

Effects of the Illicit Trade of Conventional and Small Arms:

8. The procurement of illicit arms trade deeply concerns Member States. This concern occurs because illegal armaments transfer makes weapons readily available to unauthorized groups, including terrorist organizations. This threat leads to “human suffering, political repression, crime, and terror.”²⁷ Also, according to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the illicit trade of “small arms and light weapons undermines security and the rule of law,” and constantly cause forced displacement, as well as “massive human rights violations.”²⁸ These particularly affect women, children, and the elderly in low-income, conflict-affected and fragile states.
9. Illicit arms trade has been a global threat over past decades. Instead of contributing to national and regional economies, it reduces security and discourages investment. In 2011, the illegal ammunition industry reportedly generated USD 5.6 billion.²⁹ However, considering that 90% of these exports occurred within fifteen states,³⁰ the above statistics may only be a fraction of the profit made the illegal transfer of arms. Currently, this decades-long threat remains under-addressed, as most Member States have limited supervision of illicit arms trade. Therefore, it is imperative that the International Community strengthen data collection mechanisms.

Definition of Weapons of Mass Destruction:

10. Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) are capable of producing irreparable damage: killing and maiming thousands of civilians and wreaking havoc on national infrastructure.
11. In 1948, the UN Commission on Conventional Armaments defined WMDs as “atomic explosive weapons, radioactive material, lethal chemical and biological weapons, and any weapons developed in the future which have characteristics comparable in destructive effect to those of the atomic bomb or other weapons mentioned above.”³¹ Although chemical and biological weapons are included in the definition of WMDs, they must produce irreversible damage towards mass populations to be recognized as such.

Consequences of Nuclear Weapons:

12. In 2013, a General Assembly High-Level Meeting regarding nuclear disarmament noted the “threat posed to humanity by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and their potential use,”³² and “reaffirmed that the only guarantee against the threat of nuclear weapons is their total elimination.”³³
13. The above affirmation is because nuclear explosions could have devastating ramifications. For instance, they could leave tens of thousands disabled or with chronic health conditions. Furthermore, agrarian societies would be direly affected by ionizing radiation, and radioactive contamination would deem water sources undrinkable, leading to food insecurity and a shortage of national resources. Consequently, mass migration would be imminent. Moreover, reconstruction and

²⁷ Un.org. (2018). *Small Arms – UNODA*. [online] Available at: <https://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/salw/>

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Omegaresearchfoundation.org. (2018), pg. 23 [online] Available at:

<https://omegaresearchfoundation.org/sites/default/files/uploads/Publications/Corney-Marsh-Aiming-for-Control-PRIO-Paper-2013.pdf>

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Commission on Conventional Armaments (CCA), UN document S/C.3/32/Rev.1, August 1948, as quoted in UN, Office of Public Information, *The United Nations and Disarmament, 1945–1965*, UN Publication 67.1.8, 28.

³² UNIDIR (2017). *Understanding Nuclear Weapon Risks*. © UNIDIR 2018, pg.17.

³³ Ibid.

societal recovery would be complicated processes, requiring the aid of numerous development and financial organizations worldwide.³⁴

14. Even though a nuclear disaster would affect all demographics, women and men would be affected in dissimilar ways. For instance, women are believed to be more vulnerable to the harmful effects of ionizing radiation³⁵ because they have 50% more high-risk reproductive and fatty tissues³⁶ in comparison to their male counterparts.
15. Despite these harmful effects, existing nuclear weapons remain at around 15,000 globally.³⁷ While this is less than a fourth of their number at the height of the Cold War,³⁸ the threat of nuclear weapons remains grave as several Member States pursue nuclear tests. For instance, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has carried out three nuclear tests since January 2016, the most recent of which produced the largest explosion,³⁹ causing a 6.3 magnitude earthquake.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, the DPRK's tests only account for 0.03% of the explosive yield caused by nuclear tests since 1945.⁴¹ Moreover, India and Pakistan have nearly quadrupled size of their nuclear arsenal over time.⁴² Therefore, the Committee should take a global focus to the elimination of WMDs. The International Community witnessed nuclear weapons' catastrophic damage 70 years ago, and it must not wait until future havoc to eradicate them.

Effects of Chemical and Biological Weapons:

16. Although the number of existing chemical weapons has been greatly reduced since the Cold War -during which the USA and Soviet Union's chemical weapons combined would have been "enough to destroy much of the human and animal life on Earth"⁴³- the possession of increasingly deadlier ones is another cause for concern to the International Community. Due to a lack of updated information regarding disarmament in general, however, the most recent published statistics come from 2013. These showed an alarming chemical weapons stockpile worldwide. For instance, Russia possessed 40,000 (metric) tonnes of chemical agents, while the USA and Syria possessed 31,500 and 1,300 tonnes, respectively.⁴⁴ The International Community must be reminded of the evidence confirming that in April 2017, the Syrian government deployed a sarin bomb -a chemical nerve gas- in the Khan Shaykhun area, killing around 100 civilians.⁴⁵
17. On the other hand, the United Nations defines biological weapons as "complex systems that disseminate disease-causing organisms or toxins (poison) to harm or kill humans, animals or plants."⁴⁶ The deliberate use of biological weapons is difficult to identify and can be confused with natural disease outbreaks, for which it requires

³⁴ Sabatier, 2014

³⁵ Borrie et al., 2016, pg. 12

³⁶ Borrie et al., 2016, pg. 11

³⁷ "Un News – Treaty banning nuclear weapons opens for signature at UN," 2017

³⁸ Un.org. (2018). *The "step-by-step" process of nuclear disarmament: Quo vadis? – UNODA*. [online] Available at:

<https://www.un.org/disarmament/update/20130424/>

³⁹ NORSAR. (2017). *Large nuclear test in North Korea on 3 September 2017*. [online] Available at: <https://www.norsar.no/press/latest-press-release/archive/large-nuclear-test-in-north-korea-on-3-september-2017-article1534-984.html>

⁴⁰ Seis.ustc.edu.cn. (2018). *North Korea's 3 September 2017 Nuclear Test Location and Yield: Seismic Results from USTC*. [online] Available at: http://seis.ustc.edu.cn/_s223/2017/0904/c10084a191096/page.psp

⁴¹ Ldeo.columbia.edu. (2018). [online] Available at: http://www.ldeo.columbia.edu/~richards/my_papers/WW_nuclear_tests_IASPEI_HB.pdf

⁴² Borrie et al., 2016, pg. 21

⁴³ Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (2018). *Brief History of Chemical Weapons Use*. [online] Available at:

<https://www.opcw.org/about-chemical-weapons/history-of-cw-use/>

⁴⁴ "Countries Compared by Military > Weapons of mass destruction > Declared chemical weapons stockpile. International Statistics at NationMaster.com," n.d.

⁴⁵ UN News. (2017). *Both ISIL and Syrian Government responsible for use of chemical weapons, UN Security Council told*. [online] Available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/11/570192-both-isil-and-syrian-government-responsible-use-chemical-weapons-un-security>

⁴⁶ Unog.ch. (2018). *Where global solutions are shaped for you | Disarmament | What Are Biological and Toxin Weapons?*. [online] Available at: [https://www.unog.ch/80256EE600585943/\(httpPages\)/29B727532FECBE96C12571860035A6DB?OpenDocument](https://www.unog.ch/80256EE600585943/(httpPages)/29B727532FECBE96C12571860035A6DB?OpenDocument)



multi-sectoral efforts. In recent years, rat poison and pesticides were reportedly used against girls' schools in Afghanistan, wounding over 2,500 children.⁴⁷

Past International Action

Regarding Illicit Arms Trade of Conventional and Small Weapons:

18. Member States have made substantial steps in preventing the illicit trade of conventional and small arms and reducing the number of WMDs.
19. For instance, the 2014 Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is one of the most recent milestones in deterring the illegal distribution of conventional weapons. The Treaty established international standards governing the transfer of armament and recommended measures to increase transparency in this process.⁴⁸ Progress is regularly assessed at Conferences of State Parties. Nevertheless, over 60 UN Member States have not signed the ATT, and more than 100 are not parties to it, numerous of which are conflict-affected and fragile states.⁴⁹ Most notably, the NPT's strict measures to collect and share information from arms users caused widespread rejection as they were seen as breaches of national sovereignty.⁵⁰ Thus, Member States must aim for consensus that takes into consideration the views of other nations. Furthermore, the Treaty has some loopholes: the illegal trade of ammunition and other weapons, as well as various forms of transfer and transaction, are not included in it.⁵¹
20. Additionally, through the universally-adopted Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects (PoA), 22 UN agencies aid the implementation of "fact-finding missions, capacity-building projects, workshops and technical assistance."⁵²

Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction:

21. On the other hand, one of the most achieving resolutions regarding nuclear disarmament is the Treaty of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Often regarded as the "cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime," this agreement has successfully placed nuclear non-proliferation at the center of the global stage. This is because the NPT mandates "each non-nuclear weapon state party to negotiate a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)." In other words, nations agree to direct their nuclear capacity towards atomic energy, rather than armament.⁵³ Consequently, significant strides in ceasing the manufacture of nuclear weapons in the Treaty's 190 state parties have been made. Nevertheless, the NPT failed to eliminate WMDs due to the lack of global will to multilaterally dismantle nuclear weapons.⁵⁴ This was also due to the fact that non-parties to the Treaty, such as the DPRK, India, Israel, and Pakistan, continued to

⁴⁷ Johnstonsarchive.net. (2018). *Summary of historical attacks using chemical or biological weapons*. [online] Available at: <http://www.johnstonsarchive.net/terrorism/chembioattacks.html>

⁴⁸ Thearmstradetreaty.org. (2018). *The Arms Trade Treaty*. [online] Available at: <http://www.thearmstradetreaty.org/index.php/en/the-arms-trade-treaty>

⁴⁹ Thearmstradetreaty.org. (2018). *The Arms Trade Treaty | Homepage*. [online] Available at: <http://www.thearmstradetreaty.org/index.php/en/>

⁵⁰ Scoville, R. (2012). *The Arms Trade Treaty: A Response to the 2nd Amendment Critique – Marquette University Law School Faculty Blog*. [online] Law.marquette.edu. Available at: <https://law.marquette.edu/facultyblog/2012/12/01/the-arms-trade-treaty-a-response-to-the-2nd-amendment-critique/>

⁵¹ Amnesty.org. (2012). *Hopes raised for strong Arms Trade Treaty*. [online] Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/press-releases/2012/07/hopes-raised-strong-arms-trade-treaty/>

⁵² ("Programme of Action - Implementation Support System," 2016

⁵³ Acheson and Fihn, 2013, p. 4

⁵⁴ UNODA, 2004



strengthen their nuclear arsenal. They claimed that the NPT limits the nuclear capacity of states that have not acquired nuclear weapons without eliminating those possessed by nuclear powers. Despite this, the NPT remains as one of the best demonstrations of how the First Committee can have a lasting effect on global security policy.⁵⁵

22. Although other actions such as the resolution on “Renewed Determination Towards the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons” (A/RES/61/74) received widespread support from the General Assembly, nuclear states opposed it, as it made direct reference to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which 27 states have failed to ratify.⁵⁶
23. Despite past action in the field of chemical and biological weapons, further measures must be taken. While the Chemical Weapons Convention serves as a “forum for consultation and cooperation” among its 192 parties,⁵⁷ intensified action is necessary to verify the alleged use of chemical weapons. Additionally, further consultation efforts must be undertaken to implement the robust approaches to mitigate the use of biological WMDs proposed in A/RES/59/110.⁵⁸

Action from non-UN bodies:

24. Finally, non-UN bodies, such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union, have taken action to spread awareness about disarmament, arms control, and non-proliferation among civil society and parliaments worldwide.⁵⁹

Political and Regional Groups

African Union:

25. The African Union (AU) has taken substantive measures to combat the illegal transfer of small arms and conventional weapons. In 2005, the AU convened a meeting of governmental experts from across the African continent who adopted the “African Common Position for the Conference to Review the PoA.”⁶⁰ Additionally, the Windhoek Common Position called all AU Member States to strengthen their efforts “to prevent, combat and eradicate” the illegal trade of small arms and light weapons.⁶¹

Association of Southeast Asian Nations:

26. Another group that has made outstanding progress within the realm of disarmament is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). This group has declared its will to eliminate nuclear weapons through its numerous treaties and its implementation of an ambitious action plan to establish the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone.⁶² ASEAN also prioritizes supervising adherence to regionally adopted treaties regarding both WMDs, and conventional and small arms trade. For example, if one ASEAN-affiliated nation declines to cooperate in tracking

⁵⁵ “Briefing on Disarmament and International Security,” 2018

⁵⁶ “United Nations First Committee | Treaties & Regimes | NTI,” 2017

⁵⁷ Nti.org. (2017). *Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) | Treaties & Regimes | NTI*. [online] Available at: <http://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-regimes/organization-for-the-prohibition-of-chemical-weapons/>

⁵⁸ (“United Nations First Committee | Treaties & Regimes | NTI,” 2017

⁵⁹ Ababa, 2009, p. 28

⁶⁰ (“Programme of Action - Implementation Support System,” 2014

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² “Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty (Bangkok Treaty) | Treaties & Regimes | NTI,” 2017



mechanisms, it may be referred to the International Atomic Energy Agency, the UN Security Council, or the General Assembly for compliance.⁶³

League of Arab States:

27. Furthermore, the League of Arab States has continuously called for increased reporting on measures taken to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, through collaboration with the Security Council and other counter-terrorism bodies.⁶⁴ Regional workshops, conferences, and training sessions have also been integral to the establishment of dialogue and a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.⁶⁵

Organization of American States:

28. A group strongly affected by recent civil wars and the illicit transfer of conventional and small arms –mostly imported from the USA and Europe- the Organization of American States (OAS) has a mixed record of participation in international treaties against the illegal arms trade.⁶⁶ However, its unified efforts are enshrined in the “Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of, and Trafficking in, Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Material.” However, it urgently requires reliable and transparent implementation and tracking mechanisms.⁶⁷ Despite these problems, substantial progress has been made regarding WMDs: Latin America and the Caribbean is a nuclear-test-free zone due to the implementation of effective legal measures like the Tlatelolco Treaty.⁶⁸

Western European and Others Group:

29. The Western European and Others Group (WEOG) has displayed its full commitment to Security Council Resolution 1540, which upholds Member States’ obligation to enact laws eradicating support to non-state actors possessing nuclear, chemical or biological WMDs.⁶⁹ Additionally, the WEOG strongly favors awareness measures to promote the decisions taken in the above resolution. These measures include sessions, summits, and workshops for Member States and civil society.⁷⁰ Furthermore, most countries in this group –with few exceptions like the United States, an observer nation- are state parties to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which prohibits atomic, military testing in any form.⁷¹

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ “The League of Arab States,” 2013

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ GSDRC. (2008). *The Small Arms Trade in Latin America - GSDRC*. [online] Available at: <http://www.gsdr.org/document-library/the-small-arms-trade-in-latin-america/>

⁶⁷ Oas.org. (2018). *OAS :: SLA :: Department of International Law (DIL) :: Inter-American Treaties*. [online] Available at: http://www.oas.org/en/sla/dil/inter_american_treaties_A-63_illicit_manufacturing_trafficking_firearms_ammunition_explosives.asp

⁶⁸ Oosthuizen and Wilmshurst, 2004, p. 5

⁶⁹ Un.org. (2018). *UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) – UNODA*. [online] Available at: <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/sc1540/s>

⁷⁰ “Western Europe, Eastern Europe and Turkey 1540 Reporting | Analysis | NTI,” 2017

⁷¹ Un.org. (2018). *Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) – UNODA*. [online] Available at: <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/ctbt/>

Possible Solutions

30. As punitive or humanitarian measures are not included in the First Committee's mandate, this body is encouraged to formulate practical solutions to strengthen –and achieve consensus on– the global disarmament agenda.
31. For example, a realistic means to protect international peace and security –and by extension, civilians vulnerable to armed conflict– would be to invest in human resources. Engaging diverse UN agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and, specifically, civil society groups for the monitoring, reporting, and response to violence is crucial.⁷² It is also imperative to raise global awareness on the interrelationship between conflict, poverty, and human rights, as well as on measures that civil society can follow to push for disarmament agendas. These must reaffirm that building state and military security through disarmament results in human and economic security.⁷³ Several existing UN methods of outreach are available and should be prioritized.
32. Additionally, the Committee may wish to pursue recommendations by the United Nations. For instance, the Open-Ended Working Group on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations suggested the implementation of transparency measures and preventive action to mitigate the risk of accidental or unauthorized nuclear weapon detonations. Legal measures focusing on the above aspects “must be made to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons.”⁷⁴
33. Proposed provisions to eliminate nuclear weapons include the Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC). The NWC would require Member States to prohibit nuclear testing, weapons, and fissile material essential for their production.⁷⁵ For this purpose, the Convention would establish an agency responsible for monitoring reports made by nuclear-armed states. As the NWC groups together past efforts such as the NPT and CTBT, it would provide a unified and consistent approach to nuclear disarmament.⁷⁶
34. Similar measures, particularly regarding integrated data collection mechanisms, can be implemented to combat the illegal transfer of conventional and small arms.

Current Status – Points for Delegates to Consider

35. A critical impediment to making tangible progress in the First Committee is the conflicting perspectives of Member States, and insufficient efforts to bridge them through dialogue. Thus, “some states have become entrenched in their positions, and do not listen to the arguments or suggestions of others. They reject the norms of the majority—who have arrived at a common understanding through discussion, debate, and compromise—and oppose resolutions that would otherwise demonstrate consensus on many disarmament-related issues.”⁷⁷
36. Winston Churchill's fable of the diplomatic situation in 1938 Europe accurately illustrates the current state of disarmament negotiations. Churchill narrated a disarmament conference attended by zoo animals that would examine their vulnerabilities and choose the first ‘weapon’ to be eliminated. Although the rhinoceros vied to eliminate claws, it would not allow horns to disappear, as it saw them as defensive. The tiger, however, opposed and sought to defend both teeth and

⁷² Machel, 2001, p. 94

⁷³ McCarthy, 2005, p. 59

⁷⁴ *Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations*. available from undocs.org/A/RES/71/258, 2017, p. 3/4

⁷⁵ “A Treaty to Eliminate Nuclear Weapons | Nuclear Darkness & Nuclear Famine,” 2018

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ “First Committee of the UN General Assembly,” 2018

claws, which it saw necessary for its survival. On the other hand, the bear advocated for hugs as a means of solving conflict.⁷⁸ Today, crucial debate on disarmament has stagnated, as state interests have prevailed over multilateral cooperation. It is worrying that disarmament efforts are often regarded as tools to maintain military powers' superiority while infringing upon national sovereignty, hampering trust among states and reducing security,⁷⁹ even though the purpose of disarmament explicitly contradicts this. Hence, delegates are strongly encouraged to carefully consider the viewpoints of dissident nations and strive to bridge gaps in policies through the solutions they propose during the conference.

37. Another crucial issue hindering the work of institutions closely following armed conflict and breaches of peace is the lack of information. For instance, due to insufficient historical records, as well as the "lack of access to and engagement with senior leaders and officials who have an overarching knowledge of the Syrian chemical weapons programme,"⁸⁰ the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons' Fact-Finding Mission submitted a report on Syria's use of chemical weapons –with numerous informational gaps- seven months after the attack it sought to investigate.⁸¹
38. Finally, in an era where children have never known a weapon-free world, it is crucial to increase the presence of youth, "survivors and victims, women, indigenous persons and persons with disabilities"⁸² in negotiations. Only with their intervention and Member States' careful analysis of past efforts and shortcomings can this complex issue be solved.

Key Questions to Consider when Researching and Negotiating

- What remains unresolved in the plight for disarmament? What has the 2030 Agenda achieved thus far in this aspect?
- How are conflict, poverty, and human rights interconnected with the issues at hand?
- What concerns your represented nation regarding illicit arms trade and WMDs?
- How can existing treaties be enforced to eliminate the illicit trade of conventional and small arms, as well as WMDs?
- How can dialogue and diplomacy be promoted to breach differences in policies? Which nations could be more collaborative in the road to disarmament? How can consensus be achieved considering particular nations' contrasting viewpoints?
- Are international stakeholders' efforts sufficient to prevent the acquisition and use of chemical and biological weapons by state and non-state actors? How can NGOs, International NGOs (INGOs), and civil society better influence relevant decisions?
- How can transparency and current data collection mechanisms be improved?
- What is the role of awareness in disarmament and conflict prevention?
- How can women's participation in the prevention of illicit arms trade and WMDs be improved?

⁷⁸ Un.org. (2018). *The "step-by-step" process of nuclear disarmament: Quo vadis? – UNODA*. [online] Available at: <https://www.un.org/disarmament/update/20130424/>

⁷⁹ "Nuclear deterrence vs. the nuclear weapons ban," 2017

⁸⁰ UN News. (2017). *Both ISIL and Syrian Government responsible for use of chemical weapons, UN Security Council told*. [online] Available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/11/570192-both-isil-and-syrian-government-responsible-use-chemical-weapons-un-security>

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² "Un.org," 2017, p. 5



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