



## MEETINGS COVERAGE

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### **Approving 21 Drafts, First Committee Asks General Assembly to Halt Destructive Direct-Ascent Anti-Satellite Missile Tests in Outer Space**

A draft resolution introduced by the Russian Federation entitled “Secretary-General’s Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons” drew intense debate in the First Committee (Disarmament and International Security) today and was ultimately defeated in a recorded vote.

By 30 votes in favour to 65 against, with 77 abstentions, delegations rejected the text, which would have had the General Assembly reaffirm its dedication to protecting humanity from chemical and biological warfare and reiterate that the Secretary-General should review the Mechanism’s technical guidelines and procedures and revise them as needed for submission to the Assembly upon its request.

Introducing the draft on 31 October, the representative of the Russian Federation said it aims to ensure the effective use of the Mechanism in the sphere of biological and chemical security. The principles and procedures have not been updated since 1990 and, to a large extent, are “out of lockstep” with new developments and new threats, such as terrorism.

The text, he said, proposes in operative paragraph 3 that the Secretary-General ask Member States’ opinions on the state of the procedures, to update them if needed, and asks him to submit a substantive report with an annex including those inputs. He said that the separate vote on that provision demonstrates that the opponents of the initiative do not have cogent arguments against it. Rather, it is a glaring attempt to call the Secretary-General’s mandate into question and leads to a discriminatory practice that has no place at the United Nations.

Among the opponents of the draft was the representative of the United States who, explaining his vote, said paragraph 3 would have launched a formal critique of the Mechanism’s procedures and guidelines. There already is a provision in place for updating it. Moreover, he said, the procedures function well, most recently in the Syrian case. New procedures run the risk of becoming politicized and of weakening the Mechanism. The Russian Federation’s actions in multilateral arms control forums also raise concerns about its underlying motivations.

The Committee also approved the five other draft resolutions in its cluster on weapons of mass destruction, two of those by recorded votes. They were on the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare (“L.11”); Chemical Weapons Convention (“L.55”); Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring mass destruction weapons (“L.60”); Preventing the acquisition by terrorists of radioactive sources (“L.64”); and the Biological Weapons Convention (“L.74”).

Six drafts were approved in the Committee’s cluster on outer space (disarmament aspects), including one on practical measures for preventing an outer space arms race (“L.70”), by a recorded vote of 124 in favour to 48 against, with 9 abstentions (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Chile, Fiji, Georgia, Guatemala, Honduras, Papua New Guinea, Switzerland).

According to its terms, the Assembly would express grave alarm over the threat of an arms race in outer space and call on all States, especially those with major space capabilities, to, among other things, take urgent measures to prevent for all time the placement of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force in outer space, from space against Earth and from Earth against objects in outer space.

Prior to the draft's approval as a whole, recorded votes were requested and taken on preambular paragraph 5 and operative paragraphs 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12.

The Committee approved a new draft resolution, entitled "Destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite missile testing" (document A/C.1/77/L.62). Introduced by the United States, it was approved by a recorded vote of 154 in favour to 8 against (Belarus, Bolivia, China, Cuba, Iran, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syria), with 10 abstentions (India, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Pakistan, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Togo, Uganda, Zimbabwe).

By that text, the Assembly, determined to advance norms of responsible behaviour for outer space activities, would call on all States to commit not to conduct destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite missile tests. It would consider such a commitment to be an urgent, initial measure aimed at preventing damage to the outer space environment, while also contributing to the development of further measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The Committee approved a related draft resolution on no first placement of weapons in outer space (document A/C.1/77/L.67) by a recorded vote of 123 in favour to 50 against, with 4 abstentions (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Côte d'Ivoire, Papua New Guinea, Switzerland), by which the Assembly would urge work on a treaty on preventing any such placement and encourage States to make political commitments not to be the first to place weapons in space. The text required four separate recorded votes.

Also approved with a vote was a decision on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours ("L.27"). Acting without a vote, the Committee approved its traditional text on prevention of an arms race in outer space, and transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities.

In its cluster on conventional weapons, the Committee approved 10 drafts: "L.39" on the Arms Trade Treaty, "L.40" on the Mine Ban Convention, "L.41" on countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices, "L.43" on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, "L.48" on transparency in armaments, "L.50" on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, "L.51" on Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus, "L.53" on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms, "L.68" on the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and "L.76" on assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them.

General statements on other weapons of mass destruction were made by representatives of the United States, Czech Republic, Syria, Cuba, the Russian Federation, Malaysia, and New Zealand.

Speaking in explanation of vote before the vote on other weapons of mass destruction were representatives of Iran, India, Algeria, China, Israel, Mexico, United States, Argentina, Philippines, Russian Federation, Türkiye, Switzerland, and Equatorial Guinea.

General statements on Outer Space (Disarmament Aspects) were representatives of the United States, the Russian Federation, Cuba, and China.

Speaking in action on outer space drafts were representatives of India, the Russian Federation, Iran, United States, France, Czech Republic, and China.

Speaking in explanation of vote after the vote were representatives of the Russian Federation, Philippines, Switzerland, Mexico, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Israel, United States, Cuba, Viet Nam, New Zealand, Costa Rica, India, and Japan.

General statements on conventional weapons were made by representatives of the Republic of Korea, Australia, and Colombia.

Speaking in action on conventional weapons were representatives of Iran, India, Egypt, the Russian Federation, Cuba, and Equatorial Guinea.

Speaking in explanation of vote after the vote were representatives of Indonesia, Brazil, Armenia, Republic of Korea, India, Cyprus, Mexico, United States, Pakistan, and Iran.

Representatives of Syria and the Russian Federation spoke in exercise of the right of reply.

The First Committee will meet again at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 2 November, to continue taking action on all draft resolutions and decisions before it.

## Explanation of Vote – Weapons of Mass Destruction

The representative of the United States, explaining his vote on “L.69” on the Secretary-General’s Mechanism, said he highly values the Mechanism’s integrity and independence. In recent years, the world saw chemical weapons use in Iraq, the Russian Federation, Malaysia, Syria and the United Kingdom. This, combined with the experience from the pandemic and the advances in life sciences that might be misused, underscored the need for an effective international mechanism. A coalition of countries defeated the Russian Federation’s draft resolution on this topic in 2020 and 2021. This year, that country proposed a new draft resolution undermining the Mechanism. Its operative paragraph 3 would launch a formal process of critique of its procedures and guidelines. The existing procedures already contain a provision that allows for updating, and any Member State could share its views or nominate consultant experts. Moreover, the procedures function well, most recently in the Syrian case. New procedures run the risk of becoming politicized and of weakening the Mechanism. The Russian Federation’s actions in multilateral arms control forums also raise concerns about its underlying motivations. It will continue to strip away the Secretary-General’s prerogative to lead review processes objectively. The United States will vote “no” on operative paragraph 3 and on the draft as a whole, and urges others to follow suit.

The representative of the Czech Republic, on behalf of European Union members and other States, noted with concern the Russian Federation’s proposal “L.69”. The two previous draft resolutions were not adopted, by a wide margin. The aim of the initiative remains unchanged and risks undermining the Mechanism. The Union’s member States support the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions as key pillars of the international rules-based system, and the Secretary-General’s Mechanism and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) as key components of the non-proliferation architecture. The procedures authorize the Secretary-General to autonomously start an investigation without Security Council approval. This independence is a vital guarantee that the request for an investigation cannot be blocked by another Member State for any reason or political motive.

The Russian Federation’s proposal suggests that the procedures and guidelines need to be updated in light of scientific and technological developments, she said. However, the draft has never indicated specifically what those are. Moreover, the text does not mention the 2007 update, which worked adequately in Syria in 2013 and in the Capstone Simulation in 2022. She also questioned the motives behind the proposal. The Russian Federation, on numerous occasions, showed that its objective was not to strengthen, but to undermine the Mechanism’s independence. In short, she does not support the resolution, as she has serious concerns about its form and contents. She calls on all States to reject it as well.

The representative of Syria took the floor to explain her country’s vote on “L.55”. For the eighth year, this draft’s sponsor pushed it to extremism and disregarded other States’ positions. She had hoped the draft resolution would address Syria’s successful experience in eliminating chemical weapons and its OPCW cooperation, and not disregard that terrorist groups used chemical weapons against civilians and the Syrian Arab Army. The Polish lead sponsor disregarded that input at the first negotiation round and cancelled the second round of negotiations. The draft resolution also referred to the illegitimate decision by the OPCW Conference of States Parties, adopted by only 45 per cent support, instead of unanimity. The draft resolution also referred to the Joint Investigative Mechanism that relied on open sources and disinformation provided by terrorist groups. The resolution thus lacked credibility, but Poland left these sources in the draft. Further, it referred to the illegally established Investigation and Identification Team and targeted countries individually, like the Russian Federation, setting a dangerous precedent, as well as violating the Chemical Weapons Convention. She would vote against the politicized preambular paragraph 6 and operative paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 18. She called on all Member States to vote no. Last, she also rejected the statement of the Czech Republic’s delegate and urged her to use diplomatic discourse.

The representative of Cuba said he shared the overall goal of “L.55” and remained committed to the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the CWC. However, his delegation could not support this unbalanced draft. It would also abstain or vote against preambular paragraph 6 and operative paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 5 and 18. The draft resolution ignored the Syrian Government’s cooperation in the destruction of its chemical weapons. He objected to hasty agreements without taking all countries’ positions into consideration. On “L.55” operative paragraph 3, he objected to mentioning one State without independent and comprehensive investigation. On “L.55” operative paragraphs 4, 5 and 18, he said it should be considered in this Committee as elements do not enjoy consensus in OPCW. He urged an end to politicization that affects the work of OPCW and CWC. He rejected the use of chemical weapons and pleaded for their full destruction.

The representative of the Russian Federation said OPCW used to be authoritative when its decisions were made on the basis of consensus. Now, the organization was split, and its mandate blurred, influenced by narrow geopolitical interests. The Russian Federation called on “L.55”’s authors to re-establish the CWC’s consensus nature. No one had the illusion that it was easy, but failure to act was the height of irresponsibility. His country’s calls fell on deaf ears as text proposals were simply ignored. The draft contained politicized paragraphs, with baseless accusations, but no call to the last possessor of chemical weapons, the United States, to destroy its stockpile. Moreover, the CWC Conference of States Parties did not have a legal basis for attributing powers to the OPCW Technical Secretariat, so all ensuing actions were in direct CWC violation.

On “L.55” operative paragraph 6 on nerve agents, he said that the Russian Federation made constructive proposals to OPCW on definitions. On “L.55” operative paragraph 2, he said that this paragraph was simply springing from the imagination of the authors. The

Russian Federation called upon all Member States to support the CWC and vote against “L.55”; in current form it was nothing more than a tool to deepen the current rift in OPCW, blur its mandate and undermine its principles. He was not prepared to agree with OPCW’s transformation into a tool to exert political pressures in the interests of a single group of States.

The representative of India supported “L.55” and maintained that any use of chemical weapons totally disregarded humanity. Perpetrators should be held accountable. Underlining the importance of upholding the CWC’s integrity, he said that in cases of alleged chemical weapons use, the OPCW should adhere to the CWC provisions and issues should be addressed with the cooperation of all parties concerned. He regretted that the inclusion of contentious issues in its operative part led to a loss of consensus, and hoped for change in the future. On “L.74”, he underlined the importance of the BWC and international cooperation on peaceful biological activities and exchanges of technical and scientific information, particularly for developing countries. He urged States Parties to make their annual contributions in full and on time as financial stability was essential.

The representative of Malaysia, explaining his vote on draft resolution “L.55”, entitled “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction”, reaffirmed his condemnation in the strongest possible terms of the use of those weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances. Any use or threat of use of these abhorrent weapons of mass destruction is totally unacceptable and in flagrant contravention of international law and the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Convention is a landmark instrument proscribing a type of weapon of mass destruction, and its compliance and verification provisions are important in assuring the global community of its effectiveness. There cannot be impunity for the re-emergence of chemical weapons, and those responsible must be held to account. Malaysia will abstain from voting on operative paragraphs 2, 3, 5 and 18 of the draft resolution and will vote in favour of the text as a whole.

The representative of New Zealand, explaining her position on “L.69” on the Secretary-General’s Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons, said New Zealand is a strong supporter of that instrument, which is an essential complement to the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions. Regrettably, however, New Zealand is obliged, once again, to vote “no” on the resolution. A negative vote does not at all reflect a lack of support for the Mechanism itself, but rather, concerns that the resolution again seeks to politicize and undermine the Mechanism, as well as the existing international framework governing chemical weapons. She regrets that the text fails to acknowledge new developments with regard to the Mechanism. For example, the updated technical appendices to its original guidelines and procedures, the maintenance of a list of qualified experts, and the holding of relevant training.

The representative of Iran, explaining his vote on “L.55”, reaffirmed its strong support for and commitment to the Convention on Chemical Weapons as a unique multilateral agreement that has not only codified and reinforced international norms against those weapons, but also made remarkable progress in their elimination. It also provides a framework for international cooperation and exchange in scientific and technical information in the field of chemical activities for peaceful purposes among States parties. It is essential to preserve the Convention’s effectiveness and its implementing institution. Unfortunately, the draft resolution is being used for political ends rather than for contributing to the Convention’s implementation. It highlights controversial issues and deepens divisions among the States parties, rather than moving them towards consensus. Moreover, the draft contributes to confrontation and polarization among the States parties, rather than uniting them around the Convention’s main objectives. A strict observance of the principles of impartiality and independence, as well as preserving the integrity of the chain of custody, is of the utmost importance in conducting investigations regarding the alleged use of chemical weapons and drawing a reliable professional conclusion. He will vote against the draft, and hopes that politicization of the draft and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) will be put to an end, thus enabling the Committee to adopt a consensus text on the Convention’s implementation in future sessions.

The Committee took up a resolution tabled by Indonesia, entitled “Measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol” (document A/C.1/77/L.11) by which the Assembly would renew its previous call to all States to observe strictly the principles and objectives of the Protocol, and reaffirm the vital need to uphold its provisions. The Committee approved that text by a recorded vote of 180 in favour to none against, with 2 abstentions (Israel, United States).

The Committee then turned to consideration of the draft resolution, tabled by Poland, entitled “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction” (document A/C.1/77/L.55) and proceeded to take action on one preambular paragraph and six operative paragraphs.

Among its provisions, the General Assembly would condemn in the strongest possible terms the use of a toxic chemical as a weapon against Alexei Navalny in the Russian Federation, express grave concern that Syria failed to declare and destroy all of its chemical weapons and chemical weapons production facilities, and urge all States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention to meet their obligations.

The Committee first retained preambular paragraph 6 of the draft by a recorded vote of 117 in favour to 7 against (Cuba, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Iran, Kazakhstan, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syria), with 33 abstentions.

By its terms, the Assembly would re-emphasize its unequivocal support for the decision of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to continue the mission to establish the facts surrounding the allegations of the use of chemical weapons, including toxic chemicals, for hostile purposes in Syria, while stressing that the safety and security of mission personnel remains the top priority, and recall the work of the Joint Investigative Mechanism of OPCW.

The Committee next retained operative paragraph 2, by which the Assembly would condemn in the strongest possible terms the use of a toxic chemical as a weapon against Alexei Navalny in the Russian Federation. The provision held by a recorded vote of 88 in favour to 10 against (Armenia, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syria), with 63 abstentions.

It then retained the third operative paragraph, by which the Assembly would condemn in the strongest possible terms that chemical weapons have since 2012 been used in Iraq, Malaysia, Syria and the United Kingdom, by a recorded vote of 114 in favour to 9 against (Bolivia, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran, Kazakhstan, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syria), with 31 abstentions.

By a recorded vote of 114 in favour to 8 against (Bolivia, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syria), with 33 abstentions, it then retained operative paragraph 4, by which the Assembly would note with great concern reports regarding the alleged incidents in Marea and Kafr Zeita, Syria, which concluded that a toxic chemical or a vesicant chemical substance was used as a weapon.

The Committee retained operative paragraph 5, by which the Assembly would recall the adoption of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 "Addressing the threat from chemical weapons use", of 27 June 2018; the decision EC-94/DEC.2 "Addressing the possession and use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic", and the decision C-25/DEC.9 "Addressing the possession and use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic", and stress the importance of their implementation. It took that action by a recorded vote of 107 in favour to 9 against (Bolivia, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syria), with 38 abstentions.

It then retained the operative paragraph 6, by which the Assembly would take note of the decision C-26/DEC.10 "Understanding Regarding the Aerosolised Use of Central Nervous System-Acting Chemicals for Law Enforcement Purposes", by a recorded vote of 117 in favour to 5 against (China, Iran, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syria), with 31 abstentions.

Next, by a recorded vote of 111 in favour to 7 against (China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syria), with 38 abstentions, the Committee retained operative paragraph 18, by which the Assembly would express grave concern over the failure of Syria to declare and destroy all of its chemical weapons and chemical weapons production facilities.

The Committee then approved the draft resolution "L.55" as a whole by a recorded vote of 156 in favour to 6 against (China, Iran, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syria, Zimbabwe), with 18 abstentions.

Next, the Committee considered the draft resolution entitled "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction" (document A/C.1/77/L.60), introduced by India. By its terms, the Assembly would call on Member States to support international efforts in that regard, and urge them to strengthen national measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring those weapons and their delivery means. The text also appeals to States to accede to and ratify the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. The Committee approved "L.60" as a whole, without a vote.

The Committee then took up the draft resolution on "Preventing the acquisition by terrorists of radioactive sources" (document A/C.1/77/L.64), introduced by France and Germany. By its terms, the Assembly would call on Member States to support international efforts to prevent that possibility and urge the strengthening of national measures in that regard, including to prevent terrorist attacks on nuclear plants. It would urge States to follow the guidance contained in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. The Committee approved "L.64" as a whole, by a recorded vote of 180 in favour to none against, with 2 abstentions (Iran, Syria). Then, the Committee considered a new draft resolution on "Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons" (document A/C.1/77/L.69), introduced by the Russian Federation. By its provisions, the Secretary-General would periodically review the technical guidelines and procedures contained in Annex I of his 1989 report on chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons and revise them as necessary. It would also request the Secretary-General to seek views and proposals of Member States about the current status of those guidelines and procedures, possibly to update them and submit a substantive report.

Before taking action on "L.69" as a whole, the Committee rejected operative paragraph 3, by a recorded vote of 27 in favour to 63 against, with 70 abstentions. That provision concerned the request of the Secretary-General to seek views and proposals from Member

States about the current status of the Mechanism's guidelines and procedures, for possible updates, and to submit a substantive report.

The Committee defeated draft resolution "L.69" as a whole, by a recorded vote of 30 in favour to 65 against, with 77 abstentions.

Acting without a vote, the Committee approved the draft resolution on "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction" (document A/C.1/77/L.74), introduced by Hungary. By its terms, the Assembly would encourage States parties to provide, at least biannually, information on their implementation of the Convention's article X, and to collaborate on and support implementation measures. It would request the Secretary-General to continue to render the necessary assistance to the Convention's depositary Governments.

The representative of Iran voted in favour of "L.69". The draft resolution contains particularly positive paragraphs. Regrettably, he consistently witnessed the abuse of the Security Council and the Secretariat by the United States and Western countries. He believed that the independence and impartiality of the Secretary-General's Mechanism is imperative. Since the Mechanism, however, depends on the financial contributions of some Western States, and while the United States has been exerting its influence on the Secretariat's functions, utilizing it and the Council for the realization of its destructive policies, it is hard to believe that the Mechanism can remain independent and impartial.

The representative of India, on "L.69", recognized the efforts of the Russian Federation for tabling the revised version; however, it still falls short of expectations. India has maintained that the use of chemical or biological weapons should be dealt with as per the provisions of the Conventions. The Chemical Weapons Convention has a comprehensive verification system and detailed provisions to deal with any use of those weapons. As for the Biological Weapons Convention, India has called for the negotiation of a comprehensive and legally binding protocol, providing for an effective, universal and non-discriminatory verification mechanism. India has always supported upholding the integrity of these Conventions and dealing with specific instances. In line with their provisions, India believes that matters relating to the use of chemical or biological weapons should be addressed within the treaties' frameworks. India reiterates that a verification protocol for the Biological Weapons Convention is the only way to strengthen the norm against those weapons' use. India abstained in the vote on "L.69".

The representative of Algeria, explaining his vote on "L.55" said that since Algeria's accession to the Biological Weapons Convention, the country has always been a staunch supporter of it. It believes its universality is essential, in line with its position against all weapons of mass destruction. Algeria condemns in the strongest terms any use of these weapons by any party and under any circumstance. Unfortunately, Algeria could not support the draft resolution for the fourth running year.

The representative of China said he voted against "L.55" as a whole. The draft resolution failed to embody balanced objectivity and inputs. The destruction of abandoned chemical weapons helped to realize a chemical-weapon-free world, and the Chemical Weapons Convention provided for this destruction. Japan abandoned chemical weapons destruction, he said, and have repeatedly exceeded the deadline. This topic should have been reflected in "L.55". Also, dialogue and cooperation were the only ways to solve the issue of Syrian chemical weapons. The decision of central nervous system agents at the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties bears upon the obligations of States parties, and thus, amendments should be done based on the Convention's article 15, rather than by forcing a vote. It was counterproductive to the decision's implementation and undermined the Convention's authority. Finally, in strict accordance with the Convention, dialogue and consultations should take place regarding the Navalny case. He opposed a presumption of guilt. He urged a return for the Chemical Weapons Convention to consensus decision-making.

The representative of Israel, on "L.55" said that chemical weapons use by Syria had clearly been stipulated in the Joint Investigative Mechanism and the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team reports. Recent statements of the OPCW Director General also referred to gaps in Syria's declaration. That country's serious acts must be addressed to prevent norm erosion. Israel fully supported the work of the Investigation and Identification Team in attributing acts to the actual perpetrators. The concerning actions of State and non-State actors demonstrated an erosion of the chemical weapons taboo. It was evident that the residual chemical capacity of Syria should be ended fully. Israel voted in favour of "L.55", as a long-standing supporter of the Chemical Weapons Convention and a close cooperator with OPCW.

The representative of Mexico explained his abstention on "L.69", saying that the Russian Federation's draft, considered again this year, was still unclear in its scope in terms of what needed to change in the Secretary-General's Mechanism. He fully rejected and condemned the use of chemical weapons and expressed his commitment to the universalization of the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions and to enhancing the verification proposal and OPCW.

The representative of the United States, speaking on behalf 48 countries, said he voted in favour of "L.55". It reflected the objectives and goals of the Conventional Weapons Convention, provided an accurate account of events of chemical weapons use and of the courageous work of the OPCW Technical Secretariat in its quest for the truth – to follow evidence and attribute responsibility to those who use chemical weapons. The Convention's entry into force was the result of many who were determined to end the threat of

chemical weapons and hold the few to account that seek to normalize it. Unfortunately, a few countries prefer to look away and whitewash chemical weapons. He said his country will not allow that to happen, not now and not ever. Syria has repeatedly clouded its international obligations under the Convention by using chemical weapons against its people. It is not “politization” to state facts. The Russian Federation should also comply with the Convention. The international community has already waited more than two years for it to provide a full account of the case of Alexei Navalny, as well as the case of Sergei Skripal. Since its unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, it has falsely accused Ukraine of chemical weapons use without evidence. If the international community fails to act, others might become emboldened in the future.

The representative of Argentina explained his abstention on “L.69”. The Secretary-General’s Mechanism aims to investigate alleged or possible use of chemical weapons drawn to its attention. Any such investigation should be in line with the procedures endorsed in 1990 and updated in 2007. The Mechanism is a fundamental tool to deal with alleged use. He underlined the importance of maintaining the legitimate right for peaceful use. Any decision that is in accordance with the Mechanism should enjoy the broadest possible support.

The representative of the Philippines, a co-sponsor of “L.60”, said it is a necessary resolution to prevent terrorists from gaining access to weapons of mass destruction. The text emphasizes the need for robust strategic trade management on the national level and for international cooperation on global non-proliferation norms. On “L.69”, she voiced her commitment to the Mechanism and highlighted her country’s efforts and regional cooperation. The Philippines remained open to discussions as long as they did not undermine the Mechanism’s independence or technical competence.

The representative of the Russian Federation voted in favour of “L.11” on measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol. This document prohibits the use in war of asphyxiating poison or other similar gases and bacteriological methods of warfare. It remains a key element of the international legal arms control architecture. It organically supplements the obligations of States under the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions, and constitutes the basis for the Secretary-General’s investigative Mechanism. The United States has refused to support a General Assembly resolution on the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which was the first instrument to have banned the use of biological weapons. This comes on top of Washington’s consistent statements saying that it does not wish to revoke its reservation by which it retains the ability to use this type of weapon of mass destruction.

The representative of Türkiye delivered an explanation of vote on draft resolution “L.55” in favour of the text and its related paragraphs, in line with its principled position and strong support for the full and effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. He condemned in the strongest terms the use of chemical weapons that has re-emerged in various parts of the world. The case of Syria remains a particular concern. The resolution reflects the objectives and goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention. It provides a factual account of the repeated use of those weapons in recent years and supports the work of the technical secretary of the OPCW in identifying fact-based evidence. Its Technical Secretariat’s impartiality, objectivity and professionalism in investigating chemical weapons attacks in Syria and elsewhere is highly commendable, as it contributes to collective endeavours towards accountability and combating impunity. He called on the regime to comply with its Convention-based obligations.

The representative of Switzerland explained his negative vote on “L.69”. He said that the resolution would not achieve its stated aim of strengthening the Secretary-General’s Mechanism, but would in fact be counterproductive, because it risks undermining the instrument’s independence, as well as the Secretary General’s authority.

The representative of Equatorial Guinea, speaking on operative paragraph 6 of “L.55”, said he had voted in favour of it in the past, but today had abstained.

The representative of Syria, on a point of order, asked if the right of reply would be at the end of the cluster or at the end of the meeting.

#### General Statements – Outer Space (Disarmament Aspects)

CAROL LESLIE HAMILTON (United States) introduced a new draft resolution on “Destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite-missile testing” (document A/C.1/77/L.62). She said that those destructive tests create thousands of pieces of debris and pose risks to all countries. Through three rounds of discussions, the draft resolution is now improved and is co-sponsored by 49 States. Seeing the risks to the outer space environment and the desire of all for its peaceful use, operative paragraph 1 calls on States to refrain from such tests. The draft resolution met the three key objectives, to limit the creation of debris, to be easily understandable and to address the greatest near-term threat to space security.

She said that the language and voluntary commitments meet the criteria of transparency and confidence-building measures set by the Group of Governmental Experts on outer space activities. The resolution was limited to one threat and should be seen as an important step that the international community can take now to reign in testing. Operative paragraph 2 mentions it as an “urgent and initial step”. Operative paragraph 3 calls for continued discussions. She underlined that, while many countries may not intend to develop

such technology, the draft resolution's broad support reflects the world's commitment to this emerging norm. This draft resolution would enhance space security and take a step towards preventing a conflict in outer space. She encouraged unanimous support.

KONSTANTIN VORONTSOV ([Russian Federation](#)) said the peaceful exploration of outer space should serve as an effective means to tackle many global problems, including economic development. However, space recently faced the risk of turning into a place of aggression. Several States were ramping up their hostilities in outer space, underlining the importance of the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) document. The Russian Federation attempted to prohibit weaponizing outer space and to reach agreements, including a ban on weapon deployment and use of force in that domain. Most effective would be a multilateral legally binding instrument.

He said that the Russian Federation and China had proposed a treaty in the Conference on Disarmament in 2008 and a new version in 2014, with 30 States signed on so far. This year, they also submitted a draft resolution on "No first placement of weapons in outer space" (document A/C.1/77/L.67), as well as a draft resolution on "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities" (document A/C.1/77/L.71/Rev.1), which propose that the Secretary-General request Member States' proposals about the practical implementation of such measures, as provided for in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts, and submit a substantive report to the General Assembly at its next session. He trusted his resolution would be adopted without a vote.

He also introduced a draft resolution entitled "Further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race" (document A/C.1/77/L.70), which has undergone several changes. To bring the world's work to the next stage, the text proposes the recommendation by a group of governmental experts of a legally binding instrument on PAROS, to start work after the Open-Ended Working Group on Space Threats concludes its work in 2023.

Mr. PADILLA ([Cuba](#)) co-sponsored draft resolutions "L.3" on "Prevention of an outer space arms race", "L.67" on "No first placement of weapons in outer space", "L.70" on "Further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race" and "L.71/Rev.1" on "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities". He advocated the use of space solely for peaceful ends and to enhance the legal regime to prohibit weapons in outer space. The draft by the Russian Federation and China introduced at the Conference on Disarmament was an excellent basis for agreement. He supported voluntary measures on transparency and confidence-building measures, but not as a substitute for a legally binding mechanism.

LI SONG ([China](#)) supported the statement by the Russian Federation, and co-sponsored draft resolutions "L.70" and "L.67". He supported the language in both drafts, including preambular paragraph 5 on "a community of shared future for mankind" and operative paragraphs 8 through 12 in "L.70" on establishing a group of governmental experts on PAROS. Regrettably, a handful of countries had requested a vote on these resolutions and paragraphs. Only since 2019, countries started to reject the concept of "a community of shared future for mankind". These countries are so obsessed with their cold-war mentality that they would reject anything that China proposed. This is not the way things should work in the world, let alone in the United Nations. The concept of a shared future was non-ideological, open, above board and an embodiment of true multilateralism. He called on all delegations to vote in favour of these paragraphs and defend Member States' equal right to contribute to the United Nations cause.

Operative paragraphs 8 through 10 of "L.70" call for a re-establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts on PAROS, he noted. The United States participated in the Group's work in 2018 and 2019 but singlehandedly blocked support for its draft reports. This year, China, together with 20 other co-sponsors, put forward "L.70" to allow the Group to continue its work, including on a code of conduct of responsible behaviour in space. Certain countries' cynical attempts to block this as an act of hegemony should be resisted, and he called on all Member States to support "L.67" and "L.70" as a whole.

The representative of [India](#), explaining her vote on draft decision "L.27" on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours, said India has vital developmental and security interests in space. It is opposed to its weaponization and has been a consistent advocate of preserving outer space as an ever-expanding frontier for cooperative endeavors. India supports substantive consideration of the prevention of an arms race in outer space and remains committed to a legally binding instrument. India is concerned about who and on what basis assessments will be made about the responsibility or lack thereof with respect to space, activities therein or operations. India will abstain on "L.27".

The representative of the [Russian Federation](#) said his country views the decision of the United States to undertake a political commitment not to carry out direct-ascent anti-satellite missile-testing and the initiative to submit a resolution on that front as a very dubious. Moreover, it was taken after the United States carried out the necessary "ASAT" tests which could strike outer space objects. It is completely insufficient to ensure a guarantee of peaceful activities in outer space and to accomplish the goal of preventing an arms race and outer space. The adoption of such a commitment does not mean renouncing the production or the development of "ASAT" systems, he said. Paradoxically, it also does not prevent them from being used, including in combat. Also, the draft resolution does not contain a moratorium on the testing of anti-satellite missiles that are non-destructive in nature, nor does it provide for the destruction of existing weapons of this type. The United States is attempting to replace real diplomatic efforts with "grand gestures and half measures", he said.



The representative of Iran explained his position on draft decision “L.27”, saying he disagrees with that approach, and so Iran will vote against it. On draft resolution “L.62”, the suggestion to undertake a political commitment not to conduct destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite missile tests as a discriminatory, insufficient and major deviation from the right approach to guarantee the exclusively peaceful uses of outer space, as well as the long-awaited goal of preventing an arms race in that domain. This draft lacks the needed renouncement of developing and manufacturing the anti-satellite systems, their combat use or non-destructive “ASAT” tests, he said. All this is exacerbated by the absence of a definition of anti-satellite missile weapons. He said Iran attaches great importance to the commencement of negotiations on a comprehensive, legally binding instrument that contains guarantees of non-weaponization of outer space and non-use of force or threat of force against space objects.

Regarding two draft resolutions, namely, the one on no-first-placement of weapons in outer space, and on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities, he will vote in favour of these two documents.

The representative of the United States, on resolution “L.3”, preventing an arms race in outer space, said that, although he will not oppose this resolution, there is a reference to the draft treaty from the Russian Federation and China introduced in 2014 at the Conference on Disarmament, which the United States opposes. However, its position with respect to the draft treaty proposal does not change the United States’ continued desire to avoid the extension of future conflicts to outer space. As the United States has repeatedly noted, he said, both China and the Russian Federation are aggressively developing and deploying technologies designed and intended to extend future conflict to outer space.

The representative of France said she will vote “no” on “L.67” and “L. 70”. It is pleased to work in a constructive and pragmatic manner with other Member States to enhance safety, stability and security and sustainability in outer space activities. The resolutions proposed by the Russian Federation do not adequately respond to threats. The non-first-use does include some important problems. First, it does not adequately define what is represented by a weapon in outer space. The double use, which is recognized in space systems, makes it difficult to define a viable definition. Second, it does not include any characteristic, which allows us to confirm effectively the respect by a State of its political commitment to not be the first to deploy weapons and outer space.

The representative of the Czech Republic, on behalf of the European Union members and other States, explained her opposition to “L.70” and “L.67”. The European Union and its member States are actively engaged in promoting the preservation of a safe, secure and sustainable space environment, and the peaceful use of outer space on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis for present and future generations. The group is strongly committed to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and it shares the view that practical measures are needed. However, “definitional ambiguity” regarding what constitutes a weapon in space will affect all objects placed there. The “NFP” [no-first-placement of weapons] initiative does not address that difficult issue, which continues to make this resolution ineffective and does not address threats and security risks emanating from the capability of space systems to interfere with other space systems, she said.

She continued that the European Union and its member States support the new United States’ resolution on destructive direct-ascent, anti-satellite missile testing as a pragmatic, concrete and measurable step forward without excluding the possibility of new legally binding instruments in the future. An approach based on behaviours is the best way forward to improve space security. A legally binding framework in the context of space security should be effective and verifiable and should aim to cover all relevant threats, she said, adding that it is too soon to decide on new working formats on prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The representative of China explained his positions on “L.62” and “L.27”, saying draft resolution “L.62” is hypocritical and one-sided and does not constitute any constraint or limitation on the United States-led space strategy. China welcomes all arms control initiatives that are genuinely conducive to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space, but is opposed to any practice that expands unilateral military superiority under the pretext of arms control. The motives and sincerity of the United States initiative are dubious and its significance for international arms control is limited. China is also opposed to “L.27”. The process advocated by the United Kingdom is not comprehensive nor inclusive, he said, adding that it remains to be seen whether the Western countries, as the main drivers of the process, will be able to accommodate the principle, the positions and reasonable proposals of non-Western countries, thus making the process truly inclusive and broadly representative.

The representative of Pakistan, on “L.62”, said that the primary litmus test of the relevance and value added of such an initiative is whether, and to what extent, it contributes meaningfully to the universally shared goal of preventing an arms race and placement of weapons in outer space. On the prevention of an arms race, there are some gaps in the current draft. The text shies away from incorporating several expressions of concern over the growing arms race in outer space, in the various urgent threats to and from outer space, including its weaponization, and how these developments impede progress towards negotiating a legally binding instrument. For decades, the international community has prioritized prevention of an arms race in outer space. It is unfortunate that the Conference on Disarmament has been prevented from commencing negotiations on this long-standing item, he said, concluding that it is imperative to preserve the international consensus on using outer space for peaceful purposes only.

The representative of Egypt, explaining his vote on "L.62" on destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite missile testing, said it is more necessary today than at any other time for the United Nations to provide a clear signal expressing its determination to address this alarming threat. Egypt will support this draft resolution in line with its principled position to support all credible efforts complementary to initiatives which seek to elaborate rules that would pave the way to conclude legally binding instruments on preventing an arms race in outer space. This initiative should be a first step towards elaborating legally binding rules that are not limited to the direct-ascent anti-satellite missiles.

Acting without a vote, the Committee approved the resolution entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" (document A/C.1/77/L.3) by which the Assembly would call upon all States to contribute actively to the objective of the peaceful use of outer space and to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and urge States conducting activities in that domain to keep the Conference on Disarmament informed of the progress of bilateral and multilateral negotiations on the matter.

It then considered the draft decision, tabled by the United Kingdom, entitled "Reducing Space Threats through Norms, Rules and Principles of Responsible Behaviours" (document A/C.1/77/L.27), by which the Assembly would include the item by the same name as a sub-item under its item on preventing an outer space arms race.

The Committee approved that text by a recorded vote of 165 in favour to 7 against (China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syria), with 5 abstentions (Belarus, Equatorial Guinea, India, Pakistan, Tajikistan).

It next considered a new draft resolution, entitled "Destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite missile testing" (document A/C.1/77/62), by which the Assembly would call on all States not to conduct destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite missile tests and to continue discussions which could contribute to legally binding instruments on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The Committee approved that text by a recorded vote of 154 in favour to 8 against (Belarus, Bolivia, China, Cuba, Iran, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syria), with 10 abstentions (India, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Pakistan, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Togo, Uganda, Zimbabwe).

Next, the Committee considered the draft resolution entitled "No first placement of weapons in outer space" (document A/C.1/77/L.67), by which the Assembly would urge an early commencement of substantive work based on the updated draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects.

The Committee then proceeded to take action on three preambular paragraphs.

It retained preambular paragraph 5, by which the Assembly would reaffirm that practical measures should be examined and taken in the search for agreements to prevent an arms race in outer space. It did so by a recorded vote of 111 in favour to 50 against, with 6 abstentions (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Haiti, Malawi, Switzerland).

By a recorded vote of 115 in favour to 48 against, with 4 abstentions (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Côte d'Ivoire, Malawi, Switzerland), it retained preambular paragraph 9, by which the Assembly would welcome the draft treaty introduced by China and the Russian Federation on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects.

It next retained preambular paragraph 11 by a recorded vote of 115 in favour to 42 against, with 9 abstentions (Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Italy, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Korea, Spain, Switzerland). According to it, the Assembly would stress the importance of the political statements made by a number of States that they would not be the first to place weapons in outer space.

The Committee then approved the draft resolution as a whole by a recorded vote of 123 in favour to 50 against, with 4 abstentions (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Côte d'Ivoire, Papua New Guinea, Switzerland).

The Committee then turned to a draft resolution entitled "Further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space" (document A/C.1/77/L.70). By its terms, the Assembly would call on States, particularly those with major space capabilities, to take urgent measures to prevent weapons placement in outer space and the threat or use of force in outer space, from space against Earth and from Earth against objects in outer space, and to seek through negotiations a reliable, verifiable, legally binding multilateral agreement. It would further urge the Conference on Disarmament to agree to a programme of work, including on a legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and would request to establish a Group of Governmental Experts with a membership of 25 Member States to consider and make recommendations on this topic.

Before taking action on the draft resolution as a whole, the Committee had six separate votes on preambular paragraph 5 and operative paragraphs 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12.

The Committee retained preambular paragraph 5, by a recorded vote of 110 in favour to 47 against, with 8 abstentions (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chile, Georgia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea, Switzerland), by which the Assembly would bear in mind that all States should contribute to prevent an arms race in outer space and use space for peaceful purposes with the objective of shaping a community of shared future for humankind.

Next, the Committee retained operative paragraph 8, by a recorded vote of 97 in favour to 46 against, with 17 abstentions, by which the Assembly would request the Secretary-General to establish a Group of Governmental Experts, with a membership of up to 25 Member States, to consider and make recommendations on substantial elements of an international legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The Committee also retained operative paragraph 9, by a recorded vote of 98 in favour to 46 against, with 16 abstentions, by which the Assembly would decide that the Group of Governmental Experts would operate by consensus, without prejudice to national positions in future negotiations.

The Committee thereafter retained operative paragraph 10, by a recorded vote of 99 in favour to 46 against, with 17 abstentions, by which the Assembly would request the Chair of that Group to organize information consultative meetings, so that all Member States could engage in interactive discussions and share their views.

Next, the Committee approved operative paragraph 11, by a recorded vote of 99 in favour to 46 against, with 17 abstentions, by which the Assembly would request the Secretary-General to transmit that Group's report to it and to the Conference on Disarmament prior to its 2025 session.

The Committee also retained operative paragraph 12, by a recorded vote of 100 in favour to 46 against, with 16 abstentions, by which the Assembly would decide that if the Conference on Disarmament agrees on a programme of work, the Group of Governmental Experts would conclude its work and submit the results thereof to the Secretary-General for transmission to the Conference.

Then, the Committee approved "L.70" as a whole by a recorded vote of 124 in favour to 48 against, with 9 abstentions (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Chile, Fiji, Georgia, Guatemala, Honduras, Papua New Guinea, Switzerland).

Acting without a vote, the Committee next approved a draft resolution entitled "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities" (document A/C.1/77/L.71/Rev.1), by which the Assembly would encourage Member States to implement the transparency and confidence-building measures in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Outer Space Activities on a voluntary basis, and encourage it to hold regular discussion in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament.

The representative of the Russian Federation provided clarification regarding his position on "L.27". The Russian Federation, as the author of several decisive initiatives aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space, welcomes any ideas that maintaining that realm free of weapons of any kind and prevent outer space from turning into yet another theatre of tension and armed confrontation. With regard to the initiative by the United Kingdom, he said there are several fundamental imbalances and flaws. In addition, the duplication of the consideration of these issues in other fora is unacceptable. Additionally, certain fragmented non-inclusive rules for regulating outer space activities that do not take into account the approaches of all Member States and which seek to achieve the space dominance of a small group of space States will not avert an arms race or facilitate international peace and security, he said. It will only lead to an escalation of tensions in outer space, further divisions in the global community and limit equitable access to space for research and peaceful use.

Further, he said, the United Kingdom's initiative to develop norms, rules and principles for so-called responsible behaviour in outer space is an attempt to shift the focus of efforts to prevent an arms race onto less relevant topics. Moreover, he said his country rejects entrenching rules for regulating outer space activities that are advantageous to Western States at the detriment of others. This approach is an attempt by Western States to consolidate the use of outer space as an arena for confrontation and possible military activities, or, in other words, to legitimize the possibility of the use of force in outer space, as provided for in the doctrines of these States. This is why the Russian Federation opposed the draft decision.

The representative of the Philippines explained his position on "L.70". The Philippines is actively engaged in the Open-Ended Working Group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours. Given the inclusive and transparent nature of the Working Group's format, the Philippines abstained on the creation of a group of governmental experts to make recommendations on substantial elements of an internationally legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer

space. The Philippines is of the view that a legally binding instrument should be driven by Member States in an inclusive manner, he said, adding that, if the group of governmental experts does not have a negotiating mandate, then it likely only to extend discussion without actual progress and therefore be prejudicial to the efforts of the open-ended working group.

The representative of Switzerland abstained on "L.67". Its position on previous iterations of this resolution remain, he said. Its reservations to the text have been reinforced by the recent testing of counter-space capabilities by the resolution's promoter, which are inconsistent with its stated objective. Switzerland also abstained on "L.70", of the view that progress in addressing the risks posed by an outer space arms race and in elaborating legally binding instruments in this area are important objectives. Certain provisions should be revisited. Additionally, the draft refers to space-to-Earth and Earth-to-space weapons, but remains silent about the space-to-space threat dimension and on anti-satellite tests, which put space objects and activities in danger by creating debris. His country's abstention, he said, is also motivated by the need to ensure coherence and complementarity with ongoing processes on outer space security.

The representative of Mexico voted in favour of "L.62" on destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite missile testing. He supported any measure aimed at preventing the militarization of outer space, as well as the creation of new frameworks that are complementary to existing ones which prohibit the development of an arms race, testing or deployment of weapons in outer space. Mexico will strive to ensure that no actor deploys weapons in outer space or launches them from Earth, he said, adding that his country supports the resolution on the commitment of not being the first to put weapons in outer space, "L.67". All nuclear weapons must be prohibited and ultimately eliminated, regardless of their category or location, and in conformity with existing treaties.

Speaking after the votes, the representative of Sri Lanka said PAROS could be achieved through the early conclusion of a legally binding agreement, strengthening the current legal framework, and prohibitions on weapons placement and threat or use of force in outer space. Sri Lanka supported any initiative to achieve that goal and accordingly voted in favour of "L.70" and "L.27", and co-sponsored "L.67". Its support was based on the understanding that the Open-Ended Working Group on responsible State behaviour in space was a stepping-stone towards a legally binding agreement. Recognizing the importance of voluntary commitments, he underscored that these should be complementary to a legally binding agreement, and not a substitute. Sri Lanka abstained from "L.62", of the view that the text contained severe limitations, as it does not refer to production or research, and only to direct-ascent anti-satellite missiles. The impending threat of space warfare calls for renewed international cooperation.

The representative of Indonesia recognized that outer space has become an integral part of peoples' lives and requires multilateral approaches. He supported all six resolutions in this cluster, in line with his country's position that outer space must be used for peaceful purposes. He called for a legally binding instrument on PAROS. The voluntary practical measures of not performing anti-satellite-missile tests as per "L.71/Rev.1" have value and promote transparency. Rather than seeing it as a mutually exclusive effort to a legally binding system, he sees it as a stepping-stone. He also supports the Group of Governmental Experts as per "L.70".

The representative of Israel voted in favour of "L.62", as it strongly resonates with his country's policy regarding protecting outer space and responsible State behaviour. Notwithstanding this, he disassociated from operative paragraph 3 on potential legally binding instruments. Due to the constant technical developments in space, continual adaption was required, and "soft law and norms" were more suited to that. Israel supports "L.62", dissociated from operative paragraph 3, and joined consensus on "L.3" and "L.71/Rev.1", despite having reservations on some aspects.

The representative of the United States supported "L.71/Rev.1" on confidence-building measures in outer space, in line with its belief that shared understanding and behavioural norms in outer space would enable risk-reduction and enhance stability. Transparency and confidence-building measures also worked more quickly. This year, the United States regrettably could not co-sponsor the text. Preambular paragraph 4 reminded the world that preventing an arms race in outer space was in the interests of maintaining international peace and security. However, the lead author, the Russian Federation, was engaged in an illegal war, an affront to international peace and security. The international community has rejected that country's breach of territorial integrity and sovereignty. He calls on the Russian Federation to cease its unprovoked war and abide by the Charter and international law.

The representative of Cuba said "L.62" has certain gaps and inefficiencies. The text simply calls on States to not engage in destructive anti-satellite-missile testing, but this commitment has no legal value or standing whatsoever. Moreover, the text does not discourage the testing of other types of missiles. The threat of use of force in outer space is not prohibited, nor does it contain binding norms. She condemns any military activity in outer space, including the placement of weapons. The world should guarantee the preservation of outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes.

The representative of Viet Nam said she voted in favour of "L.62", as her country supports efforts to strengthen the rights of all States to pursue the peaceful use of outer space in accordance with international law, and to prevent an arms race in that domain. She supports all resolutions to this end; however, efforts to achieve the general goal of arms-race prevention should be complemented by other measures.

The representative of [New Zealand](#) explained that, while she voted in favour of “L.71/Rev.1”, she had reservations about operative paragraph 11, which duplicates the work undertaken by the Disarmament Commission. New Zealand continues to oppose “L.67”, as such an approach risks providing tacit approval for second or third placement of weapons. On “L.70”, New Zealand voted against operative paragraphs 8 through 12, as well as against the resolution as a whole. While reaffirming support for measures to prevent an arms race in outer space, New Zealand has reservations about the draft treaty put forth by China and the Russian Federation as a viable way to address space security. Voluntary and legally binding measures can support that goal. However, she does not agree that the proposals set out in “L.67” and “L.70”, are productive at present.

The representative of [Costa Rica](#) said she voted in favour of “L.67”, as her country agrees on the need to prevent an arms race in outer space. She regrets that it is not possible to bring about a full, clear prohibition to prevent any weapons in outer space, but supports the creation of a deliberative mechanism leading to such norms. On “L.70”, Costa Rica voted in favour, as it recognizes the value of generating forums for discussion and supports open-ended working groups to reduce space threats.

The representative of [India](#) said her country abstained from voting on “L.62”. Although it shares concerns about the potential dangers arising from space debris, the text does not address the issue of a binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. India voted in favour of “L.67”, as it supports a strengthened legal regime to prevent the weaponization of outer space. However, India voted against preambular paragraph 5, which includes phrases that express a political ideology. On “L.70”, India has traditionally supported the resolution, but cast a negative vote on preambular paragraph 5, for the same reasons as it did with a similar provision in “L.67”.

The representative of [Japan](#) said he voted against “L.70”, due to a number of issues, including the need for further discussion on norms of outer space use. A lack of transparency can lead to misunderstandings, given the increasing societal reliance on space systems. Japan does not agree with operative paragraph 8, as it coincides with the work of an ongoing Open-ended Working Group. On “L.71/Rev.1”, Japan joined consensus on its adoption, as it agrees with the importance of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities. However, preambular paragraph 11 is concerning, as a related report is forthcoming from the Disarmament Commission, and it is preferable to avoid duplication.

#### General Statements – Conventional Weapons

KIM SUNGHOON ([Republic of Korea](#)) introduced the annual resolution on the Arms Trade Treaty, “L.39”. The Treaty aims to reduce human suffering and violence against women and children, in particular. This year, the text reflects technical and factual updates. The Republic of Korea reflected Member States’ input and bore in mind the overall balance. The resolution was co-sponsored by 78 delegations, and he encouraged others to join.

Mr. UNDERWOOD ([Australia](#)), speaking also on behalf of France, introduced “L.41” on countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices, or “IEDs”. These devices continue to cause indiscriminate deaths and hinder sustainable development. In 2021, they accounted for 43 per cent of global explosive weapons casualties. They also gravely endanger global peacekeeping operations. The resolution raises concern and awareness, and promotes effective regulations, international cooperation and assistance. It was previously adopted without a vote and now only contains minor amendments. However, this year, one delegation has called for a vote on preambular paragraphs 8 and 9, relating to women’s participation in addressing the threat of “IEDs” and their differential impacts on women, girls, boys and men. He was confident that States saw the political motivations behind calling for a vote on this previously consensus text.

NOHRA MARIA QUINTERO CORREA ([Colombia](#)) introduced draft resolution “L.50”, jointly with South Africa and Japan, and endorsed by more than 80 States. The illicit commerce and diversion of small arms and light weapons to non-authorized users remains a threat to international peace and security, stability, and sustainable development. No country is immune from this phenomenon, and all possible efforts must be deployed to mitigate this global tragedy. The draft seeks to maintain dialogue, coordinate action and cooperation, and strengthen the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. She invited all delegations to approve it without a vote.

Second, she introduced, together with the Netherlands and Germany, “L.40” on anti-personnel landmines. In 2020, at least 7,000 mine victims were recorded, of whom 80 per cent were civilians and half were children. As mines and “IEDs” are the weapon of choice for non-State actors, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction should be universal. This resolution seeks to pull efforts together to free the world of these weapons. She reiterated the importance of incorporating a gender perspective in arms control and non-proliferation, and expressed her surprise that numerous related paragraphs, based on previously agreed language, were brought to a vote this year.

#### Action

The representative of Iran said his country will abstain on “L.39”, because the Arms Trade Treaty prioritizes the political and commercial interests of weapons-exporting countries over observance of international law. Some countries are committing major violations by exporting such weapons to Israel and other countries in the Persian Gulf. Iran’s position on the resolution applies to all paragraphs. Although Iran joins consensus “L.76” on curbing the illicit small arms and light weapons trade, its position is similar to that on “L.39”.

Regarding “L.48”, Iran will abstain, he said. The United Nations transparency mechanisms without transparency for weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons were not sustainable, particularly when Israel continues to develop weapons of mass destruction. He hoped that the General Assembly would pursue transparency mechanisms on these weapons too.

The representative of India provided a pre-voting explanation on “L.40” and “L.39”. India will abstain on “L.40” on anti-personnel landmines. While supportive of a vision of a world free of those weapons and committed to their eventual elimination, a militarily effective alternative that performs their legitimate defensive role is needed to expedite this goal. India is a high contracting party to Additional Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which enshrines the legitimate defence consideration of States, particularly those with long borders. India fulfils its obligations vis a vis undetectable landmines and has a moratorium on anti-personnel landmine export. Measures have been taken to address the humanitarian concerns, in accordance with international law, and to increase international cooperation and assistance, including victim assistance. On “L.39”, India has established strong and effective national export controls on defensive items. It subscribes to the Arms Trade Treaty’s objectives and its export controls meets these. India will keep the Treaty under review based on its foreign, security and defence interests, and will abstain on the resolution.

The representative of Egypt, on “L.39”, was concerned about loopholes in the Treaty, as well as about its subjective and selective implementation. Further, it ignores a prohibition on State-sponsored illegal armed groups. Egypt will continue to abstain on the draft and paragraphs referring to the Treaty in “L.76” and elsewhere. On “L.40”, it will abstain due to reservations over the imbalanced nature of the instrument, vis a vis humanitarian concerns and military use, particularly in countries with long borders. Further, it places no legal obligation on States to remove the anti-personnel mines they placed in other States. Egypt, for example, is still affected by millions of landmines planted there during the Second World War.

The representative of the Russian Federation would vote against “L.68”, which is a “hastily prepared draft” generated outside the United Nations during a process in which his country did not take part. The Convention on Cluster Munitions declares a full ban on those weapons, but its aim is to redivide markets based on the bad types of such weapons, while allowing high-tech munitions, benefiting a narrow group of producing countries. It therefore reflects double standards. “Cluster munitions are lawful; the main reason for humanitarian issues is not the type of weapon but their inappropriate use,” he stressed. Thus, his country’s accession to the Convention is inadvisable.

The representative of Cuba, on “L.39”, said his country will abstain, as it will do on preambular paragraphs 9 and 10. The Arms Trade Treaty is imbalanced, favouring exporting States. Moreover, it does not prohibit the transfer of such weapons to non-State actors. It cannot be effective due to such ambiguities and legal gaps. Cuba, therefore, disassociates from all paragraphs referring to the Treaty. On “L.40”, Cuba maintains its abstention, owing to the continued policy of aggression by the United States against it, and its legitimate right to self-defence. However, Cuba shares the legitimate humanitarian concerns surrounding the irresponsible use of anti-personnel mines, while maintaining a balance between humanitarian and national security concerns.

The representative of Equatorial Guinea said he would vote in favour of all draft resolutions in the conventional weapons cluster, due to concerns around the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons, particularly affecting African nations. Observing that there must be a will to curb the illicit trafficking in those weapons, he underlined the need for greater transparency from the manufacturers in order to control their use, adding, “They are exterminating our people.”

The Committee then took up the draft resolution on the Arms Trade Treaty (document A/C.1/77/L.39), introduced by the Republic of Korea. Among its provisions, the Assembly would call on all States to ratify the Treaty to achieve its universalization and to submit their annual reports to enhance confidence and transparency as well as to provide assistance to other States in the Treaty’s implementation.

Before taking action on the draft as a whole, the Committee retained preambular paragraph 9, by a recorded vote of 150 in favour to 1 against (Russian Federation), with 14 abstentions, by which the Assembly would recall the Secretary General’s disarmament agenda, *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*, in particular the section entitled “Disarmament that saves lives”.

Next, the Committee retained preambular paragraph 10, by a recorded vote of 145 in favour to none against, with 19 abstentions. By its terms, the Assembly would recognize the negative impact of the illicit trade in conventional arms on women, men, girls and boys, and that the Arms Trade Treaty was the first agreement to call upon States to address the link between conventional arms transfers and the risk of serious acts of gender-based violence, as well as serious acts of violence against women and children.

The Committee approved "L.39" as a whole by a recorded vote of 159 in favour to none against, with 22 abstentions.

Thereafter, the Committee took up the draft resolution on "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.1/77/L.40), introduced by Colombia, Germany and the Netherlands.

By its terms, the Assembly would invite States to accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, urge the one remaining State that signed but did not ratify to do so, and all States parties to provide the Secretary-General with complete information to promote transparency and compliance.

The resolution "L.40" was approved as a whole by a recorded vote of 170 in favour to none against, with 16 abstentions.

The Committee next considered the draft resolution on "Countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices" (document A/C.1/77/L.41), introduced by Australia and France, by which the Assembly would strongly encourage States to counter improvised explosive devices, prevent their territory from being used for terrorists purposes and combat illegal armed groups, and would urge States to provide support to reduce the risks posed by these devices, while taking into consideration the different needs of women, girls, boys and men.

Prior to taking action on the whole, the Committee first decided to retain preambular paragraph 8 by a recorded vote of 174 in favour to none against, with 4 abstentions (Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran, Russian Federation, Syria), by which the Assembly would recognize the importance of full involvement and equal opportunities for participation for both women and men in countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices.

Second, the Committee retained preambular paragraph 9 by a recorded vote of 174 in favour to none against, with 4 abstentions (Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran, Russian Federation, Syria), by which the Assembly would underline the importance of addressing the threat of improvised explosive devices and their differential impacts on women, girls, boys and men.

The Committee approved "L.41" as a whole, without a vote.

Acting without a vote, the Committee approved the draft resolution, introduced by France, on the 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.1/77/L.43). Among the terms of the wide-ranging text, the Assembly would call on all States to become parties, as soon as possible, to the Convention, as amended, and on High Contracting Parties to express their consent to be bound by the Protocols and amendment extending the scope of the Convention and Protocols to include armed conflicts of a non-international character.

The Committee took up a resolution entitled "Transparency in armaments" (document A/C.1/77/L.48), by which the Assembly, expressing its concern at the low number of reports that have been submitted to the Register of Conventional Arms by Member States, would call upon Member States to provide the Secretary-General with the requested data and information, and invite those in a position to do so, pending the Register's further development, to provide additional information on procurement through national production and military holdings.

By a recorded vote of 135 in favour to 1 against (Eswatini), with 34 abstentions, the Committee retained preambular paragraph 7, by which the Assembly would recall the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty.

The Committee then approved the draft resolution as a whole by a recorded vote of 158 in favour to none against, with 24 abstentions.

Acting without a vote, the Committee approved the wide-ranging draft resolution on "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects" (document A/C.1/77/L.50), by which the Assembly would recognize the need to maintain and enhance national controls, and emphasize the need for States to redouble national efforts to provide for the safe, secure, comprehensive and effective management of those stockpiles held by Governments to prevent, combat and eradicate the diversion of those weapons.

By a recorded vote of 150 in favour to none against, with 22 abstentions, the Committee retained preambular paragraph 23, by which the Assembly would welcome the inclusion of small arms and light weapons in the scope of the Arms Trade Treaty.

The Committee considered the draft decision on "Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus" (document A/C.1/77/L.51), introduced by Germany and France. By its provisions, the Assembly would decide that the Open-

Ended Working Group would convene to complete its work. The Assembly would request the Secretary-General to provide the necessary support.

The Committee approved "L.51" as a whole by a recorded vote of 173 in favour to none against, with 6 abstentions (Cuba, Equatorial Guinea, Iran, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syria).

Acting without a vote, the Committee approved the draft resolution on "Information on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms" (document A/C.1/77/L.53). Among its provisions, the Assembly would encourage all Member States to continue to adopt and apply confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms and invite them to submit information on their measures, as well as encourage them to continue dialogue.

Next, the Committee approved the draft resolution on "Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions" (document A/C.1/77/L.68) by a recorded vote of 145 in favour to 1 against (Russian Federation), with 35 abstentions, by which the Assembly would urge States to ratify the Convention as soon as possible. It would express grave concern over the number of allegations of the use of cluster munitions and related civilian casualties, and urge all Convention States parties to provide the Secretary-General with complete information in order to promote transparency and compliance.

The Committee then took up the draft resolution on "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them" (document A/C.1/77/L.76), introduced by Nigeria, by which the Assembly would encourage countries of the Sahelo-Saharan subregion to facilitate effective national commissions to combat the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons and call on the international community to provide technical and financial support to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations to combat the illicit trade.

Prior to taking action on the resolution as a whole, the Committee retained preambular paragraph 16 by a recorded vote of 152 in favour to none against, with 22 abstentions. By its terms, the Assembly would welcome the inclusion of small arms and light weapons in the scope of the Arms Trade Treaty, as well as the inclusion of international assistance in its provisions.

The Committee then approved "L.76" as a whole, without a vote.

The representative of Indonesia, explaining her country's position on the resolutions on conventional weapons, said her country abstained on all references to the Arms Trade Treaty in all drafts, including "L.39". While Indonesia supports the Treaty's spirit and goal in contributing to international peace and security, it is of the view that it should not hinder or restrict developing countries. On "L.50", she welcomed the inclusion of operative paragraph 23, as well as the successful conclusion of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms.

The representative of Brazil, explaining his abstention on "L.68" pertaining to cluster munitions, said his country did not participate in "the so-called Oslo Process", which was a parallel process to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. The resulting Convention has serious loopholes, including allowing the use of munitions with technically sophisticated mechanisms for an indefinite period of time, which are present in a small number of countries with advanced industries. Brazil has never used cluster munitions and is a State party to all Protocols of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, including its Protocol 5 on explosive remnants of war.

The representative of Armenia said he abstained from voting on "L.39" due to concerns about the preambular section of the Arms Trade Treaty, as well as his country's need to adhere to its right to self-determination. The Arms Trade Treaty in its current shape limits his country's exercise of its sovereign right to self-defence, he said, adding that his abstention on "L.39" extends to all other mentions of the Treaty in other drafts, from which Armenia disassociates.

The representative of the Republic of Korea abstained on "L.40" and "L.68". While his country supports the Mine Ban Convention, it is not currently party to the Convention, owing to the unique security situation on the Korean Peninsula. His country is nonetheless concerned with the challenges involving the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines, he said, outlining steps taken to mitigate their use, including through maintaining an indefinite moratorium on their export and the contribution of more than \$40 million to United Nations programmes providing demining and victim assistance. Turning to "L.68", he said that while he shares the international community's concerns about their impact, his country is not a party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions due to the unique security situation on the Korean Peninsula, and has therefore abstained from voting. Regretting that his country is unable to support the resolution at present, he said it will continue efforts to mitigate the humanitarian problems associated with the use of such munitions.

The representative of India, on "L.48", said that transparency was necessary for confidence-building and enhancing mutual trust. Transparency measures should be mutually agreed by all States and respect the inherent right to self-defence. Those measures could not restrict arms for self-defence or national security interests. Regarding the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, India



supports the United Nations Registry and has submitted annual reports. She is pleased that the Group of Governmental Experts adopted a consensus report this year, to which India contributed by providing transparency on its military expenditure. Moreover, India is a member of the Wassenaar arrangement.

The representative of Cyprus explained her abstention on “L.68”, on the implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, saying her country was a party to all conventional weapons instruments, and its national policy and legislation are in compliance with European Union standards. Cyprus signed the Convention in 2009, but the ratification process is ongoing, owing to the special security situation on the island, but she hopes that Cyprus can vote in favour of the text in the future.

The representative of Mexico voted in favour of “L.39” on the Arms Trade Treaty. Mexico had hoped that the draft would have contained an appeal to weapons-producing countries to support efforts against their illicit traffic. On the path towards the ninth Conference of States Parties to the Treaty, Mexico will insist on making this issue a priority.

The representative of the United States, on “L.40” on the Mine Ban Convention, said he had abstained. The resolution is only applicable to States parties to the Convention. However, as recently announced by President Joseph R. Biden, the United States will align its policy, outside of the Korean Peninsula, with the Ottawa Convention. Outside the Korean Peninsula, the United States will not export anti-personnel mines except when necessary for activities related to mine destruction or removal for the purpose of destruction. The United States also will not introduce them to anyone prohibited by the Ottawa Convention. The United States is undertaking efforts to adhere and ultimately accede to the Convention. It is committed to mitigating the harmful consequences of landmines and explosive remnants of war and has provided aid in more than 100 countries to support these efforts.

The representative of Pakistan, on “L.39”, said his country consistently stood in solidarity with States negatively impacted by the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons. While endorsing the Arms Trade Treaty’s objectives, he drew attention to its shortcomings, including the lack of effective accountability and clear definitions. The exclusion of the production of weapons cannot be justified. There is a pressing need for a deep examination of ongoing arms transfers and resulting human suffering. He hopes that the next resolution will factor in some of these enforcement gaps.

On “L.40”, on anti-personnel landmines, he said that Pakistan abstained. It was a party to the amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons to protect civilians from the lethal effects of landmines, and there are no uncleared mines on Pakistan’s territory. The country made sure that its mines in the military would never become a source of civilian deaths. Mines were a part of Pakistan’s security, because of its long borders. Pakistan is one of the largest contributors to peacekeeping operations and has undertaken anti-mine operations around the world.

He said that Pakistan also abstained on “L.68”, as the country does not support the conclusion of important international treaties related to arms control, like cluster munitions, outside of the United Nations framework. At the same time, he condemned the use of cluster munitions against civilians and people under illegal occupation.

The representative of Iran abstained on “L.40” due to the draft resolution’s sole focus on humanitarian concerns. It does not address nor account for the legitimate military requirements of many countries, especially those with long land borders and a specific need to defend them. National and international efforts should explore new alternatives. He joined consensus on “L.41”, given the draft’s focus on preventing and combating the use of “IEDs” by illegal armed groups and terrorists. Since many of the items used in the manufacturing of these devices have civilian applications, any interpretation which restricts access to and trade in such equipment and goods for civilian use is unacceptable. Regarding “L.68”, he abstained as his country did not participate in the negotiation process and is neither a signatory nor party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Negotiations on disarmament must take a balanced and comprehensive approach, reflect a progressive, transparent and inclusive process, and address the security concerns of States. As no State or group of States should have an advantage over others, the General Assembly must not encourage an external process which circumvents the United Nations disarmament machinery.

#### Right of Reply

The representative of Syria, in exercise of the right of reply, said that some statements made in the second cluster were ironic, as the Committee has listened to the occupying Power Israel ask the international community to adhere to international agreements. It was indeed ridiculous. Israel should join the agreements that it appeals to others to join, and destroy its nuclear, chemical and biological weapons arsenals. The representative of the Zionist entity has failed to safeguard its weapons of mass destruction arsenals and continues to commit crimes against Syrian people. It refuses to adhere to Security Council resolutions and provides support to armed terrorist groups, notably Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), also known as Daesh. This makes clear its hypocrisy, arrogance, and lack of credibility.

Syria, she said, rejects the accusations made by the representative of the United States. The reports on which he relies in his allegations lack credibility and contain erroneous messages. This is not acceptable and is the reason the Council rejected the Joint Investigative Committee's report. The United States as permanent member should be an example for other countries to fulfil their commitments and should destroy their chemical weapons arsenal, before requesting others to do so.

She also rejected the allegations made by Türkiye. The Syrian delegation has worked with the Council and OPCW, including with regard to attempts by Daesh and other terrorist entities to obtain chemical weapons and other chemical materials to use against Syrians. The allegations that Syria committed chemical weapons attacks distort the facts. The Turkish forces cooperated on this. She referred to United Nations reports that state that tens of thousands of foreign terrorists arrived in Syria with help from the Turkish authorities. That country should abide by Council resolution 1540 (2004) and stop transferring chemical materials to terrorists, abide by international law, withdraw its forces from Syrian territory and more. Lastly, several delegations referred to Syria as a "regime". This arrogance reflects a decades-long trend. After decades, those countries still do not understand that their aggressive policies against Syria have failed. They should learn the principles of politics and diplomatic discourse when addressing other delegations.

The representative of the Russian Federation, in exercise of the right of reply, rejected all the accusations against his country on the special military operations in Ukraine, which were carried out in full accordance with international law and international humanitarian law. Responding to the "brazen" attempts of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries, headed by the United States, which accused his country of involvement with the use of nerve agents, he said these attempts are particularly cynical given Western countries' refusal to comply with international legal obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, as well as other instruments, including involving mutual assistance in criminal matters. He categorically rejects this and is determined to find out the truth. He will continue to demand answers from the German and United Kingdom authorities.

The United Kingdom, the United States and France are "crying out" about Russian Federation disinformation, he said. The target of their missile strikes in Syria were allegedly certain military chemical facilities run by Damascus. When did they plan to notify OPCW about those facilities? Or were the last five years not long enough? Or did they think it was enough time for everyone to forget everything and to get away with their "lies"? The Russian Federation shared the facts about possible violations. These "fighters against impunity" should demonstrate their ideals in action. Why do countries not fight the impunity of the United States in assassinating Suleimani? This is a rhetorical question. The only fight the European Union member States and other allies of the United States are capable of waging is the one for Washington's impunity.

All of the Russian Federation's actions in outer space are carried out in strict compliance with international law, including the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, he said. Unlike the United States, the Russian Federation does not enshrine achieving military superiority in outer space in its documents. On the contrary, it has maintained a consistent position of preventing an arms race in outer space and preserving outer space for peaceful purposes. It is necessary to begin with a legally binding instrument on PAROS, for which the China-Russian Federation initiative is the foundation. He was aware of criticism by Western States; however, during the current session, the vast majority have affirmed they favour a legally binding agreement. The Russian Federation promotes agreements on definitions and verification. There is no alternative proposal to that of China and the Russian Federation. Western States should not torpedo these efforts, but join them to maintain peace in outer space.

The representative of the United States raised a point of order in response to the Chair's statement that rights of reply will continue tomorrow at the end of the meeting, saying he wants to exercise his right of reply first thing tomorrow morning as part of the discussion that just took place.

The Chair replied that the decision was already made that rights of reply would be held at the end of the day, as the Committee is "running against time".

**! For information media. Not an official record.**

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