



As First Committee Approves 10 Texts, Delegates Spotlight Rights to Self-defence, Raising Concerns about Conventional Weapons Treaties

The First Committee (Disarmament and International Security) turned its attention to conventional weapons today, approving 10 texts, including one that would have the General Assembly reaffirm its determination to ensure the effective operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

By the terms of that draft resolution, titled “transparency in armaments” (document A/C.1/71/L.21), the Assembly would reaffirm its decision to keep the scope of and participation in the Register under review. To that end, it would ask the Secretary-General, with the assistance of a group of governmental experts to be convened in 2019, to prepare a report on its continuing operation, relevance and further development.

The text, as a whole, was approved, with 151 in favour to none against, with 28 abstentions, following separate recorded votes that retained seven of its preambular and operative paragraphs.

Several delegations, in explanations of position, emphasized the sovereign right of States to self-defence, contending that some conventional weapons, including landmines and cluster munitions, remained an integral part of their military strategies, notably in border areas. Speakers also raised their reservations on all draft texts that had referred to the Arms Trade Treaty. Some delegates said that instrument was unbalanced and had failed to consider more sophisticated weapons systems.

The draft resolution on “the Arms Trade Treaty” (document A/C.1/71/L.29) had been approved by a vote of 152 in favour to none against, with 28 abstentions. The text would have the Assembly call upon all States that have not yet done so to ratify, accept, approve or accede to the Treaty, according to their respective constitutional processes.

Further by that text, the Assembly would call upon those States parties in a position to do so to provide assistance, including legal or legislative assistance, institutional capacity-building and technical, material or financial assistance, to requesting States in order to promote the universalization of the Treaty. The Assembly would, by the text, welcome the decisions taken at the Second Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held in Geneva from 22 to 26 August 2016, and note the upcoming Third Conference from 11 to 15 September 2017.

Approved by a vote of 161 in favour to none against, with 16 abstentions, a draft resolution on the “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.1/71/L.7/Rev.1) would see the Assembly would stress the importance of the full and effective implementation of and compliance with the Convention, including through the continued implementation of the action plan for 2014 to 2019.

Also by that text, the Assembly would renew its call upon all States and other relevant parties to work together to promote, support and advance the care, rehabilitation and social and economic reintegration of mine victims, mine risk education programmes and the removal and destruction of anti-personnel mines placed or stockpiled throughout the world.

By a vote of 134 in favour to 2 against (Russian Federation, Zimbabwe), with 40 abstentions, it approved a draft text on “implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions” (document A/C.1/71/L.22), under the terms of which the Assembly would stress the importance of the full and effective implementation of and compliance with the Convention and express strong concern regarding recent allegations, reports or documented evidence of the use of cluster munitions in different parts of the world.

A draft resolution on “preventing and combating illicit brokering activities” (document A/C.1/71/L.9) was approved, as a whole, by a vote of 179 in favour to 1 against (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea), with 1 abstention (Iran). By its terms, the Assembly would call upon Member States to establish appropriate national laws and/or measures to prevent and combat the illicit brokering of conventional arms and materials, equipment and technology that could contribute to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, in a manner consistent with international law. The Committee also approved the retention of the draft’s preambular paragraph 8, by a vote of 159 in favour to 1 against (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea), with 13 abstentions.

Following separate recorded votes on three of its preambular and operative paragraphs, the Committee approved a text regarding “national legislation on transfer of arms, military equipment and dual-use goods and technology” (document A/C.1/71/L.58) by a vote of 175 in favour to none against, with 3 abstentions (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Iran, Syria). That text would have the General Assembly encourage Member States to provide, on a voluntary basis, information to the Secretary-General on their national legislation, regulations and procedures on the transfer of arms, military equipment and dual-use goods and technology, as well as the changes therein.

Approved without a vote were draft resolutions 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.1/71/L.4), “information on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms” (document A/C.1/71/L.8), “the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects (A/C.1/71/L.25), and “assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them” (document A/C.1/71/L.32).

Explaining their positions were the representatives of Poland, Latvia, Cuba, Egypt, Ecuador, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, India, Cyprus, Libya, Brazil, Pakistan, Venezuela, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Singapore.

Speaking in exercise of the right of reply were the representatives of the Russian Federation, Iran, United States, Ukraine and Saudi Arabia.

The Committee will meet again at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 1 November, to continue its consideration of all draft resolutions and decisions before it.

Background

The First Committee (Disarmament and International Security) met this morning to take action on draft resolutions and decisions. For background, see Press Release [GA/DIS/3545 \(/press/en/2016/gadis3545.doc.htm\)](https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/gadis3545.doc.htm) of 3 October.

Action on Draft Texts

The representative of Australia, speaking also on behalf of Canada, delivered a statement in explanation of position on the draft resolution on “no first placement of weapons in outer space” (document A/C.1/71/L.18). The text would have the General Assembly call on States to uphold a political obligation not to be the first to place weapons in outer space. However, the resolution did not adequately deal with the question of what constituted a weapon in outer space, where dual-use technologies abound. Australia and Canada did not believe that a no-first-placement pledge would be effectively verifiable. The text did not address the threat of terrestrial-based weapons, such as anti-satellite missiles and high-energy lasers, which constituted the most serious threats to space-based systems currently in place or being developed.

The representative of Switzerland said his delegation had abstained from voting on “L.18”. Switzerland supported the drafting of legally binding instruments to prevent an arms race in space and confidence-building measures had an important role to play pending negotiations on such instruments. The text, however, did not address terrestrial-based weapons that had been developed to attack satellites.

The representative of New Zealand, indicating that her delegation had abstained on “L.18”, said voluntary and legally binding measures could play a part in preventing an arms race in outer space. However, her delegation had been unable to support the approach contained in operative paragraph 5, which encouraged weak unilateral commitments not to be the first to place weapons in outer space.

The representative of India had voted in favour of “L.18”. As a major space-faring nation, India had vital security interests in outer space and supported the strengthening of the international legal regime and the prevention of its weaponization.

The representative of Japan, on “L.18”, said his delegation had worked tirelessly to preserve the long-term stability and security of outer space and supported transparency and confidence-building measures. However, it was concerned about the development of anti-satellite weapon capabilities, an issue requiring urgent attention. Due to a number of issues, including the definition of weapons in outer space and verifiability, his delegation had abstained from voting on the text.

The representative Mexico, having voted in favour of “L.18”, said his Government believed the prevention of an arms race in outer space was a priority. Mexico would continue to fight to ensure no actor could place weapons in outer space for any reason and would support bringing about new agreements and treaties to supplement those that existed.

The representative of Iran said his delegation had voted in favour of “L.18”, supporting its provisions in line with the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Iran attached importance to operative paragraph 5, which would have the Assembly call on all States to commit to refraining themselves from placing weapons in outer space.

The representative of Mali, on behalf of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), tabled the draft text titled “assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them” (A/C.1/71/L.32). Noting that small arms and light weapons were responsible for more than 90 per cent of victims in situations of armed conflict, he said the text sought to bolster development, stability and good governance in West Africa by strengthening regional commitments. He commended the support given by the European Union and the United Nations in supporting ECOWAS with regard to combatting small arms and light weapons.

The representative of Cuba said his delegation would abstain from voting on the draft text on “the Arms Trade Treaty” (A/C.1/71/L.29). The Treaty contained ambiguities, inconsistencies, legal vacuums and lacked definitions, he said, adding that the draft favoured arms exporting States and could be easily manipulated or abused for political purposes. Cuba would disassociate itself from paragraphs in other texts that referred to the Treaty. On the draft text titled “implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions” (A/C.1/71/L.22), he said Cuba, which had recently become a State party to that instrument, would vote in favour.

The representative of Tunisia, on behalf of the Arab Group, said members would abstain from voting on the draft text on “transparency on armaments” (A/C.1/71/L.21). The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms faced a number of negative aspects, with only about half of Member States providing relevant information. The Register only covered classic armaments and did not new high-tech systems. Limiting the Register to only seven categories of weapons was an unfair and unbalanced approach. Israel was the only country in the Middle East not party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and was still building a very modern arsenal of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, undermining the international community’s control and transparency mechanisms.

The representative of Indonesia said his delegation would abstain from voting on “L.29”. While Indonesia fully subscribed to the spirit of the Treaty, its vote should not be construed as a disassociation from the instrument’s goals. Indonesia was currently undertaking a study of the Treaty to avoid legal discrepancies with its national laws should the country decide to join it in the future.

The representative of Cuba, addressing “L.21” under the conventional weapons cluster, said his Government would abstain from voting on that text. His delegation regretted the negative development of the text, which they had traditionally supported. The draft was unbalanced because it unjustifiably emphasized small arms and light weapons, even though they were not part of the registry. Cuba did not support such partial analysis. Moreover, the text endorsed the 2016 Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) report of the registry, and his delegation had issues with that. It did not favour the expansion of the registry to include small arms and light weapons or the request for more national information. Moreover, Cuba was not in favour of the convening of the 2019 GGE as proposed in the draft resolution.

The representative of Egypt said his delegation was committed to eradicate the illicit trade in arms, but would abstain from voting on “L.29”, as the Arms Trade Treaty was neither universal nor inclusive and did not contain definitions of terms important to its implementation. Egypt had reservations on preambular paragraph 19 of the draft resolution on “the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects” (document A/C.1/71/L.25) and on preambular paragraph 15 of “L.32”. Nevertheless, Egypt valued the traditional consensus on those drafts and thus decided not to break it. International efforts regarding the Arms Trade Treaty should be focused on filling in the remaining gaps, such as the overproduction and stockpiling of conventional weapons among traditional arms-producing States. Thus, Egypt would be closely following the development of the implementation of the Treaty.

The representative of Morocco said his delegation would vote in favour of the draft resolution on the “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.1/71/L.7/Rev.1). By doing so, his delegation was reiterating its support for the Convention’s humanitarian objectives, in particular that of protecting civilians from the unacceptable damage caused by anti-personnel mines. Morocco also supported the universal momentum towards the elimination of those weapons.

The representative of United States said his delegation would abstain from voting on “L.7/Rev.1”. The unique security situation on the Korean Peninsula precluded the United States from supporting the humanitarian measures included in the Convention, noting that his country was the biggest financial contributor to anti-mine efforts and would continue to partner with State parties to the Convention. His delegation would also abstain from voting on “L.22”, as the United States was not a party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and was not bound by its provisions. Cluster munitions provided an important advantage to the United States against key military targets and produced less collateral damage, he said.

The representative of Armenia, referring to “L.29”, said his delegation had serious concerns that the Arms Trade Treaty contained loopholes that would hinder the sovereign right of States to self-defence or prevent access to relevant technology. Armenia would abstain on “L.29,” he said, adding that its concerns also applied to all references to the Treaty in other draft resolutions.

The representative of Iran said his delegation would abstain from voting on “L.29”. The Arms Trade Treaty did not uphold the prohibition of the use of force by one State against another, which was the most fundamental principle of modern international law. The call in operative paragraph 4 for non-parties to accede to the Treaty was unacceptable and lacked credibility. He also referred to arms exports to Saudi Arabia, which had carried out violations of international humanitarian law in Yemen.

The Committee then took up a draft resolution 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.1/71/L.4). By that text, the Assembly would call upon all States that have not yet done so to take all measures to become parties, as soon as possible, to the Convention and its Protocols with a view to achieving the widest possible adherence to these instruments at an early date and so as to ultimately achieve their universality.

The Committee then approved the draft without a vote.

It then turned to a draft resolution on the “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.1/71/L.7/Rev.1) by which the Assembly would invite all States that have not signed the instrument to accede to it without delay. The Assembly would stress the importance of the full and effective implementation of and compliance with the Convention, including through the continued implementation of the action plan for 2014 to 2019.

Also by the text, the Assembly would renew its call upon all States and other relevant parties to work together to promote, support and advance the care, rehabilitation and social and economic reintegration of mine victims, mine risk education programmes and the removal and destruction of anti-personnel mines placed or stockpiled throughout the

world.

The Committee then approved the draft by a vote of 161 in favour to none against, with 16 abstentions.

The Committee then took up a draft resolution on "information on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms" (document A/C.1/71/L.8), by which the Assembly would encourage Member States to continue to adopt and apply confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms and to provide information in that regard. Also by the text, it would welcome the establishment and continuing operation of the database containing information provided by Member States, and request the Secretary-General to keep the database updated and to assist Member States, at their request, in the organization of seminars, courses and workshops aimed at enhancing the knowledge of new developments in that field.

The Committee then approved the draft without a vote.

The Committee then turned to a draft resolution on "preventing and combating illicit brokering activities" (document A/C.1/71/L.9). By the text, the Assembly would call upon Member States to establish appropriate national laws and/or measures to prevent and combat the illicit brokering of conventional arms and materials, equipment and technology that could contribute to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, in a manner consistent with international law.

The Committee first approved preambular paragraph 8 by a vote of 159 in favour to 1 against (Democratic People's Republic of Korea and 13 abstentions).

It then approved the draft, as a whole, by a vote of 179 in favour to 1 against (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), with 1 abstention (Iran).

The Committee then took up a draft resolution on "transparency in armaments" (document A/C.1/71/L.21), by which the Assembly would reaffirm its determination to ensure the effective operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and decide to adapt its scope in conformity with the recommendations contained in the 2016 report of the Secretary-General.

The Assembly would also, by the text, reaffirm its decision, with a view to further development of the Register, to keep the scope of and participation in the Register under review, and to that end, request the Secretary-General, with the assistance of a group of governmental experts to be convened in 2019, to prepare a report on its continuing operation, relevance and further development, taking into account the work of the Conference on Disarmament, relevant deliberations within the United Nations, the views expressed by Member States and the reports of the Secretary-General.

Prior to approving the text as a whole, the Committee held separate recorded votes to retain preambular paragraphs 4, 7 and 8 and operative paragraphs 3, 4, 6c and 7.

By a vote of 145 in favour to none against, with 22 abstentions, the Committee approved the retention of preambular paragraph 4, which would have the Assembly welcome the consolidated reports of the Secretary-General on the Register, which include the returns of Member States for 2012, 2013 and 2014.

The Committee, by a vote of 132 in favour to none against, with 34 abstentions, approved the retention of preambular paragraph 7, asking the General Assembly to welcome its adoption of and the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty on 2 April 2013 and 24 December 2014, respectively, and note that the Treaty remains open for accession by any State that has not signed it.

It then approved the retention of preambular paragraph 8, by a vote of 133 in favour to none against, with 34 abstentions, whereby the Assembly would welcome in particular the increase in transparency in armaments that is provided by the Treaty.

The Committee approved, by a vote of 139 in favour to none against, with 27 abstentions, operative paragraph 3, which would have the Assembly decide to adapt the scope of the Register in conformity with the recommendations contained in the 2016 report of the Secretary-General.

The Committee also approved the retention of operative paragraph 4, by a vote of 141 in favour to none against, with 26 abstentions, which would have the Assembly call upon Member States, with a view to achieving universal participation, to provide the Secretary-General, by 31 May annually, with the requested data and information for the Register.

By a vote of 147 in favour to none against, with 21 abstentions it approved the retention of operative paragraph 6c, which would ask the Assembly to reaffirm its decision, with a view to further development of the Register, to keep the scope of and participation in the Register under review, and to that end, also request the Secretary-General to continue to assist Member States to build capacity to submit meaningful reports, and encourage States in a position to do so to provide assistance for that purpose upon request.

The Committee then, by a vote of 141 in favour to none against, with 24 abstentions, approved the retention of operative paragraph 7, by which the Assembly would request the Secretary-General to implement the recommendations contained in his 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2013 and 2016 reports on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development and to ensure that sufficient resources are made available for the Secretariat to operate and maintain the Register.

Taking up the draft as a whole, the Committee approved it by a vote of 151 in favour to none against, with 28 abstentions.

It then took action on a draft resolution on the “implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions” (document A/C.1/71/L.22). By the text, the Assembly would stress the importance of the full and effective implementation of and compliance with the Convention and express strong concern regarding recent allegations, reports or documented evidence of the use of cluster munitions in different parts of the world. The Assembly would, by the text, urge all States parties to provide the Secretary-General with complete and timely information as required under Article 7 of the Convention in order to promote transparency and compliance with the Convention.

The Committee approved the draft by a vote of 134 in favour to 2 against (Russian Federation, Zimbabwe), with 40 abstentions.

The Committee then took action on a draft resolution on “the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects” (document A/C.1/71/L.25), by which the Assembly would call upon all States to implement the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner.

The Committee then approved the draft without a vote.

It then took action on a draft resolution on “the Arms Trade Treaty” (document A/C.1/71/L.29), by which the Assembly would welcome the decisions taken at the Second Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held in Geneva from 22 to 26 August 2016, and notes that the Third Conference of States Parties will be held in Geneva from 11 to 15 September 2017.

Also by the text, the Assembly would welcome the establishment of the ad hoc working group on implementation, the working group on transparency and reporting and the working group on universalization by the Second Conference of States Parties as important steps in advancing the object and purpose of the Arms Trade Treaty.

The Committee then approved the draft by a vote of 152 in favour to none against, with 28 abstentions.

It then took action on a draft resolution on “assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them” (document A/C.1/71/L.32). The Assembly, by the text, would commend the United Nations and international, regional and other organizations for their assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them.

Also by the text, the Assembly would encourage the Secretary-General to pursue his efforts in the context of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 49/75 of 15 December 1994 and the recommendations of the United Nations advisory missions aimed at curbing the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons and collecting them in the affected States that so request, with the support of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and in close cooperation with the African Union.

The Committee then approved the draft without a vote.

The Committee took up a draft resolution regarding “national legislation on transfer of arms, military equipment and dual-use goods and technology” (document A/C.1/71/L.58), which would have the General Assembly encourage Member States to provide, on a voluntary basis, information to the Secretary-General on their national legislation, regulations and procedures on the transfer of arms, military equipment and dual-use goods and technology, as well as the changes therein. It would also request the Secretary-General to make that information accessible to Member States.

Prior to approving the text as a whole, separate recorded votes were held on preambular paragraphs 7 and 8 and operative paragraph 1.

The Committee first approved the retention of preambular paragraph 7 by a vote of 143 in favour to none against with 27 abstentions. By that paragraph, the Assembly would welcome its adoption of and the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty on 2 April 2013 and 24 December 2014, respectively, and note that the Treaty remains open for accession by any State that has not signed it.

Then, by a vote of 143 in favour to none against, with 24 abstentions, it then approved the retention of preambular paragraph 8, which would have the Assembly consider that, as long as not all States that report to the electronic database established by the Office for Disarmament Affairs have become party to the Treaty, the database will retain its added value.

Following that action, the Committee approved the retention of operative paragraph 1 by a vote of 144 in favour to none against, with 20 abstentions. By that paragraph, the Assembly would invite Member States that are in a position to do so, without prejudice to the provisions contained in Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) of 28 April 2004 and subsequent relevant Council resolutions, to enact or improve national legislation, regulations and procedures to exercise effective control over the transfer of arms, military equipment and dual-use goods and technology, while ensuring that such legislation, regulations and procedures are consistent with the obligations of States parties under international treaties, such as the Arms Trade Treaty.

The Committee then approved the draft, as a whole, by a vote of 175 in favour to none against, with 3 abstentions (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Iran, Syria).

The representative of Poland, speaking also on behalf of Greece, Estonia, Finland and Romania, said the delegations had abstained from voting on "L.22". Humanitarian concerns had to be balanced with States' legitimate security concerns. The best framework to address cluster munitions was 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.

The representative of Latvia, on "L.22", said her country supported the goals of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, but emphasized that the humanitarian point of view must be balanced with security concerns. Her country did not have such weapons, she said, adding that it was also not a State party to the Convention, although that position could be revisited.

The representative of Cuba said his delegation had voted in favour of "L.9", which might contribute to efforts to combat the illicit transfer of munitions. Going forward, however, the text should not continue to stress just one category of weapons to the detriment of the relevance of sophisticated arms. Cuba had abstained from voting on preambular paragraph 8, noting that the Arms Trade Treaty did not have the consensus of all States. Regarding preambular paragraph 9, he said his delegation had taken note of Security Council resolutions that did not have consensus in that body. Regarding preambular paragraph 16, he said the Nuclear Security Summit had been organized outside the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Turning to "L.17," he said Cuba had abstained from voting on the text. Cuba shared legitimate humanitarian concerns about anti-personnel mines and was a party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, but it could not give up their use for the preservation of its own sovereignty and territorial integrity for self-defence. Cuba would support all efforts to maintain a proper balance between national security and humanitarian issues.

The representative of Egypt said his delegation had abstained from voting on "L.7", saying the Mine Ban Convention was an imbalanced instrument that had been developed outside the framework of the United Nations. The Convention lacked balanced humanitarian concerns and the legitimate military use of anti-personnel mines in border protection, particular in countries with long borders and extraordinary security concerns. The Convention also placed no obligations on States which had placed mines in other countries, he said, recalling that Egypt had millions of mines remaining from the Second World War.

The representative of Ecuador said his delegation had abstained from voting on "L.21". While transparency in weapons was an important step in creating confidence-building measures, Ecuador did not support elements of preambular paragraphs 7 and 8. His delegation had abstained from voting on "L.29". Although Ecuador had supported the Arms Trade Treaty from the outset, it had refrained from signing the instrument, which contained several flaws, including about the rights and obligations of importing and exporting States and the explicit omission of a reference banning weapons transfers to non-State actors. Regarding "L.58", Ecuador supported the draft's approval, but regretted the text's references to the Arms Trade Treaty in preambular paragraphs 8 and 9, as that instrument was not universal.

The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, noting his delegation's abstention from voting on "L.7/Rev.1", said that despite sharing concerns at the humanitarian costs of the use of anti-personnel mines, his Government was not in a position to give up its use of those weapons due to the unique security environment on the Korean Peninsula. "They are strictly for defence purposes as the danger of war is increasing by the United States," he said.

The representative of the Republic of Korea said his delegation had abstained from voting on "L.7/Rev.1". While her Government sympathized with the Convention's aims, she expressed concerns about the security situation on the Korean Peninsula. The Republic of Korea would, however, continue to contribute to mine clearance efforts, as it a party to as Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Speaking on "L.22", she said that while her delegation fully shared concern for the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions, it had abstained from voting on the draft due to the unique security situation on the Korean Peninsula. She noted that the Republic of Korea had adopted a new directive on cluster munitions.

The representative of India said his delegation had abstained from voting on "L.29" pending his Government's review of the Arms Trade Treaty. Regarding "L.7/Rev.1", he said India had observed a moratorium on anti-personnel mines and had taken a number of measures to address related humanitarian concerns. India had abstained from voting on "L.9", "L.21" and "L.58" because the texts contained references to the Arms Trade Treaty.

The representative of Cyprus, speaking on "L.22", said that while his Government had signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the ratification process was still ongoing due to an abnormal security situation on the island. It hoped to be in a position to support the draft resolution in the future.

The representative of Libya, on "L.4", said his delegation shared concerns on the use of conventional weapons, but the instrument had not taken into account national concerns of defence. Despite that, his delegation had joined consensus on the draft because it did not want to break that trend. Regarding "L.7", he said Libya shared humanitarian concerns regarding anti-personnel mines, as it had suffered from mines and explosive in its territory since the Second World War. The Convention played a positive role, but had disregarded the damage borne by countries affected by mines and the colonial powers that had planted the mines. Nevertheless, Libya had changed its vote on the draft during the current session and had voted in favour of the text instead of abstaining.

The representative of Brazil said her delegation had abstained from voting on "L.22" because, while Brazil supported efforts to address cluster munitions within the United Nations and had participated in negotiations, the Convention contained serious loopholes.

The representative of Pakistan, in abstaining from the vote on “L.22”, said the multilateral framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons was the most appropriate forum to consider cluster munitions. Cluster munitions were legitimate weapons in the regional context. Pakistan had never used them in military conflict and it strongly opposed their use against civilians. Turning to “L.7/Rev.1”, on which his delegation had abstained from voting, he said landmines still played a significant role in many States and their use was an important part of Pakistan’s self-defence strategy. Landmines could, however, be replaced by such measures as the availability of alternative non-military and cost-effective technology, he said, noting Pakistan’s mine-clearing efforts had been undertaken as part of its contribution to United Nations peacekeeping operations. In voting in favour of “L.29”, he said the draft’s successful implementation would depend on strict adherence of States parties to its principles. Regarding “L.21,” for which Pakistan had voted in favour, he said his delegation supported the broad objective of transparency, which could serve as an early warning system. Pakistan had regularly been reporting to the United Nations Register. However, there could hardly be a one-size-fits-all approach for every region, he said, emphasizing that specific security concerns needed to be considered.

The representative of Venezuela said his delegation had abstained from voting on preambular paragraph 8 of “L.9”, preambular paragraphs 7 and 8 of “L.21”, preambular paragraphs 7 and 8 of “L.58” and the vote, as a whole, of “L.29” because of references in those texts to the Arms Trade Treaty. The Treaty did not prevent the transfer of conventional weapons to non-State actors nor address the excessive production of those arms. Moreover, the text failed to address the development and production by highly-developed countries of sophisticated weapons which, in humanitarian terms, could be as devastating as weapons of mass destruction.

The representative of Syria said his delegation had abstained from voting on “L.21”, which was an unbalanced text. The United Nations Register was not comprehensive nor did it include developments in the conventional weapons field or the special situation in the Middle East, where the Arab-Israeli conflict was continuing. Israel was being provided with weapons by major powers and also could produce different types of high-tech weapons, including nuclear bombs, and stockpile them. Also abstaining on “L.29” on the Arms Trade Treaty, Syria had suffered due to terrorist groups getting all types of weapons in an illegal way through Arab, regional and international parties who were well-known to everybody. Most of those countries were party to the Arms Trade Treaty, he said, adding that Syria would adhere to the Treaty if it was comprehensive and balanced, but it currently only served the interests of some parties at the expense of other Member States. He expressed Syria’s reservations regarding all paragraphs referring to the Arms Trade Treaty contained in all texts before the Committee.

The representative of Saudi Arabia, explaining his delegation’s abstention on “L.29”, emphasized the right of all countries to buy weapons and defend their territory. However, certain countries, like Iran, were buying weapons and distributing them to terrorists in violation of international law. Iran was providing weapons to Houthi groups in Yemen where they were being used to attack villages and to launch missiles on cities. Since 1979, Iran had been trying to destabilize the security of Arab countries.

The representative of Singapore said her delegation had voted in favour of “L.7/Rev.1” and “L.22”. She recalled Singapore’s moratorium on both anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions, adding that her Government believed that the legitimate security concerns and right of self-defence of States could not be undermined.

The representative of Sweden, speaking on behalf of a number of countries, said the delegations would join consensus on a draft resolution on the “promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation” (document A/C.1/71/L.45). International deliberations on cyberspace issues and the use of information and communications technologies in a global security context needed to continue to evolve, as the international community sought greater common understanding. It was crucial that the Internet remained open, free, equal and secure, thereby facilitating a free flow of information in cyberspace. Threats to freedom and security in cyberspace could only be tackled effectively through global cooperation between States and with the private sector, technical community and civil society.

Right of Reply

The representative of the Russian Federation, speaking in exercise of the right of reply, responded to a statement on “L.18” that had been made at the Committee’s meeting on 28 October. The Russian Federation had not withdrawn from the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, but had suspended its activities in relation to it. The Russian Federation had, in fact, not withdrawn or violated anything, he said. For the past two years, the United States had said the Russian Federation had been violating something, but no specifics had ever been put forward. His Government had well-justified concerns about the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty being upheld by the United States itself. The Government of the United States was aware of the Russian Federation’s concerns, including the use of anti-ballistic missiles and the use and production of armed drones, which were banned under the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. His delegation would continue to work with its United States colleagues and were confident an agreement would be reached. He then turned to the Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Russian Federation concerning the Management and Disposition of Plutonium Designated as No Longer Required for Defence Purposes and Related Cooperation. The Russian Federation had stemmed its participation in that instrument, but had done so fully in line with the law of international treaties. When the Agreement had come into force, unfriendly steps had been taken against the Russian Federation, including sanctions, he said, noting that the United States had not upheld the treaty.

The representative of Iran said the Saudi regime had not been able to distinguish between military targets and civilian objects, having bombed markets, hospitals, schools and funerals, and did not have any respect for international civilian protection obligations. He called on arms-exporting countries not to send arms to the Saudi regime, as it had flouted its

international obligations and committed serious violations of the Geneva Conventions relating to the protection of victims of international armed conflicts.

The representative of the United States said his Government remained committed to the Russian Federation's return to compliance with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, having tried to press for a diplomatic solution. The United States remained in full compliance to its Treaty obligations. His counterpart from the Russian Federation had raised those accusations to detract away from Russian non-compliance. Comments that had been made on the Plutonium Management and Disposition Agreement amounted to a political stunt, he said, pointing to the many conversations the United States and the Russian Federation had had on the issue. If the Russian Federation was serious, it should raise concerns through normal diplomatic channels rather than before the First Committee.

The representative of Ukraine said his counterpart from the Russian Federation should be more attentive while preparing commentary.

The representative of the Russian Federation said his counterpart from the United States could neither provide proof regarding accusations. Acknowledging that the First Committee was not the correct venue for such discussions, he expressed surprise by comments that had been made by his counterpart from Ukraine. The Russian Federation would continue its fruitful dialogue with the United States and was confident they would find a solution.

The representative of Saudi Arabia said his Government wanted to protect civilians and Iran was under an economic embargo due to its support of terrorism.

The representative of the United States responded to comments that had been made by the Russian Federation's delegate, saying fruitful dialogue should be a priority over political stunts.

The representative of Iran said Saudi Arabia's delegate had tried to escape from responding to the main concern raised. It was well documented by the United Nations and international humanitarian organizations that 3,000 civilian locations had been targeted and bombed by Saudi Arabia and its coalition in Yemen. Moreover, it was false to say that Iran was sending arms to Yemen. Iran was currently under a blockade so there was no movement of weapons.

For information media. Not an official record.
