

First Committee Approves 8 Drafts, Continuing Action Phase, as Delegates Differ over Definition of Legitimate Arms Control Treaties

Delegates expressed differences over what constitutes legitimate arms control treaties, as the First Committee (Disarmament and International Security) approved seven draft resolutions and one draft decision as it concluded the penultimate day of the session's action phase.

Voting on six of the eight drafts related to conventional weapons, the Committee remained divided over several issues, with differences from previous sessions re-emerging on the draft resolution "The Arms Trade Treaty". Approved by a recorded vote of 151 in favour to none against, with 27 abstentions, the draft would have the General Assembly stress the vital importance of the Treaty's full and effective implementation, as well as compliance with all its provisions by States parties.

Some delegations disassociated themselves from any references to the Arms Trade Treaty in drafts under consideration today, with several pointing out that the instrument does not enjoy universal adherence or support, and was not adopted by consensus.

Cuba's representative highlighted her delegation's votes against all provisions referring to the Arms Trade Treaty, saying the draft favours exporting States and contains loopholes.

Egypt's representative said that whereas his country participated in negotiations on the Arms Trade Treaty, manipulative moves by some States led to the retention of loopholes, including the lack of necessary definitions. In addition, the Treaty ignores States that are supplying weapons to unauthorized recipients, he added.

While acting without a vote in approving the draft resolutions "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them" and "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects", the Committee held separate recorded votes on paragraphs contained therein that refer to the Arms Trade Treaty.

Many delegations evoked the right to self-defence as the Committee approved the draft "Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions", by a recorded vote of 140 in favour to 1 against (Russian Federation), with 39 abstentions. By its terms, the Assembly would urge all States not signatory to that Convention to ratify or accede to it as soon as possible, and all those in a position to do so to promote adherence to it through bilateral, subregional and multilateral contacts, outreach and other means.

The Russian Federation's representative said cluster munitions are legitimate weapons, only harmful when misused. Furthermore, the Convention on Cluster Munitions was negotiated and adopted outside the United Nations framework.

Similar concerns were raised by several delegations as the Committee approved the draft resolution "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction", by a recorded vote of 162 in favour to none against, with 20 abstentions.

India's representative emphasized that until modern technology offers a substitute to anti-personnel mines, her country will continue to responsibly use landmines in defence of its borders and, therefore, could not support the draft resolution.

By a recorded vote of 167 in favour to none against, with 9 abstentions (Bolivia, Cuba, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Iran, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syria, Venezuela), the Committee approved the draft resolution "Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus". By that text, the General Assembly would, among other things, decide to establish an open-ended working group to elaborate a set of political commitments as a new global framework to address existing gaps in through-life ammunition management, without prejudice to national legal systems that address national ammunition ownership, possession and use.

Equatorial Guinea's representative, noting that Africa is the continent that suffers most from the consequences of small arms and light weapons, asked how small countries can be judged to have excessive stockpiles of conventional weapons when nuclear-weapon States do not recognize their own stockpiles as excessive.

Acting without a vote, the Committee approved the draft decision "Countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices", by which the Assembly would include its related resolutions from previous years in the provisional agenda of its seventy-seventh session.

Again without a vote, the Committee approved the draft resolution "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". By that text, the General Assembly would recall decisions by the High Contracting Parties to the Convention to, among other things, organize 20 days of meetings of the Group of Governmental Experts related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems, to be held in Geneva in 2021.

Also speaking in explanation of position were representatives of the United States, Iran, Armenia, Syria, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore, Israel and Cyprus.

Speaking on drafts relating to other disarmament and international security issues – which the Committee will consider on 3 November – were representatives of the United States, Republic of Korea, Pakistan, Russian Federation, China, Belarus, Iran, Syria, Venezuela, Japan, United Kingdom, Malaysia, Costa Rica, New Zealand, Canada, Cuba, Armenia, Australia and South Africa.

Slovenia's representative delivered a statement related to drafts on other disarmament measures and international security on behalf of the European Union.

Azerbaijan's representative spoke in exercise of the right of reply.

The First Committee will reconvene at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 3 November, to continue taking action.

Explanation of Position

The Committee heard explanations of position on the draft decision "Countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices" (document A/C.1/76/L.45) and on the following draft resolutions relating to conventional weapons: "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.1/76/L.5); "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.1/76/L.12); "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them" (document A/C.1/76/L.15); "Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions" (document A/C.1/76/L.41); "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects" (document A/C.1/76/L.43); "The Arms Trade Treaty" (document A/C.1/76/L.46); and "Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus" (document A/C.1/76/L.47).

The representative of the United States said his delegation would join the consensus on "L.43", but has several concerns, including the issue of ammunition remaining outside the scope of the Programme of Action on Small Arms. He expressed disappointment that the draft refers to outcome documents from the recent biennial meeting of States parties, and regret that programme budget implications have been requested, emphasizing that his delegation expects information on expenditures to be provided in a timely manner.

The representative of Iran said he does not agree with operative paragraph 8 and others in "L.43", recalling that his delegation had suggested using language that can be conducive to consensus. However, the existing controversial elements remain in the current draft, including an endorsement of the outcome of the seventh biennial meeting of States parties, he noted. Iran will abstain on "L.46", he affirmed. He went on to express concern about the activities of certain arms-exporting companies and the transfer of arms to countries in conflict. The draft's call for universal adherence to the Arms Trade Treaty was not adopted by consensus, he said, noting that some States parties to that instrument are violating its provisions, including by delivering arms to Israel. He went on to state that his delegation joined the consensus around "L.15" but maintains the same reservations it holds in the case of "L.46". He added that Iran will abstain on "L.47" because the related Group of Governmental Experts operates outside its mandate.

The representative of Cuba said that since the blockade imposed by the United States remains in place, her country cannot give up its landmines as it exercises its right to

self-defence. Reaffirming her country's commitment to responsible use of anti-personnel mines to safeguard national defence interests, she said Cuba recognizes concerns about those munitions. On "L.43", she noted that the Arms Trade Treaty does not enjoy international consensus and favours exporting States. Rejecting claims of synergies with other universally accepted treaties, she disassociated Cuba from all paragraphs referring to the Arms Trade Treaty in all drafts under consideration by the First Committee.

The representative of Egypt, referring to the draft "L.46", said that whereas his country participated in negotiations on the Arms Trade Treaty, manipulative moves on the part of some States led to the retention of loopholes, including the lack of necessary definitions. The Treaty also ignores States supplying weapons to unauthorized recipients, leading Egypt's delegation to abstain, he said, adding that he also abstained on "L.41" and "L.5" because the relevant instruments are unbalanced and were concluded outside the United Nations framework. The latter text lacks a clear definition of cluster munitions, he pointed out. Noting the absence of an established legal obligation on States to remove landmines that they have placed in other States, he said Egypt is one of the most afflicted countries and still has about 22 million landmines on its territory placed during the Second World War.

The representative of Armenia reaffirmed that the Arms Trade Treaty in its current form may limit States from enacting their right to self-defence and accessing key technologies. He said his delegation would abstain, adding that its position on that Treaty applies to all related resolutions.

The representative of Syria said his delegation joined the consensus on "L.43" due to the need to fight trafficking in small arms and light weapons, but disassociated itself from paragraph 13. Syria's position on the Treaty is well known, he added.

The representative of Equatorial Guinea, noting that his delegation abstained on "L.47", asked: If nuclear-weapon States do not recognize their stockpiles as excessive, how can small countries be judged to have excessive stockpiles of conventional weapons? He went on to point out that Africa is the continent that suffers most from the consequences of small arms and light weapons.

Action on Drafts

The Committee first took up the draft resolution "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.1/76/L.5). By that text, the Assembly would invite all States that have not signed the Convention to accede, and the one remaining State that has signed but not ratified it to do so without delay.

By a recorded vote of 162 in favour to none against, with 20 abstentions, the Committee approved "L.5".

Acting without a vote, it then approved the draft "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.1/76/L.12). By

its terms, the General Assembly would call upon all States that have not yet done so to accede as soon as possible with the goal of achieving universal adherence. The Assembly would, by other terms, recall the technical decision of 3 May 2021 by the High Contracting Parties to the Convention to organize a total of 20 days of meetings of the Group of Governmental Experts related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems, to be held in Geneva in 2021.

The Committee then turned to the draft “Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them” (document A/C.1/76/L.15), which would have the General Assembly encourage cooperation among State organs, international organizations and civil society in support of programmes and projects aimed at combating the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them.

Before taking action on that draft, the Committee decided – by a recorded vote of 115 in favour to none against, with 19 abstentions – to retain preambular paragraph 16, by which the Assembly would welcome the inclusion of small arms and light weapons within the scope of the Arms Trade Treaty, as well as the inclusion of international assistance.

The Committee then approved “L.15” without a vote.

It then turned its attention to the draft “Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions” (document A/C.1/76/L.41), by which the General Assembly would urge all States not party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions to ratify or accede to it as soon as possible. It would also urge all States parties in a position to do so to promote adherence to the Convention through bilateral, subregional and multilateral contacts, outreach and other means. Also by that text, the Assembly would express strong concern regarding the number of allegations, reports or documented evidence of cluster munitions use in different parts of the world, related civilian casualties and other consequences that impede realization of sustainable development. It would further 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.

The Committee approved “L.41” by a recorded vote of 140 in favour to 1 against (Russian Federation), with 39 abstentions.

It then took up the draft “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects” (document A/C.1/76/L.43). By that text, the General Assembly would emphasize the need for States to redouble national efforts to provide for the safe, secure, comprehensive and effective management of stockpiles of small arms and light weapons held by Governments and to prevent, combat and eradicate their diversion. The text would also have the Assembly call upon all States to implement the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (the International Tracing Instrument) by, inter alia, including in their national reports the name and contact information of the national points of contact and information on national marking practices used to indicate country of manufacture and/or country of import, as applicable. It would further underline the

importance of full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument for attaining Goal 16 and target 16.4 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Also before the Committee was an eponymous draft resolution (document A/C.1/76/L.65) containing programme budget implications.

Before action on “L.43” in its entirety, the Committee decided – by a recorded vote of 152 in favour to none against, with 17 abstentions – to retain preambular paragraph 22, by which the General Assembly would welcome the inclusion of small arms and light weapons within the scope of the Arms Trade Treaty.

The Committee then approved “L.43” without a vote.

It went on to approve, again without a vote, the decision “Countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices” (document A/C.1/76/L.45). By that text, the General Assembly would decide to include the sub-item “Countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices” in the provisional agenda of its seventy-seventh session, under the item “General and complete disarmament”.

The Committee then took up the draft “The Arms Trade Treaty” (document A/C.1/76/L.46), which would have the General Assembly recognize that consolidation of that instrument’s institutional structure provides a framework for supporting further work under the Treaty, in particular its effective implementation. In that regard it would express concern about the unpaid assessed contributions of States and the potential adverse implications for Treaty processes, and call upon States that have not yet done so to address their financial obligations under the Treaty in a prompt and timely manner. Also by that text, the Assembly would further stress the vital importance of full and effective implementation of and compliance with all provisions of the instrument, and urge States parties to meet their Treaty obligations, thereby contributing to international and regional peace, security and stability, to reducing human suffering and to the promotion of cooperation, transparency and responsible action.

Before taking action on that draft, the Committee decided – by a recorded vote of 141 in favour to 1 against (Russian Federation), with 17 abstentions – to retain preambular paragraph 9, which would have the Assembly recall the Secretary-General’s disarmament agenda, *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*, in particular the section titled “Disarmament that saves lives”.

The Committee then retained – by a recorded vote of 143 in favour to none against, with 23 abstentions – preambular paragraph 10, which would have the Assembly recognize the negative impact of the illicit and unregulated trade in conventional arms and related ammunition on the lives of women, men, girls and boys, and that the Arms Trade Treaty was the first international agreement to identify and call upon States to address the link between conventional arms transfers and the risk of serious gender-based violence and serious acts of violence against women and children.

By a recorded vote of 151 in favour to none against, with 27 abstentions, the Committee then approved “L.46” as a whole.

It then took up the draft “Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus” (document A/C.1/76/L.47), which would have the Assembly appeal to all interested States to determine the size and nature of their surplus stockpiles of conventional ammunition, whether they represent a security or safety risk, their preferred means of destruction, if appropriate, and whether external assistance is needed to eliminate that risk. The Assembly would further decide to establish an open-ended working group to elaborate a set of political commitments as a new global framework to address existing gaps in through-life ammunition management, including international cooperation and assistance, without prejudice to national legal systems addressing national ammunition ownership, possession and use.

Also before the Committee was an eponymous draft resolution (document A/C.1/76/L.66) containing programme budget implications.

The Committee then approved the draft “L.47” by a recorded vote of 167 in favour to none against, with 9 abstentions (Bolivia, Cuba, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Iran, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syria, Venezuela).

Following that action, delegates delivered statements in explanation of position.

The representative of Indonesia said that whereas her delegation supports the objectives of the Arms Trade Treaty, it should not hinder or restrict national aims, and Indonesia therefore abstained on all drafts referring to it. Concerning “L.43”, she expressed hope that the global community is one step closer to solving the problem of small arms and light weapons.

The representative of Malaysia emphasized that Member States cannot disregard the devastation caused by conventional weapons and their effects on civilians. The Arms Trade Treaty will support national policies while reserving the right of States to self-defence, he said, adding that his delegation voted in favour of all drafts under cluster four concerning conventional weapons.

The representative of the United States said his delegation voted yes on “L.47”, and the open-ended working group is the appropriate avenue to address conventional ammunition. He expressed disappointment that a programme budget implication paper was released only late last week, at a higher cost than expected.

The representative of Pakistan said his delegation abstained on “L.5”, given the significant role that landmines play in meeting the military needs of States guarding long borders. However, as one of the largest troop contributors to United Nations peacekeeping, Pakistan is committed to demining efforts, he added. Noting that “L.41” does not support the conclusion of international treaties outside United Nations framework, he said the strength of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons lies in its legal framework, which balances human suffering and the legitimate security needs of States. Pakistan therefore abstained.

The representative of Singapore said her delegation has traditionally voted in favour of “L.5”, noting that her country’s two-year moratorium on exporting anti-personnel landmines, imposed in 1996, has been extended indefinitely. However, as a small State,

Singapore's right to self-defence cannot be disregarded, she affirmed, emphasizing that blanket bans on those weapons are not acceptable.

The representative of Iran, noting that anti-personnel landmines can be used indiscriminately, said the Convention [on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, known informally as the Ottawa Treaty, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, or the Mine Ban Treaty] does not address the legitimate military requirements of States with long borders. Given the lack of warning systems, landmines are necessary, but they should be used in ways that ensure civilians are protected, he emphasized. Iran abstained on "L.5" and "L.41", he said, explaining that it did not participate in the negotiations and the latter text was concluded outside the United Nations framework. Stressing that discussions on disarmament require a progressive, transparent process, he said the conclusion of the Convention on Cluster Munitions disregarded the interests of many States, adding that his delegation joined the consensus around "L.45" to prevent the use of improvised explosive devices by terrorists, the exclusive purpose of that resolution.

The representative of India, explaining her delegation's abstention on "L.5", said the availability of technology that can substitute the role of anti-personnel mines would be welcome, but the legitimate defence requirements of States must be considered. India is observing a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel mines and has addressed concerns about those weapons. Explaining her delegation's abstention on "L.46", she said India has established strong export controls and subscribes to the objectives of the Arms Trade Treaty.

The representative of Israel, while noting his delegation's support for "L.43", "L.46" and "L.47", said the Programme of Action on Small Arms lacks the scope to cover ammunition.

The representative of Cuba said her delegation joined the consensus on "L.43", but noted with regret that the concerns of many nations, including her own, were not considered. The text contains paragraphs from the outcome document of the recent biennial meeting of States parties, she said, adding that discussions on new technological developments should take developing countries into account. On "L.46", she said her delegation abstained on preambular paragraph 22 in line with its position on the Arms Trade Treaty, emphasizing that States must be able to enjoy the right to self-defence.

The representative of Cyprus said her country is a signatory to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, but the abnormal security situation on the island has delayed its ratification of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

The representative of the Russian Federation said his delegation voted against "L.41" due to serious concerns over an ambiguous document hastily drawn up outside the United Nations framework. Citing restrictive stipulations and unjustified differentiations between which cluster munitions may be used, he also said it allows States parties to use cluster munitions jointly with non-signatory States. Describing cluster munitions as legitimate weapons, he said they are only harmful when misused. The Russian Federation abstained on "L.46", he said, noting that the outcome documents of the

seventh Biennial Meeting of States offered no breakthrough results. He went on to state that the Arms Trade Treaty includes no bans on the transfer of weapons to non-State actors, presents substantial defects in closing channels of weapons circulation, and is open to bad-faith interpretations of its provisions. The Russian Federation will not join the Treaty in its current form, he said.

The representative of Brazil said his delegation abstained on “L.41” despite its participation in the Group of Governmental Experts on the Convention on Cluster Munitions. He said a negotiation process parallel to the Convention is not appropriate, adding that the Oslo Declaration contains serious loopholes. Brazil voted in favour of “L.46” as it is a State party to the Arms Trade Treaty, he said, while noting that use of the term “synergies” in operative paragraph 10 is ineffective.

The representative of Nicaragua said he joined the consensus on “L.43” as a whole but regrets that the comments and concerns of many delegations were not taken into account. Nicaragua, therefore, disassociated itself from the consensus on operative paragraph 13. He added that his delegation abstained on preambular paragraph 22 because tackling the deeply rooted socioeconomic causes of trafficking in small arms and light weapons requires solidarity and a commitment to international assistance on that issue.

The representative of the Republic of Korea said “L.5” does not address the unique situation of the Korean Peninsula. The Government exercises tight control over landmines and has had a moratorium on their export since 1997, she noted. The Republic of Korea continues its mine-clearing efforts and has removed 1,326 mines over the past year, she said, adding that it is contributing \$40 million to United Nations demining programmes. Despite sharing concerns over the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions, she said, the Republic of Korea is not a party to the Anti-Mine Ban Convention due to the security situation on the Peninsula and her delegation abstained on “L.41”.

The Committee then began consideration of the following draft resolutions and decisions relating to other disarmament measures and international security: “Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament” (document A/C.1/76/L.6); “Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, and advancing responsible State behaviour in the use of information and communications technologies” (document A/C.1/76/L.13); “Compliance with non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament agreements and commitments” (document A/C.1/76/L.16); “Relationship between disarmament and development” (document A/C.1/76/L.24); “Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control” (document A/C.1/76/L.26); “Promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation” (document A/C.1/76/L.27); “Youth, disarmament and non-proliferation” (document A/C.1/76/L.36); and “Promoting International Cooperation on Peaceful Uses in the Context of International Security” (document A/C.1/76/L.55).

Delegates then spoke in explanation of position.

The representative of the United States, introducing the draft “L.16”, noted that it enjoys wide support at a time when the issue of compliance is salient.

The representative of the Republic of Korea introduced “L.36”, emphasizing the importance of youth participation in disarmament discussions.

The representative of Pakistan said building back better after the coronavirus pandemic crisis hinges on the availability of technology, especially to developing countries that continue to face considerable challenges in that regard. The international community must work together to narrow the technology gap, he emphasized, noting that it was for those reasons that Pakistan co-sponsored “L.55”.

The representative of the Russian Federation said “L.13” lays the strategic basis for continuing the negotiation process and expresses support for the Open-ended Working Group on security of information and communications technologies (ICTs) 2021-2025, reaffirming its mandate, as set forth in General Assembly resolution 75/240. The text also touches on peaceful use of information and communications technologies, preventing their use for criminal and terrorist purposes, and preventing conflicts in the information space, he said, adding that its adoption will be a meaningful contribution to strengthening international peace and security in the use of information and communications technology.

The representative of China, referring to “L.55”, said that whereas some delegates claim that all views were not considered or that export control regimes will be negatively affected, discussions were held on the draft and all suggested elements were considered and incorporated. He added that requesting a vote was not constructive. China hopes “L.55” will improve export control regimes and consolidate related efforts, he said.

The representative of Belarus said his delegation supports the consensus on “L.13” and will also vote in favour of “L.55”, including its provisions on ensuring equal access to new and emerging technologies, which should foster the peaceful use of materials and enhance security.

The representative of Iran, referring to “L.55”, said numerous export control regimes place undue restrictions on non-proliferation on the basis of selective and discriminatory approaches. That has impeded genuine exchanges in science and technology, he added, noting that the purpose of the draft is to emphasize the legitimate rights of States to peaceful use of science and technology.

The representative of Syria, noting that his delegation co-sponsored “L.13”, said the draft addresses the development by some States of information and communications technology for military purposes. The international community must prevent their use for criminal or terrorist purposes, he emphasized. Syria also co-sponsored “L.55”, he added, noting that the text encourages dialogue among multilateral regimes. He said his delegation also supported “L.24”, “L.26” and “L.27”.

The representative of Venezuela, emphasizing that “L.55” reflects the inalienable right of all States to participate in the broadest exchange possible in equipment and technologies for peaceful purposes, called for the removal of undue restrictions on the

transfer of technology to developing countries, saying they hinder development and security.

The representative of the United States said his delegation voted against “L.55”, saying it offers no protection against the dire risks that technology can present. The draft would undermine international cooperation in science and technology and undermine vital non-proliferation export control regimes, he cautioned. He went on to express concern that Member States did not have enough time to discuss the draft, and that not one change has been made to the text since its initial circulation.

The representative of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the European Union, said she did not support “L.55” and called upon States to oppose it. The draft creates a false dichotomy between peaceful uses of nuclear, chemical and biological material on the one hand, and export control measures on the other, she noted, adding that it risks undermining existing export control regimes. She went on to express disappointment over the lack of transparency surrounding the negotiation process, the lack of opportunities for open and informal consultations, and China’s selective engagement with only some Member States.

The representative of Iran, noting that his country has been a victim of cyberattacks by Israel and the United States, said the First Committee is in the best position to address that issue. Expressing concern about how the related groups of governmental experts operate, he said Iran supports the notion of a new open-ended working group and a draft that pursues and considers the views of all Member States. He said his delegation will vote against “L.16” because it is proof of the hypocritical policies of the United States. That country has not complied with time-proven mechanisms and is generating annual reports on the non-compliance of certain countries with a view to exerting political pressure on them, he said. In addition, the nuclear-weapon strategy of the United States explores modernizing its arsenal and it has increased its military budget in order to do so, he added.

The representative of Japan said that in the current security environment, grave concerns persist about the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Japan, for its part, has hosted conferences to raise awareness of export control regimes, he said. However, “L.55” could hamper such efforts, as well as the international security framework, he cautioned, adding that his delegation will vote against the draft.

The representative of the United Kingdom said her delegation supports the exchange of technology, information and expertise for peaceful uses in the service of global development while underlining the crucial importance of countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. However, the draft fails to strike the appropriate balance between those two objectives, he said, expressing concern about the assertion that the Multilateral Export Control Regimes place “undue restrictions” on transfers. Noting that the draft’s sponsor has not been able to provide convincing evidence to support his case, he said that the draft also appears to be at odds with the fact that decisions on exports of sensitive technology are the sovereign prerogative of Member States.

The representative of Malaysia said his delegation co-sponsored “L.13”, noting with pleasure that the Committee could agree on a single, unifying draft resolution recognizing the outcomes of the Group of Governmental Experts and the open-ended working group.

The representative of Costa Rica expressed concern about security in cyberspace due to State and non-State actors, but also about the polarization of ideologies. Emphasizing that cyberspace cannot be a zero-sum competition between the elite, he said “L.13” is therefore a constructive example of forging consensus.

The representative of New Zealand said “L.55” suggests abandonment of export control regimes. Noting that they make significant contributions to peace, security and the rules-based international order, he said his delegation will vote against it.

The representative of Canada, speaking in explanation of position, rejected the draft resolution since it contends that the existing system of Multilateral Export Control Regimes is inherently flawed and creates undue restrictions on the peaceful uses of nuclear, chemical and biological items, and the exchange of technologies between participating and non-participating countries. The draft’s language creates an illusory distinction between the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear, chemical and biological equipment and technology on the one hand, and export control measures and regimes on the other, she noted. Canada sees no benefit in creating a new non-proliferation system within the General Assembly framework, in addition to existing non-proliferation treaties and conventions as well as numerous relevant Security Council resolutions, she emphasized, adding that there is no value in creating an open-ended working group lacking a clear mandate.

The representative of Cuba said her delegation will vote in favour of “L.55”, saying the draft could contribute to countering obstacles that affect developing nations.

The representative of Armenia said paragraphs contained in the outcome document of the Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Baku, contradict agreements on the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. He added that during its chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement, Azerbaijan has been trying to distort reality and influence the membership. Recalling Azerbaijan’s attacks in Nagorno-Karabakh, he said his delegation will not support any reference to the above-mentioned paragraphs, including in “L.8”, “L.24”, “L.26” and “L.27”.

The representative of Australia said her delegation will vote against “L.55” because it is not consistent with international norms and risks politicizing what is a technical issue. Australia strongly disagrees with the draft’s premise that export control regimes unduly restrict development on non-proliferation or national security grounds, or discriminate against developing countries, she asserted. Non-proliferation regimes do not inhibit international development or cooperation on peaceful uses of technology, nor do they disrupt legitimate trade or restrict access to equipment and technology for peaceful purposes or sustainable development, she added. Membership of an export control group does not facilitate the transfer of sensitive technology or weapons between countries. Australia remains vigilant and encourages others to do the same to counter proliferation and ensure effective export controls on goods and technologies

used in the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction. There is no evidence that the current model of export control measures has stood in the way of any country's development or legitimate cooperation, she reiterated.

The representative of South Africa said his delegation joined the consensus around "L.13" and looks forward to the second open-ended working group. Noting that the field of information and communications technology is evolving rapidly, he emphasized that the international community will never have a complete enough response to all the opportunities and threats presented, making the draft an important one.

Right of Reply

The representative of Azerbaijan, speaking in exercise of the right of reply, reminded Armenia's delegate that the outcome document of the eighteenth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Baku was unanimously adopted by 120 member countries of that bloc. It is inappropriate for Armenia to use the august Committee to advance its agenda, he added.