

The United Nations  
**DISARMAMENT**  
**YEARBOOK**



Volume 46 (Part II): 2021

Office for Disarmament Affairs  
New York, 2022

The United Nations  
**DISARMAMENT  
YEARBOOK**

Volume 46 (Part II): 2021

## Guide to the user

The *United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*, in print and electronic format, is designed to be a concise reference tool for diplomats, researchers, students and the general public on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control issues under consideration by the international community.

Part I of the 2021 *Yearbook* was published in April this year. It contains all the resolutions and decisions of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly, as well as their sponsors, voting patterns and other related information.

Part II is divided among the main multilateral issues under consideration throughout the year. It includes developments and trends on the issues, a convenient issue-oriented timeline and, in chapter VII, short summaries of actions taken by the First Committee and General Assembly on resolutions and decisions.

Because much of the background information is condensed, it is helpful to consult previous editions for expanded historical knowledge. Factual information is provided in the appendix. Websites of United Nations departments and specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations, research institutes and non-governmental organizations are referenced as hyperlinks in the online version of the *Yearbook*.

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Hyperlinks to these documents are included in the online version of the *Yearbook*. Alternatively, they can be accessed, in the official languages of the United Nations, from <https://documents.un.org>. Specific disarmament-related documents are also available from the disarmament reference collection at [www.un.org/disarmament/publications/library](http://www.un.org/disarmament/publications/library).

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## Foreword

Welcome to Part II of the 2021 *United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*. Since 1976, this annual flagship publication of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs has provided comprehensive, objective information for diplomats and the interested public on multilateral efforts to advance the cause of peace through the regulation, control and elimination of weapons.

In 2021, those efforts continued to face significant headwinds from the COVID-19 pandemic. Beyond significantly limiting the ability of intergovernmental forums to tackle pressing concerns related to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control in formal, in-person meetings, the pandemic complicated the delivery of humanitarian aid to conflict-scarred communities while eroding gains made in recent years towards greater economic and gender equality. Furthermore, even as COVID-19 underscored the urgent need for societies around the world to direct additional public resources into critical sectors such as public health, global military expenditures surged to a new, record-breaking high while armed clashes persisted.<sup>1</sup>

Against that backdrop, 2021 nonetheless saw important moments of progress. The year’s landmark developments included, on 22 January, the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. That seminal accomplishment was followed, in early February, by a five-year extension of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START Treaty). The decision of the United States and the Russian Federation to extend their only bilateral, legally binding agreement on nuclear arms control within days of its scheduled expiration further highlighted the need to expeditiously lay the foundation for the next generation of arms control.

Meanwhile, with the support of the African Union and my Office, the Governments of Madagascar, the Niger and Uganda strengthened their capacities to safely collect, store and destroy firearms that are illegally held within their borders. The assistance was the result of an ongoing partnership to help 10 States of the region remove thousands of weapons from illicit circulation in connection with Africa Amnesty Month, which is part of the African Union’s Silencing the Guns initiative.

I also joined the Executive Director of UN-Women to co-author an [opinion article](#) in which we urged Governments to cut excessive military spending in favour of social and economic development initiatives to benefit all. Redirecting funds away from armed forces to instead help strengthen

<sup>1</sup> Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, “[World military expenditure passes \\$2 trillion for first time](#)”, 25 April 2022.

women’s social and economic security and promote more inclusive and resilient societies, we observed, was “not a utopian ideal, but an achievable necessity”.

The year also held promise for ongoing efforts within our field to attract a new generation of experts and advocates. In August, the Conference on Disarmament held its first thematic session on youth, where it heard from four United Nations Youth Champions for Disarmament. Later in the year, the General Assembly adopted its second biennial resolution on “Youth, disarmament and non-proliferation”, reinforcing earlier calls for action to promote young people’s participation and empowerment in the work of disarmament and non-proliferation. As at the end of 2021, youth participation at formal and informal disarmament meetings had jumped by more than 500 per cent since 2019, when my Office launched its “#Youth4Disarmament” outreach initiative.

Those developments and many others are explored in detail throughout these pages. It is my hope that readers will find the present volume of the *Yearbook* to be useful, not only for conducting research, but also for finding new inspiration in our shared effort to achieve sustainable peace and security for ourselves and future generations.

**Izumi Nakamitsu**  
Under-Secretary-General  
High Representative for Disarmament Affairs  
September 2022

## Acknowledgements

Volume 46 (Part II) of the *United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*, like previous editions, was a collaborative effort to which the staff of the Office for Disarmament Affairs devoted considerable time and effort. It was prepared under the overall direction of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, and the Director of the Office, Thomas Markram.

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I also would like to sincerely thank all colleagues who contributed to this publication on behalf of other funds, programmes, entities and organizations.

**Diane Barnes**  
Editor-in-Chief  
September 2022

# Multilateral disarmament timeline

Highlights, 2021

JANUARY FEBRUARY MARCH APRIL MAY JUNE JULY AUGUST SEPTEMBER OCTOBER NOVEMBER DECEMBER

**18 Jan.–26 Mar.**  
Conference on Disarmament, 1st session

**22 Jan.**  
Entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons



George de Castro Day/New York Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

**24 Jan.**  
75th anniversary: First United Nations General Assembly resolution



**11 Feb.**  
50th anniversary: Opening for signature of the Sea-bed Treaty

**10 Apr.**  
40th anniversary: Opening for signature of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons



A United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination chemist and an Ammunition Management Advisory Team technical consultant analyse explosive ordnance at the blast site in Bata in March 2021.

**11 Apr.**  
25th anniversary: Signing of the Pelindaba Treaty

**10 May–25 June**  
Conference on Disarmament, 2nd session

**31 May**  
20th anniversary: Adoption of the Firearms Protocol



A collection of 1,184 firearms gathered during the 2020 Africa Amnesty Month are destroyed in Kajado county, Kenya, in June 2021.

**23 June**  
60th anniversary: Entry into force of the Antarctic Treaty

**20 July**  
20th anniversary: Adoption of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons

**26 July–10 Sept.**  
Conference on Disarmament, 3rd session

**29 Aug.**  
30th anniversary: Closure of the nuclear test site in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan

**8 Sept.**  
15th anniversary: Opening for signature of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia

**20–21 Sept.**  
Second Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (second part)



Cluster bomb submunitions gathered for destruction. UNMAS/Christian Lamontagne

**21 Sept.**  
40th anniversary: International Day of Peace

**24 Sept.**  
25th anniversary: Opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty



UN Photo/Cia Pak

**30 Sept.–5 Nov.**  
Seventy-sixth session of the First Committee of the General Assembly



UN Photo/Evan Schneider

**11 Dec.**  
35th anniversary: Entry into force of the Rarotonga Treaty

**13–17 Dec.**  
Sixth Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons



CHAPTER I

**NUCLEAR  
DISARMAMENT  
AND NON-PROLIFERATION**



*Nuclear conflict has no victors. Only victims.*

ANTÓNIO GUTERRES, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER I

# Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation

### Developments and trends, 2021

ON 24 JANUARY, THE UNITED NATIONS COMMEMORATED the seventy-fifth anniversary of the very first General Assembly resolution (1/1) on establishing a Commission that would make specific proposals “for the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons”, among other aims. To mark the occasion, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, called on all States to “finish the task begun in 1946” and establish a world free of nuclear weapons.<sup>2</sup>

Fittingly, the commemoration occurred through two important events related to that goal.

The first of those events, on 22 January, was the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the first comprehensive prohibition on the use and possession of nuclear weapons for States that choose to join it. Conditions for the Treaty’s entry into force had been met in October 2020, with the deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification.<sup>3</sup> As at the end of 2021, the Treaty had 59 States parties and 86 signatories. The Treaty’s adoption in 2017 had made it the first new multilateral legal instrument on nuclear disarmament since 1996, and the Secretary-General greeted its entry into force as “an important step towards the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons and a strong demonstration of support for multilateral approaches to nuclear disarmament”.<sup>4</sup> He commended the States that had ratified the Treaty while welcoming the instrumental role of civil society in advancing the agreement’s negotiation and entry into force.

<sup>1</sup> [Statement](#) on the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, New York, 28 September 2021.

<sup>2</sup> [Video message](#) on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the first General Assembly resolution, 24 January 2021.

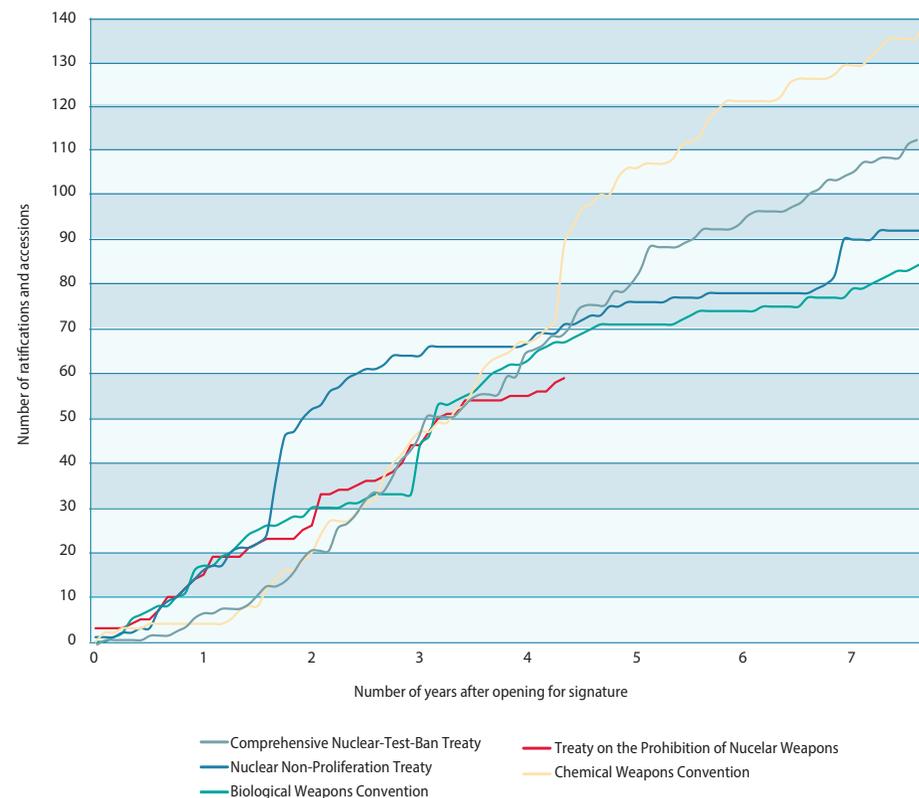
<sup>3</sup> In accordance with article 15 (1), the Treaty entered into force on 22 January 2021. For more information, see United Nations, depositary notification [C.N.478.2020.TREATIES-XXVI.9](#), 26 October 2020.

<sup>4</sup> [Statement](#) by Stéphane Dujarric, Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, on the occasion of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, New York, 22 January 2021.



At the high-level international Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held on 23 September 2021, Robert Floyd (left), Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, greets Heiko Maas, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany (also present is Izumi Nakamitsu (centre), High Representative for Disarmament Affairs). UN Photo/Loey Felipe

### Ratification and accession for weapons of mass destruction treaties over time



This chart shows the pace of States' ratification of and accession (as at December 2021) to the major instruments related to the elimination and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, chemical and biological weapons) following their opening for signature. The graph shows a rough similarity between the instruments until the 4.5-year mark. The lower rate of adherence for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons at that point is likely owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: [Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor](#) (produced and published by Norwegian People's Aid)

The second key event, on 3 February, was the extension of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START Treaty).<sup>5</sup> The

<sup>5</sup> [Press statement](#) by Antony Blinken, Secretary of State of the United States, on the extension of the New START Treaty with the Russian Federation, 3 February 2021.

Treaty was extended for the maximum five years allowed under its terms, keeping in place the last bilateral nuclear arms control agreement and providing verifiable limits on the world's largest strategic nuclear forces until 5 February 2026. Following the summit in Geneva on 16 June, the presidents of the United States and the Russian Federation announced an "integrated bilateral Strategic Stability Dialogue in the near future" that would seek to lay the groundwork for new measures for arms control and risk reduction.<sup>6</sup> The leaders also reaffirmed their commitment to the principle that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.

The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs welcomed both the extension of the New START Treaty and the resumption of dialogue on strategic stability between the Russian Federation and the United States. Speaking later in the year, she said the Treaty's five-year extension "provides a ticking clock for both sides". In that regard, she expressed hope that the two countries would "use the time before the Treaty's expiration to lay the ground for the next generation of arms control".<sup>7</sup>

Unfortunately, those developments were rare highlights in a year that otherwise saw a heightened risk of nuclear-weapon use amid rising pressure on the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Relationships between States possessing nuclear weapons deteriorated throughout the year as tensions grew at regional flashpoints, creating new possibilities for escalation. In parallel, concerns about the potential for a nuclear accident or miscalculation multiplied amid growing military activity related to new domains such as cyber- and outer space, as well as new investments in conventional weapons systems with potential strategic capabilities. As the Secretary-General said on the occasion of the 2021 International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, "Tensions remain elevated. Trust is in short supply. And in this unstable environment, the chance of misunderstandings, miscalculations and malfunctions is frighteningly high. Nuclear risk has reached levels not seen in almost four decades."<sup>8</sup>

While the five nuclear-weapon States<sup>9</sup> continued to express their support for a world free of nuclear arms, they also continued to modernize their arsenals in ways intended to qualitatively improve their reliability, accuracy, speed and stealth. Furthermore, allegations of a quantitative stockpile expansion by China<sup>10</sup> and plans

<sup>6</sup> [U.S.-Russia Presidential Joint Statement on Strategic Stability](#), United States, White House, 16 June 2021.

<sup>7</sup> [Keynote speech](#) (delivered virtually) at the lecture entitled "Nuclear Disarmament—a Dream, an Ultimate Goal, a Commitment?" organized by the Center for Policy Studies (PIR Center), 20 December 2021.

<sup>8</sup> [Remarks](#) at the plenary meeting of the General Assembly to promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, New York, 28 September 2021.

<sup>9</sup> The term "nuclear-weapon States" refers to the five States possessing nuclear weapons that are party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States).

<sup>10</sup> United States, Department of Defense, [Military and Security Development Involving The People's Republic of China](#) (Washington, D.C., 2021).

by the United Kingdom to raise the maximum potential size of its nuclear arsenal<sup>11</sup> signalled that the gradual reduction in the total number of nuclear weapons over the previous three decades was potentially ending.<sup>12</sup> As the United States announced that it would again make public its number of nuclear weapons,<sup>13</sup> reversing a 2017 policy change and boosting the transparency of its stockpile, the United Kingdom chose to end its long-running practice of releasing that information.<sup>14</sup>

Other notable developments concerning the nuclear-weapon States included independent reports that China had fielded two new brigades of its nuclear-capable DF-41 road-mobile intercontinental ballistic missile, commissioned two additional ballistic missile submarines, continued the development of a new type of submarine and reassigned a formal nuclear mission to its bomber aircraft. In June, multiple non-governmental organizations assessed from publicly available satellite imagery that China was increasing its number of ballistic missile siloes by several hundred,<sup>15</sup> prompting allegations that it was rapidly expanding its nuclear arsenal to have 700 deployed nuclear warheads by 2027 and 1,000 by 2030.<sup>16</sup> China also allegedly tested a nuclear-capable hypersonic glide vehicle launched from a fractional orbital bombardment system.<sup>17</sup> In response to those allegations, China reiterated its decades-old commitments to maintain a credible minimum deterrent and follow a no-first-use policy for nuclear weapons.

In March, the newly elected President of the United States, Joseph R. Biden, Jr., stated that his administration would “re-establish ... credibility as a leader in arms control” and “take steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy, while ensuring our strategic deterrent”.<sup>18</sup> As his administration commenced the development of a new Nuclear Posture Review, due for completion in early 2022, it requested a budget of \$43.2 billion to continue with plans to replace the United

<sup>11</sup> The United Kingdom announced that it was rolling back its commitment since 2010 to reduce the “ceiling” of its overall nuclear warhead stockpile from not more than 225 to not more than 180 by the mid-2020s. Instead, it was moving to an overall nuclear weapon stockpile of no more than 260 warheads. The Government argued that the increase only amounted to 15 per cent, not the 40 per cent highlighted by many commentators (i.e., from 180). Addressing the Conference on Disarmament in March 2021, the [Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom](#) said that the figure of 260 warheads was “a ceiling, not a target, and is not our current stockpile”. For more information, see United Kingdom, “[Global Britain in a Competitive Age: The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy](#)” (policy paper), 16 March 2021, pp. 76–78.

<sup>12</sup> The [Federation of American Scientists](#) estimated that there were some 13,150 nuclear weapons in global arsenals as of October 2021.

<sup>13</sup> United States, Department of State, “[Transparency in the U.S. Nuclear Weapons Stockpile](#)” (fact sheet), 5 October 2021.

<sup>14</sup> United Kingdom, “[Global Britain in a Competitive Age](#)”.

<sup>15</sup> Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, “[Nuclear Notebook: Chinese nuclear forces, 2021](#)”, 15 November 2021.

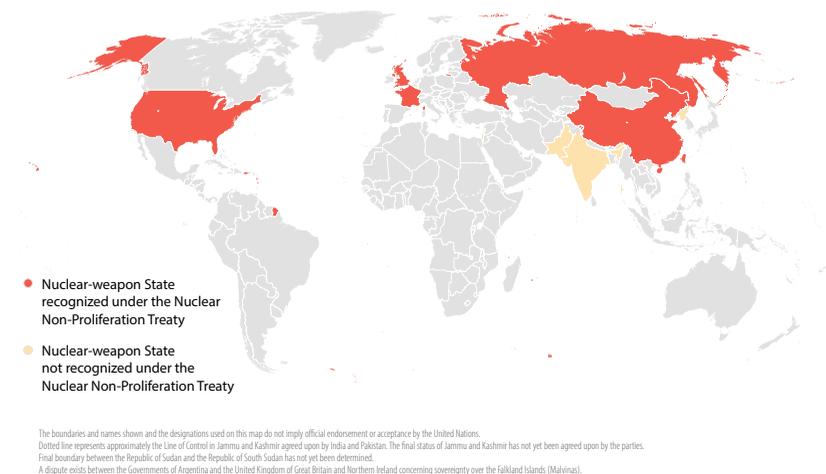
<sup>16</sup> United States, Department of Defense, “[Military and Security Development \(China\)](#)”, p. 14.

<sup>17</sup> Demetri Sevastopulo, “[China conducted two hypersonic weapons tests this summer](#)”, *Financial Times*, 20 October 2021.

<sup>18</sup> United States, The White House, [Interim National Security Strategic Guidance](#) (Washington, D.C., 2021).

## Nuclear development and modernization programmes, 2021

In recent years, States possessing nuclear weapons have stepped up nuclear modernization efforts, resulting in the development of new weapon systems, qualitative improvement of existing systems and the development of new nuclear-capable platforms. It has been argued that the modernization programmes of the five nuclear-weapon States identified in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty are inconsistent with commitments undertaken as parties to the Treaty.



- 📍 **China's** modernization programme is marked by investment in and expansion of its nuclear force capability, including significant investment in land, sea and air-based delivery platforms. The construction of updated Type 096 nuclear-powered ballistic-missile submarines, which will reportedly be armed with JL-3 submarine-launched ballistic missiles, was believed to have started in early 2021. It also reportedly deployed at least two brigades of the DF-41 road-mobile intercontinental ballistic missile. In June, multiple non-governmental organizations, using publicly available satellite imagery, reported that China was increasing the number of its ballistic missile siloes by several hundred, prompting allegations that China was rapidly expanding its strategic nuclear arsenal. China has refuted those allegations.
- 💡 The **Democratic People's Republic of Korea** continued its development and testing of various delivery systems, and it carried out several launches using ballistic missile technology.
- 📍 **France** is continuing its planned modernization campaign featuring new submarine-launched ballistic missiles, third-generation ballistic-missile submarines and refurbishment of ASMP-A air-launched cruise missiles. Pursuant to the Military Programming Law for 2019–2025, the defence budget has also increased by €1.7 billion to a new total of €40.9 billion for 2022.
- 💡 **India's** nuclear forces were expanded and improved in 2021, including testing of improved missile systems such as the Agni-P medium-range ballistic missile. The test of the Agni-P missile in December showed new usage of canisterization, improving the readiness of the nuclear forces of India.
- 💡 Although **Israel** is alleged to possess nuclear weapons, it neither confirms nor denies its nuclear status.
- 💡 **Pakistan** aims to increase its delivery capabilities for both ballistic and cruise missiles. It continues to develop variants of the Babur cruise missile, including the Babur-1A, tested in February, and the Babur-1B, tested in December 2021.
- 📍 The **Russian Federation** has recapitalized 89 per cent of its cold war-era strategic nuclear forces, expanding its warhead delivery capacity by introducing systems such as the Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle, further increasing the number of aircraft equipped with the Kinzhal air-launched hypersonic missile and investing in hypersonic weapons such as the Tsirkon, which was successfully test fired from both a submarine and a frigate in late December. The new RS-28 “Sarmat” silo intercontinental ballistic missile has also entered late-stage testing and is expected to be put on active duty in 2022.
- 📍 The **United Kingdom** remains on track for the development of four Dreadnought-class ballistic missile submarines to replace the Vanguard-class submarines in accordance with their “once-in-two-generations” modernization programme. That also includes plans to replace nuclear warheads to guarantee an effective deterrent during the commissioning of the Dreadnought-class submarines. The United Kingdom raised the ceiling of its overall nuclear-weapon stockpile to no more than 260 warheads, a departure from the previous cap of 180 warheads.
- 📍 The **United States'** nuclear modernization is continuing as planned with efforts across its entire nuclear triad, including development of the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent to replace the Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile. The Congressional Budget Office of the United States estimated that plans for nuclear forces would cost \$634 billion over the 2021–2030 period, which was \$140 billion or 28 per cent more than the 2019 estimate. The National Defense Authorization Act for 2022 approved a \$5.2 million budget for development of a low-yield sea-launched cruise missile (SLCM-N) and established that the National Nuclear Security Agency funds should not be used to retire or reconvert the debated W76-2 warhead.

States' land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles, air-launched cruise missiles and nuclear-capable bombers and submarines, as well as to modify or replace nuclear warheads.<sup>19</sup>

The Russian Federation, for its part, continued to modernize its nuclear warheads and delivery systems, including its intercontinental ballistic missile force.<sup>20</sup> The President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, had estimated that, by the end of 2021, modernized weapons would comprise some 88.3 per cent of his Government's nuclear forces.<sup>21</sup> The Russian Federation also tested new long-range cruise missiles and a hypersonic missile while continuing to develop weapons systems announced by President Putin in 2018.<sup>22</sup>

The year saw improved prospects for resolving the long-standing fears of regional proliferation tied to the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In April, the remaining parties to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action<sup>23</sup> and the United States met in Vienna to discuss a return to full and effective implementation of the Plan by all relevant parties. Significant progress had been achieved after seven rounds of talks held throughout the year. Key divergences remained, however, notably concerning the sequencing of sanctions relief by the United States and of a return to compliance by the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as the issue of a possible second withdrawal by the United States.

Throughout 2021, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) continued to report that the Islamic Republic of Iran was engaged in activities inconsistent with the Plan of Action, as reflected in announcements by its Government since 2019 and a law that its Parliament had passed in 2020. Those activities included experimenting with advanced centrifuges, producing uranium metal, stockpiling enriched uranium and enriching uranium to levels well above those allowed under the Plan. In parallel, the Islamic Republic of Iran announced that it would no longer allow verification measures beyond those required under its IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, prompting an IAEA warning that such moves would have "a serious impact on the Agency's ability to report on the implementation of Iran's commitments and undermine the critical confidence in the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme".<sup>24</sup>

On 15 September, Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States announced the creation of the "AUKUS" security partnership, along with its

first project: supplying Australia with a nuclear-powered, conventionally armed submarine fleet that Australia would construct domestically. The project would mark the first case of a nuclear-weapon State providing a non-nuclear-weapon State with the technology to build its own nuclear-powered submarines. Furthermore, as Australia had no domestic uranium enrichment or reprocessing capability, highly enriched uranium to power the submarines would need to be provided by either the United Kingdom or the United States. All three States noted that the arrangement was allowed under the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement of Australia, and they pledged to support IAEA in verifying the non-diversion of nuclear material for use in weapons. Nonetheless, critics charged that the agreement set a dangerous precedent that would allow highly enriched uranium to be removed from the Agency's view for use in submarine propulsion.

Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to constrain activities related to the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Public health risks from the pandemic forced two further postponements of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty). States parties' inability to hold the Review Conference placed significant pressure on that international regime, given the Conference's role as the de facto forum for conducting multilateral dialogue on all issues related to nuclear weapons. Such engagement can help States to delineate new measures for reducing nuclear risk and strengthening frameworks for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

States continued endeavouring to adapt to the pandemic's challenges. By its decision 76/515 of December 2021,<sup>25</sup> the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to hold two additional sessions of the Group of Governmental Experts to Further Consider Nuclear Disarmament Verification Issues in Geneva in 2023, compensating for the postponement of two sessions previously planned for 2021.<sup>26</sup> Likewise, the Assembly called for one additional informal, intersessional consultative meeting to be held in New York in 2023, to compensate for a planned 2021 meeting that had to be postponed owing to the pandemic.<sup>27</sup>

Cognizant of the urgent need to reverse the trend of rising nuclear risk and set the world back on a path to the elimination of nuclear weapons, the Secretary-General proposed the development of a "new agenda for peace" partly to increase support for nuclear non-proliferation and a world free of nuclear weapons, as well as establish stronger commitments for the non-use of nuclear weapons and a time frame for their elimination. In his new report entitled *Our Common Agenda*, the Secretary-

<sup>19</sup> United States, Congressional Research Service, "U.S. Strategic Nuclear Forces: Background, Developments, and Issues", report prepared for members and committees of Congress, 14 December 2021.

<sup>20</sup> United States, Congressional Research Service, "Russia's Nuclear Weapons: Doctrine, Forces, and Modernization", report prepared for members and committees of Congress, 21 April 2022.

<sup>21</sup> Remarks to the Defence Ministry Board, Moscow, 21 December 2020.

<sup>22</sup> Address to the Federal Assembly, Moscow, 1 March 2018.

<sup>23</sup> China, France, Germany, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Russian Federation and United Kingdom.

<sup>24</sup> Report by the Director General of IAEA on verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) (document GOV/2021/10), para. 7.

<sup>25</sup> A/76/49 (Vol. II), p. 21.

<sup>26</sup> The General Assembly had established the Working Group by its resolution 74/50 of 12 December 2019. With the addition of the two newly mandated substantive sessions, the Group was expected to convene for two one-week sessions in 2022, followed by two one-week sessions in 2023.

<sup>27</sup> With the addition of the newly mandated informal session, the Group was expected to hold two informal meetings, the first in 2022, and the second in 2023.

General expressed hope that such efforts could help advance the vision outlined in his 2018 [Agenda for Disarmament](#).

### Issues related to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty<sup>28</sup> is a landmark international treaty that was adopted to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and further the goals of nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament.

#### Postponement of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

The tenth Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was originally scheduled to be held in New York from 27 April to 22 May 2020, in accordance with the decision of its Preparatory Committee in 2018.<sup>29</sup> However, owing to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, States parties decided to postpone the Review Conference, ultimately [agreeing](#) in October 2020 to postpone the Conference until a date no later than August 2021, based on the availability of appropriate conference services at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. They agreed to hold the Conference from 2 to 27 August 2021.

However, in May, the President-designate of the Review Conference, Gustavo Zlauvinen (Argentina), advised States parties that, owing to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the related measures to ensure the health and safety of delegates and staff, conference operations at the United Nations would remain limited and, therefore, the Review Conference could not be held at an appropriate scale. Highlighting the fluid nature of the pandemic context, the President-designate urged States parties to maintain their flexibility. In October, based on the availability of services, States parties agreed to hold the Review Conference from 4 to 28 January 2022. Unfortunately, a surge in COVID-19 cases in New York in December 2021 caused the Review Conference to be postponed again, for the safety of delegates and staff, less than two weeks before it was scheduled to open. At the end of 2021, the President-designate tentatively designated 1 to 26 August 2022 for the Review Conference.

Despite the pandemic, the President-designate and the Bureau of the Review Conference, assisted by the Office for Disarmament Affairs, continued all substantive and procedural preparations for the Conference. In 2021, the President-designate held an unprecedented number of consultations with States parties, held

virtually and, when possible, in person on the following dates: 8 to 11 February; 10 to 12 May; 17 June; 13 July; 9 September; 14 October; 24 November; and 7, 23, 28 and 30 December. While the consultations were primarily focused on the scheduling of the Review Conference, they also provided an opportunity for States parties to engage in dialogue on the substantive matters affecting the Treaty across all three of its “pillars”—nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Participants in the consultations addressed overarching issues related to the Review Conference, including the need to have a balanced outcome that strengthened the implementation of all three pillars; accelerate the implementation of commitments made under the Treaty, including those made at previous Review Conferences; and ensure that the Treaty’s review cycle was fit for purpose. On nuclear disarmament, many States parties stressed that urgent measures were essential to reduce the risk of a nuclear weapon being used, agreeing that such measures should act as platforms, not substitutions, for practical steps in disarmament, such as further reductions in nuclear arsenals. Some participants also expressed support for processes aimed at enabling further progress in disarmament, including those related to nuclear disarmament verification. The consultations were also focused on ways that the Treaty could support another priority for States parties, that is, resolving regional issues associated with nuclear weapons, including in the Middle East and North-East Asia. Regarding the Treaty’s pillar on non-proliferation, many States parties affirmed the need for a fully resourced and effective safeguards system, especially in the face of potential emerging challenges, such as those stemming from technological advances. On the Treaty’s third pillar, participants expressed strong support for the Treaty’s role in facilitating the benefits of nuclear science and technology, particularly by obligating States parties to improve access to technologies that could aid in the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals. Overall, States parties supported a more inclusive approach to the Review Conference that would promote equal gender representation while giving access and opportunities to young people and civil society.

To help States parties maintain their focus on achieving a successful Review Conference, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, together with partners from IAEA, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the British American Security Information Council, held three webinars on substantive issues facing the Conference, building on a similar series of webinars held in 2020. Featuring the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and the President-designate, as well as members of the Bureau of the Review Conference, the webinars were intended to provide an intersessional platform for States parties and other stakeholders to discuss how to strengthen commonalities and narrow divergences in the lead-up to the Review Conference.

The first webinar, held on 31 March, focused on the role of youth in implementing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Entitled “[The Tenth Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference: Empowering Emerging Voices](#)”,

<sup>28</sup> For the [Treaty’s text and adherence status](#), see the Office for Disarmament Affairs Disarmament Treaties Database.

<sup>29</sup> The Review Conference was to be convened pursuant to General Assembly resolution [70/28](#) of 11 December 2015.

the event featured a panel of young professionals in the nuclear field, representing the Emerging Voices Network of the British American Security Information Council.<sup>30</sup> During the discussion, the President-designate commended the structure of that network and welcomed the fresh and necessary perspectives offered by its membership. He urged network members to “think outside of the box”, stressing that “if they did not, no one would”. The President-designate also asked the members to continue to advocate for the Treaty with their Governments and reaffirmed his commitment to an inclusive Review Conference. The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs added that young people’s participation was not being sought as “lip service”, but rather “because we believe that the continued relevance of multilateralism and international cooperation actually depends on how we will be able to create space for youth and work with youth. After all, it is you, young people, that will be responsible for developing the ethical, moral, security and legal frameworks of the future.” She underscored that youth engagement and empowerment were important for the future of disarmament, specifically to support the development of skills and knowledge to contribute to efforts towards peace and disarmament.<sup>31</sup>

The Office for Disarmament Affairs partnered with UNIDIR to organize the second webinar, entitled “[Integrating Gender Perspectives Into The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Process: Towards An Equal And Secure Future](#)”. Australia, Malaysia, IAEA and the Ploughshares Fund took part in the event, which was held on 6 April. In her opening statement,<sup>32</sup> the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs said, “Nuclear and, indeed, all weapons feed into the norms and power relationships that enable and foster gender inequality [and], based on the experiences of the hibakusha and test survivors, women are also often the ones most affected by psychological health issues, displacement, social stigma and discrimination.” The President-designate, in his remarks, applauded States parties for holding numerous events on gender issues and acknowledged that women had been under-represented in delegations and positions of leadership in the Treaty’s review process. He called for that gap to be closed, stressing that inclusivity in the review process would bring a plurality of voices and opinions, ultimately paving the way for better and more sustainable outcomes.

The Office for Disarmament Affairs and IAEA held the third webinar, entitled “[The Tenth Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference: Industry and Peaceful Applications of Nuclear Technology](#)”. Held on 30 April, the event featured

<sup>30</sup> The Council maintained working groups on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as it concerned disarmament, peaceful uses, non-proliferation, diversity and inclusion, arms control and disruptive technologies. Its Emerging Voices Network featured a geographically disparate membership of young professionals seeking to inject the perspectives of young people into fields related to nuclear weapons and, especially, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

<sup>31</sup> [Remarks](#) at the webinar “Launch of the Emerging Voices Network on nuclear policy”, 31 March 2021.

<sup>32</sup> [Opening remarks](#) at the webinar “Integrating gender perspectives into the NPT review process: towards an equal and secure future”, 6 April 2021.

speakers from the Government of Nigeria; the World Nuclear Association; the International Committee for Non-Destructive Testing; and the Global Diagnostic Imaging, Healthcare Information Technology and Radiation Therapy Trade Association. Shaukat Abdulrazak, Director of the Division for Africa at the IAEA Department of Technical Cooperation, delivered the keynote speech. In her opening remarks,<sup>33</sup> the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs emphasized the growing importance of ensuring that multilateral processes included a “multi-stakeholder” aspect, broadening their inclusivity and allowing for different perspectives. She also highlighted the important role that industry could play in realizing a successful conclusion to the Review Conference, “not least by identifying areas in which they can support and add value to the excellent work being done by the IAEA in facilitating technical assistance, regional outreach and educational programmes”. In concluding the webinar, the President-designate noted that the event had reaffirmed “what is being heard in forums around the world in the lead-up to the Review Conference—the critical importance that all States parties place on access to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, science and technology”. He stressed the importance of nuclear science and technology to sustainable development, as well as the role of industry in innovating that technology. He argued that there was “no better venue to capitalize on industry’s reach and expertise than the tenth [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty] Review Conference”.

## Issues related to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

### Entry into force and universality

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty prohibits nuclear explosions by everyone, everywhere: on the Earth’s surface, in the atmosphere, underwater and underground. Twenty-five years after the Treaty was opened for signature in New York on 24 September 1996, it was recognized as an international pillar of disarmament and non-proliferation that constrained the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons through an unparalleled verification system. The Treaty continued to play a crucial role in preventing nuclear proliferation, as well as advancing nuclear disarmament, environmental protection and human health.

Adherence to the Treaty continued to expand in 2021, with ratifications by Cuba and Comoros. As at the end of the year, the Treaty had 185 States signatories, 170 of which had ratified the agreement.<sup>34</sup> That high participation rate reflected the nearly universal support for the Treaty and its verification regime.

<sup>33</sup> [Remarks](#) at the webinar “The Tenth NPT Review Conference: Industry and Peaceful Applications of Nuclear Technology”, 30 April 2021.

<sup>34</sup> For the [Treaty’s text and adherence status](#), see the Office for Disarmament Affairs Disarmament Treaties Database.

### A year of anniversaries

In adopting the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty on 10 September 1996,<sup>35</sup> the international community declared unequivocally that the era of unrestrained nuclear testing had come to an end. After it was opened for signature on 24 September, the Treaty helped States to create and sustain a norm against nuclear testing so powerful that, as at the end of 2021, fewer than one dozen tests had been conducted over the previous 25 years, and only one country had violated the agreement in the new millennium.<sup>36</sup>

In 2021, the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization joined signatory States in holding events marking the Treaty's twenty-fifth anniversary. In addition to celebrating the Treaty's opening for signature, the events were intended to refocus international attention on the agreement's significant impact as a concrete and practical measure of disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects. The events also served as a call to action to promote and support additional signatures and ratifications of the Treaty during and beyond its twenty-fifth year.<sup>37</sup>

### Twelfth Article XIV Conference

States signatories kicked off the Treaty's twenty-fifth anniversary by convening the twelfth biennial Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, commonly known as the "Article XIV Conference". Article XIV Conferences are held to rally support for the Treaty, as well as to inspire and encourage coordinated action to advance its entry into force and universalization. The [twelfth Article XIV Conference](#), convened by the Secretary-General, the depositary of the Treaty, was held virtually on 23 and 24 September, on the margins of the general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-sixth session. It was overseen by the two co-presidents: Marina Sereni, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy, acting on behalf of Luigi Di Maio, Minister of Foreign Affairs; and Naledi Pandor, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa.

During the Conference, ministers and senior officials from more than 60 countries delivered statements of support for the Treaty, and participants heard a message<sup>38</sup> from the Secretary-General that was delivered by the High

<sup>35</sup> The General Assembly adopted the Treaty by its resolution [50/245](#) of 17 September 1996.

<sup>36</sup> As at the end of 2021, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had conducted six nuclear tests—in October 2006, May 2009, February 2013, January 2016, September 2016 and September 2017, respectively.

<sup>37</sup> The twenty-fifth anniversary of the Treaty's opening for signature coincided with the thirtieth anniversary of the closure of the former Soviet nuclear test site in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan, as well as the twenty-fifth anniversary of the opening for signature of the African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty (Pelindaba Treaty).

<sup>38</sup> [Message](#) to the Article XIV Conference of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, New York, 23 September 2021.

Representative for Disarmament Affairs. In remarks that followed, Abdulla Shahid, President of the General Assembly, and Robert Floyd, Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission, each called for the Treaty's urgent entry into force and universalization.<sup>39</sup>

In the Final Declaration<sup>40</sup> of the Conference, States renewed their commitment to the Treaty and to promoting its entry into force and universalization. They also reaffirmed their determination to take concrete and actionable steps towards that end.

### Security Council

On 27 September, Ireland, President of the Security Council, held a briefing<sup>41</sup> on the Treaty to mark its twenty-fifth anniversary. Speakers provided the Council with the opportunity to reflect on the Treaty's achievements in the 25 years since it was opened for signature, as well as to advocate for concrete actions to advance its entry into force and universalization.

Council members delivered statements highlighting the Treaty's success as a core component of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime while also calling for urgent action to bring the Treaty into force. The Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission, together with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and a member of the Preparatory Commission's Youth Group from Kenya, addressed the Council to underscore the Treaty's continued significance after 25 years.

### International Day against Nuclear Tests

The International Day against Nuclear Tests in 2021 coincided with the thirtieth anniversary of the closure of the former Soviet Union's nuclear test site in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan. The anniversary was commemorated around the world on 29 August, with events also taking place at the United Nations in New York and Vienna, as well as in Nur-Sultan.

On 8 September, the General Assembly convened a high-level plenary meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day against Nuclear Tests. At the invitation of the President of the General Assembly, the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission delivered a keynote speech in which he called on all States to do their utmost to advance the entry into force and universalization of the Treaty. Other participants recounted the serious impacts of nuclear testing on human health, the environment, and international peace and security, and unanimously called on

<sup>39</sup> Abdulla Shahid, [remarks](#) (delivered virtually) at the twelfth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, 23 September 2021; and Robert Floyd, [address](#) (delivered virtually) to the twelfth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, 23 September 2021.

<sup>40</sup> [CTBT-Art.XIV/2021/6](#), annex.

<sup>41</sup> United Nations Web TV, "[Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction: Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty - Security Council, 8865th meeting](#)" (video), 27 September 2021. For the verbatim records, see [S/PV.8865](#).

the remaining eight Annex 2 States<sup>42</sup> to take the necessary actions to advance the Treaty's entry into force.

### Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

Established in 1996, the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization continued its work in 2021 to develop the Treaty's verification regime in preparation for its entry into force. It was chaired during the year by Ivo Šrámek (Czechia).

In May, States signatories elected Robert Floyd (Australia) as the Preparatory Commission's fourth Executive Secretary. He began his four-year term on 1 August, succeeding Lassina Zerbo (Burkina Faso). The incoming Executive Secretary's top priorities for the Preparatory Commission were to promote signatures and ratifications, stress the Treaty's key role in supporting global security and disarmament, and enhance the Commission's partnerships with its signatory States, further building on its current progress.

Throughout the Preparatory Commission's 2021 sessions, the Executive Secretary highlighted the Treaty's significance as an essential pillar of the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime, noting that the Treaty's objective required a clear vision, genuine commitment and perseverance. He also referred to the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Treaty and reviewed its achievements, stressing the need to build on them.

### Status of progress on the establishment of the verification regime

#### International Monitoring System

The Treaty's International Monitoring System was designed with cutting-edge technology to ensure that incontestable evidence of a Treaty violation would be available if any nuclear detonations were conducted anywhere on the planet (air, land or sea).<sup>43</sup> Once fully constructed, the International Monitoring System would consist of 321 monitoring stations and 16 laboratories operated by 89 different countries (see the table below for the completion status of the stations).

In 2021, two new stations of the International Monitoring System were installed in the Russian Federation: primary seismic station PS35 and auxiliary seismic station AS090. The latter station, also called "Bilibino", was certified for operation and began transmissions to the Treaty's International Data Centre.

<sup>42</sup> Annex 2 States are the 44 States listed in the Treaty's annex 2 whose ratifications of the Treaty are necessary for its entry into force.

<sup>43</sup> The International Monitoring System incorporated four state-of-the-art technologies, three of which monitor vibrations produced by explosions—the seismic (land), infrasound (air) and hydroacoustic (sea) stations—while radionuclide stations monitor the atmosphere for the distinctive radioactive by-products of nuclear explosions.

Meanwhile, several stations were revalidated after receiving major technological upgrades, including the radionuclide stations RN63/SEX63 in Sweden and RN31/FRX31 in French Guiana, the radionuclide laboratory RL13 in the Russian Federation, the primary seismic station PS49 in the United States, and the infrasound stations IS56 and IS58 in the United States. The Provisional Technical Secretariat also completed an underwater environmental survey for the International Monitoring System, as well as a cable inspection of hydroacoustic station HA04 on the Crozet Islands of France. The International Monitoring System was able to provide a high level of data availability throughout the year, despite COVID-19 restrictions.

#### Status of the installation and certification programme for International Monitoring System stations, as at 31 December 2021

International Monitoring System station type	Installation complete		Under construction	Contract under negotiation	Not started
	Certified	Not certified			
Primary seismic	44	1	1	1	3
Auxiliary seismic	109	7	1	–	3
Hydroacoustic	11	–	–	–	–
Infrasound	53	1	1	0	5
Radionuclide	72	0	1	2	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>16</b>

#### International Data Centre

Throughout the year, the Preparatory Commission continued to receive and process data from International Monitoring System stations around the world through its International Data Centre, located at the Commission's headquarters in Vienna. Using a secure web portal, signatory States could access the collected data in raw formats and as specialized products for independent review and analysis. Furthermore, the Preparatory Commission used expert guidance from signatory States to continuously expand the Centre's capabilities, including through upgrades of support infrastructure and software updates for conducting scientific analysis.

In 2021, substantial progress was seen both in the progressive commissioning of the Centre and in the implementation of procedures for conducting special studies and expert technical analyses. During the year, the Preparatory Commission continued enhancing the quality of the Centre's automatic bulletins (SEL1, SEL2 and SEL3) and tuning station detection thresholds to reduce the workload of analysts.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> The aims were to minimize the rate of phases missed by the automatic detection system and, thus, added by analysts, and maximize the rate of phases detected by the automatic system and linked to events with more than the total number of associated phases (association rate).

### On-site inspections

An on-site inspection can be launched to establish whether or not a nuclear explosion has occurred. Such an inspection might involve the collection of facts to identify a possible violator of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, therefore on-site inspections constitute the Treaty's final verification measure.

In September, the On-Site Inspection Division established the Consultative Group of Experts, comprising specialists in various aspects of on-site inspections from different signatory States. The Group's objectives are to leverage the expertise of signatory States and guide the Provisional Technical Secretariat on strategic, technical and substantive matters related to the Secretariat's development and the implementation of future on-site inspection exercises. Using feedback from the Group, the Provisional Technical Secretariat developed a draft programme for on-site inspection exercises scheduled to be unveiled in 2022.

Meanwhile, the Preparatory Commission produced a report on the overall development of a capability to prepare and deploy on-site inspection equipment. Drawing on an in-depth review of documentation, the report was intended to clarify the concept of preparedness and deployment in the context of an on-site inspection. To that end, the report integrated all key components and enablers of preparedness, rapid deployment and in-field support for an inspection. The report also included guidance on implementing the preparedness and deployment concept by covering management and delivery strategies.

### Integrated capacity-building, education and training

Despite significant challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, the Provisional Technical Secretariat continued to organize integrated capacity-building, education and training activities. Those events included courses, workshops and technical meetings held through the International Data Centre, reaching 800 participants during the year. They also included remote hands-on sessions, during which signatory States and other key stakeholders could learn about specific equipment housed at the Preparatory Commission's Technology Support and Training Centre in Seibersdorf, Austria.

### Science and Technology Conference

The Preparatory Commission regularly organizes [conferences](#) to build and strengthen relationships with the broader science community in support of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

It held the [2021 Science and Technology Conference](#) from 28 June to 2 July, using a hybrid format for the first time, owing to the pandemic. The event brought together a record number of participants (over 1,600 scientists, academics, students and high-level officials), and received contributions from around the globe to help review and improve the performance of the Treaty's verification regime. The first day of the conference featured a hybrid [high-level opening ceremony](#) at the Hofburg

Palace in Vienna. In statements streamed live to participants worldwide, speakers underlined the importance of the Treaty and its contribution to global peace and development.

The Conference had two important, unique themes: the COVID-19 pandemic and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Treaty's opening for signature. To mark the anniversary, invited speakers and panels considered the achievements of the previous 25 years, as well as future challenges and prospects for the Treaty. The programme included online sessions on the latest verification innovations and research supporting the journey to entry into force. It also incorporated a dedicated panel and a series of oral presentations where speakers discussed the pandemic as a stress test for structures such as the International Monitoring System, as well as lessons learned.

### Youth Group

The year 2021 marked the fifth anniversary of the Preparatory Commission's Youth Group.<sup>45</sup> The Group was open to students and young professionals dedicated to promoting the entry into force and universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, further development of the Treaty's verification regime, and verification technologies in support of international peace and security. By the end of 2021, the Group had grown to nearly 1,200 members from 117 countries, including a considerable number from the eight Annex 2 States<sup>46</sup> that had yet to sign and ratify the Treaty.

Notwithstanding the pandemic, Youth Group members actively engaged in national, regional, and international events and activities, including in several forums and high-level events held throughout the year. In September, a member of the Group briefed the Security Council during a high-level webinar hosted by the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-proliferation on the future of the Treaty.<sup>47</sup> Members also took part in the biennial Article XIV Conference and the 2021 Science and Technology Conference.

The Preparatory Commission organized and facilitated several events for the Youth Groups, including [Citizen Journalism Academy](#) training sessions to boost young experts' communications and social media skills, and a [research fellowship](#) administered with the Center for Energy and Security Studies. In addition, the Preparatory Commission organized a series of [webinars](#) for the Youth Group as part of its "[Building Bridges, Nurture Partnerships, Embrace Dialogue](#)" project, designed to facilitate exchanges on best practices between nuclear disarmament professionals

<sup>45</sup> The Preparatory Commission launched the Youth Group in January 2016 in line with Security Council resolution [2250 \(2015\)](#) on youth, peace and security.

<sup>46</sup> China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Pakistan and United States.

<sup>47</sup> United Nations Web TV, "[Security Council, 8865th meeting](#)" (video). For the verbatim records, see [S/PV.8865](#).

and colleagues in other fields, such as climate change, advocacy for the Sustainable Development Goals and gender empowerment.

### Group of Eminent Persons

The [Group of Eminent Persons](#), comprising prominent personalities and internationally recognized experts,<sup>48</sup> was launched on 26 September 2013 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. In 2021, the Group continued to leverage its expertise and experience in examining political and technical developments related to the Treaty, as well as in identifying concrete actions and new initiatives that could be explored to accelerate its entry into force.

On 28 June, several members of the Group actively participated in the 2021 Science and Technology Conference, contributing to the high-level opening by discussing the main challenges for the Treaty, its entry into force and universalization. On 23 September, at the Article XIV Conference, Group members issued a statement<sup>49</sup> on the Treaty's importance in the global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture.

### Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, adopted in 2017, includes a comprehensive set of prohibitions on participating in any nuclear-weapon activity. It entered into force on 22 January, following the deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification or accession with the Secretary-General on 24 October 2020.

In 2021, seven States<sup>50</sup> ratified the Treaty and Mongolia acceded to it. As at 31 December, the number of signatory States stood at 86 and the number of ratifying or acceding States stood at 59.<sup>51</sup>

In a statement<sup>52</sup> to mark the Treaty's entry into force, the Secretary-General referred to it as an important step towards a world free of nuclear weapons. He

<sup>48</sup> Nobuyasu Abe (Japan), Abel Adelakun Ayoko (Nigeria), Hans Blix (Sweden), Grigory Berdennikov (Russian Federation), Alvin Botes (South Africa), Des Browne (United Kingdom), José Luis Cancela (Uruguay), Jayantha Dhanapala (Sri Lanka), Cristian Diaconescu (Romania), Sérgio de Queiroz Duarte (Brazil), Michel Duclos (France), Jorge Marcelo Faurie (Argentina), Thomas Hajnoczi (Austria), Tarja Halonen (Finland), Wolfgang Hoffmann (Germany), Igor Ivanov (Russian Federation), Angela Kane (Germany), Dina Kawar (Jordan), Kim Won-soo (Republic of Korea), Ho-Jin Lee (Republic of Korea), Patricia Lewis (Ireland and United Kingdom), Susan le Jeune d'Allegeershecque (United Kingdom), Federica Mogherini (Italy), Amina C. Mohamed (Kenya), Nursultan Nazarbayev (Kazakhstan), William Perry (United States), Kevin Rudd (Australia), Sha Zukang (China), Bruno Tertrais (France) and Ahmet Üzümcü (Turkey).

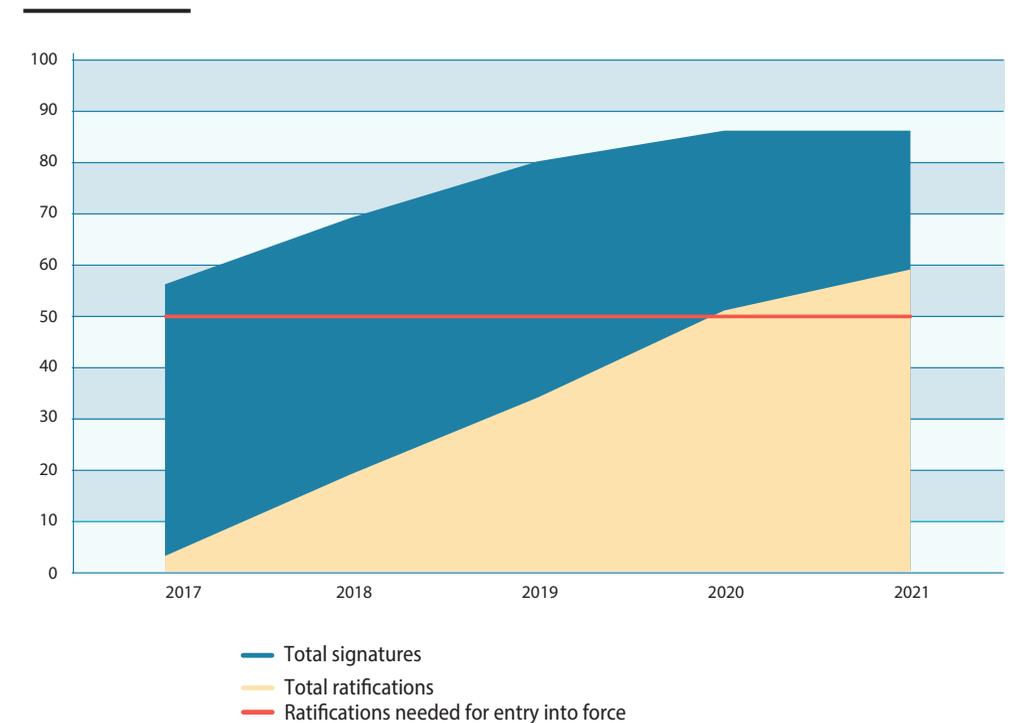
<sup>49</sup> Sergio Duarte, Angela Kane, Abel Adelakun Ayoko and Kevin Rudd, [statement](#) to the Article XIV Conference on behalf of the Group of Eminent Persons, 23 September 2021.

<sup>50</sup> Cambodia, Chile, Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Peru, Philippines and Seychelles.

<sup>51</sup> For the [Treaty's text and adherence status](#), see the Office for Disarmament Affairs Disarmament Treaties Database.

<sup>52</sup> [Statement](#) by Stéphane Dujarric, Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, on the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, New York, 22 January 2021.

### Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons ratifications and accessions



Following its adoption in 2017, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons acquired, on 24 October 2020, the 50 ratifications necessary for its entry into force. With its entry into force on 22 January 2021, the Treaty became part of the broader nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation framework. As at the end of 2021, 59 States had ratified or acceded to the Treaty and 86 had signed it.

commended the States that had ratified it, saluted the work of civil society and noted that the survivors of nuclear explosions and nuclear tests were a moral force behind the Treaty. The Secretary-General further expressed his readiness to carry out the functions assigned to him by the Treaty, and he called on all States to work towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Preparations began during the year for holding the first Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty. According to article 8, paragraph 2, of the Treaty, the first Meeting should be convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations within one year of the Treaty's entry into force. However, owing to the unprecedented

circumstances arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, it was not feasible to hold the Meeting by that date. States parties thus decided to request the Secretary-General to convene the first Meeting of States Parties from 22 to 24 March 2022 at the United Nations Office at Vienna.<sup>53</sup>

By note verbale dated 12 February, the Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations submitted the candidature of Alexander Kmentt for the position of President of the first Meeting of States Parties. In the absence of further nominations to that position by the end of the nomination period, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, on behalf of the Secretary-General, informed States parties of her intention to propose Ambassador Kmentt for election as President at the opening of the first Meeting of States Parties. Thereafter, Ambassador Kmentt led preparations for the Meeting in the capacity of President-designate.

Preparations for the first Meeting of States Parties proceeded largely through virtual informal consultations open to all States parties and signatory States, as well as civil society. Topics discussed included the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons; deadlines for nuclear-armed States and nuclear-hosting States; the competent international authority; institutionalizing scientific advice; national implementation; positive obligations, including victim assistance and environmental remediation; universalization; and organizational questions, including the rules of procedure. After an initial round of consultations, the President-designate appointed several facilitators to help advance discussions on those topics.

## Bilateral agreements and other issues

### Implementation of the Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms

On 5 February 2018, the United States and the Russian Federation met the central limits of the Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START Treaty). Under the Treaty, the parties must possess no more than 700 deployed intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles and heavy bombers, and no more than 1,550 warheads associated with those deployed launchers.

According to data published by the parties pursuant to the biannual exchange of data required by the Treaty, as at 28 September, the parties possessed aggregate numbers of strategic offensive arms as laid out in the table below.

### New START Treaty aggregate numbers of strategic offensive arms

Category of data	United States	Russian Federation
Deployed intercontinental ballistic missiles, deployed submarine-launched ballistic missiles and deployed heavy bombers	665	527
Warheads on deployed intercontinental ballistic missiles, on deployed submarine-launched ballistic missiles and nuclear warheads counted for deployed heavy bombers	1,389	1,458
Deployed and non-deployed launchers of intercontinental ballistic missiles, deployed and non-deployed launchers of submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and deployed and non-deployed heavy bombers	800	742

Source: United States, Department of State, Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance, [Fact Sheet](#), 28 September 2021.

The New START Treaty was in force until 5 February, with the option to be extended for a period of up to five years without legislative approval. On 3 February, the United States Department of State and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation announced the completion of procedures to extend the Treaty for the full five years allowed, until 5 February 2026.<sup>54</sup> The extension of the Treaty preserved the only remaining bilateral agreement on nuclear arms control between the United States and the Russian Federation, ensuring verifiable caps on the world's two largest strategic nuclear arsenals. It also provided much-needed time to develop future measures for arms control, including further reductions in strategic arsenals, and to address implications of the increasing convergence between nuclear weapons and other domains with strategic ramifications.

In announcing the extension, the Secretary of State of the United States said that it was evidence of President Biden's commitment to restore the leadership of the United States in arms control, adding that extending the New START Treaty made the world safer. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation underscored the "special responsibility" of the United States and the Russian Federation, given their status as the two largest nuclear-armed States, as well as the important predictability and transparency provided by the New START Treaty.<sup>55</sup>

On 16 June, President Biden and President Putin met in Geneva for a bilateral summit focused on "strategic stability". The topics discussed included arms control, regional conflicts and cybersecurity. In a joint statement,<sup>56</sup> the two presidents noted that "Russia and the United States have demonstrated that, even in times of tension,

<sup>53</sup> [Letter](#) dated 10 August 2021 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/75/990). The States parties later decided to postpone the Meeting to 21–23 June 2022, as reflected in the letter dated 22 March 2022 from the President-designate to the Secretary-General (A/76/773).

<sup>54</sup> [Press statement](#) by the United States on the extension of the New START Treaty; and by the Russian Federation, "Заявление МИД России о продлении Договора о СНВ - Главное в России", 3 February 2021.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> "U.S.-Russia Presidential Joint Statement on Strategic Stability"; "Совместное заявление Президентов России и США по стратегической стабильности".

they are able to make progress in implementing joint goals to ensure predictability in the strategic sphere and reduce risks of armed conflicts and the threat of nuclear war". Notably, the presidents reaffirmed their joint commitment to the principle that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. They also announced the creation of an "integrated bilateral Strategic Stability Dialogue ... to lay the groundwork for future arms control and risk mitigation measures".

The first meeting of the Strategic Stability Dialogue took place in Geneva on 28 July. The delegations were led by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergey Ryabkov, and the Deputy Secretary of State of the United States, Wendy Sherman. A detailed summary of the meetings was not made public. However, following the dialogue, the United States Department of State noted that "the U.S. delegation discussed U.S. policy priorities and the current security environment, national perceptions of threats to strategic stability, prospects for new nuclear arms control, and the format for future Strategic Stability Dialogue sessions".<sup>57</sup> According to an interview<sup>58</sup> with Deputy Minister Ryabkov, the United States also raised the issue of limitations on the Russian Federation's "newest weapons systems, including Kinzhal and Poseidon".

The Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security of the United States, Bonnie Jenkins, said in September that the United States' engagement in the Strategic Stability Dialogue would be guided by three key concepts: capturing new kinds of intercontinental-range delivery systems; including all nuclear warheads, such as non-strategic nuclear warheads; and retaining limits on systems accountable under the New START Treaty beyond 2026.<sup>59</sup> In a media interview, however, Deputy Minister Ryabkov rejected the inclusion of non-strategic nuclear weapons in the scope of discussions.<sup>60</sup> Separately, the Russian Federation noted that it had raised an existing proposal for a moratorium on the deployment of intermediate-range missiles in Europe, as well as an agreement on all types of strategic weapons, whether nuclear or conventional.<sup>61</sup>

A second meeting of the Strategic Stability Dialogue took place in Geneva on 30 September, with discussions that participants later described as "intensive

and substantive".<sup>62</sup> At the meeting, the delegations agreed to establish two expert-level working groups, on principles and objectives for future arms control, and on capabilities and actions with strategic effects. Following the September meeting, both the Russian Federation and the United States described the difficulties facing negotiations on arms control and other issues. However, they also highlighted the professional and dynamic tenor of the dialogue and pointed to the importance of taking a long-term perspective and maintaining political will.<sup>63</sup>

### **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and Security Council resolution 2231 (2015)**

In 2021, the Islamic Republic of Iran pursued enhancements of its nuclear programme in line with the steps it had announced from May 2019 to January 2020 to reduce its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.<sup>64</sup> The changes were in response to the unilateral withdrawal of the United States from the Plan of Action in May 2018, as well as to a law entitled "Strategic Action Plan to Lift Sanctions and Protect Iranian Nation's Interests", which the Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran had passed in December 2020 to enhance its nuclear-related capabilities far beyond those prescribed in the Plan of Action.

On 6 April, the remaining parties<sup>65</sup> to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and the United States met in Vienna to discuss a return to the Plan's full and effective implementation by all relevant parties. During six rounds of talks held from April to June,<sup>66</sup> the participants established three working groups to discuss matters respectively related to the lifting of sanctions imposed on the Islamic Republic of Iran by the United States, a return to full compliance with the Plan of Action by the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the sequencing of steps to be taken by the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States. Following the inauguration of a new presidential administration in the Islamic Republic of Iran in August, the parties held the seventh round of talks from 29 November to 17 December. During that session, the Islamic Republic of Iran tabled two proposals on the following: the lifting of

<sup>62</sup> "Joint Statement on the Outcomes of the U.S. – Russia Strategic Stability Dialogue in Geneva on September 30" (media note), 30 September 2021.

<sup>63</sup> Geneva Centre for Security Policy, "Deputy Foreign Minister of Russian Federation delivers keynote speech at GCSP", 14 October 2021.

<sup>64</sup> The Islamic Republic of Iran made the following announcements: (a) in May 2019, that it would no longer abide by the limits on its stockpiles of enriched uranium and heavy water; (b) in July 2019, that it had started enriching uranium beyond 3.67 per cent and suspended the transformation of the Arak Heavy Water Reactor; (c) in September 2019, that it would cease to honour the limitations on research and development of advanced centrifuges imposed by the Plan of Action; (d) in November 2019, that it would resume enrichment of uranium at Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant; and (e) in January 2020, that it would disregard the Plan's limitations on its number of centrifuges. The Government added, however, that it would continue to abide by its IAEA safeguards commitments under the Plan of Action.

<sup>65</sup> China, France, Germany, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Russian Federation and United Kingdom.

<sup>66</sup> The first session took place from 6 to 9 April, the second session from 15 to 20 April, the third session from 27 April to 1 May, the fourth session from 7 to 19 May, the fifth session on 25 May, and the sixth session from 12 to 20 June.

<sup>57</sup> United States, Department of State, "Deputy Secretary Sherman's Participation in Strategic Stability Dialogue with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov: Readout", 28 July 2021.

<sup>58</sup> Interfax, "Москва готова обсуждать с Вашингтоном новейшие системы вооружений РФ", 29 July 2021. Kinzhal is an air-launched hypersonic missile, and Poseidon is a nuclear-powered underwater drone. Both weapon systems are capable of holding nuclear or conventional payloads.

<sup>59</sup> "Nuclear Arms Control: A New Era?", remarks at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization conference on weapons of mass destruction arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, Copenhagen, 6 September 2021.

<sup>60</sup> Interview by *Kommersant*, "Мы не играем в политические игры вокруг стратегической стабильности", 9 September 2021.

<sup>61</sup> *Izvestia*, "Лавров рассказал о подготовке к консультациям с США по стратстабильности", 31 August 2021.

sanctions imposed against the Islamic Republic of Iran by the United States; and a return by the Islamic Republic of Iran to compliance with its commitments under the Plan of Action.

### **Verification and monitoring**

In 2021, IAEA continued to provide quarterly reports to its Board of Governors and the Security Council on the implementation of nuclear-related commitments of the Islamic Republic of Iran under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, as well as on matters related to verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). IAEA noted in those reports that the Islamic Republic of Iran continued to engage in several activities that were inconsistent with the Plan of Action, as per a series of announcements by the Government since May 2019 and the law that its Parliament had adopted in December 2020.

On 4 January, the Islamic Republic of Iran started to enrich uranium hexafluoride to a concentration of 20 per cent U-235 at its Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant.<sup>67</sup> Then, on 17 April, it began enriching uranium hexafluoride up to 60 per cent U-235 in two of the research and development production lines at its Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant in Natanz.<sup>68</sup> Meanwhile, it continued to enrich uranium hexafluoride up to five per cent U-235 both at the Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant and its main Fuel Enrichment Plant, also located in Natanz. Under the Plan of Action, the Islamic Republic of Iran is allowed to enrich up to 3.67 per cent and to accumulate enriched uranium only at the Fuel Enrichment Plant. IAEA later reported that, as at 6 November, the Islamic Republic of Iran had stockpiled a total of 2,313.4 kg enriched uranium hexafluoride of varying enrichment levels.<sup>69</sup>

On 6 February, a small quantity of uranium metal was produced from natural uranium tetrafluoride in a laboratory experiment conducted at the Fuel Plate Fabrication Plant in Esfahan.<sup>70</sup> Later, on 14 August, the Agency verified that 200 grams of uranium metal enriched up to 20 per cent U-235 had been produced at the facility. Under the Plan of Action, the Islamic Republic of Iran is not to engage in producing or conducting research and development or casting, forming, or machining uranium metal for 15 years.<sup>71</sup> The Government explained that the production of

enriched uranium metal was an intermediary step in a four-step process to produce new fuel for the Tehran Research Reactor.

In parallel, the Islamic Republic of Iran continued to test new types of advanced uranium-enrichment centrifuges not explicitly listed in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Throughout the year, the Government continued activities related to the following: (a) adding and operating a total of 19 cascades of IR-1, IR-2m, IR-4 and IR-6 centrifuges at the Fuel Enrichment Plant,<sup>72</sup> in addition to 30 cascades of IR-1 centrifuges currently being installed and operating at the site in accordance with the Plan of Action; (b) transferring its enrichment activities for research and development from the Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant to a segregated area in the Fuel Enrichment Plant;<sup>73</sup> and (c) adding two additional cascades of IR-6 centrifuges at the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant and experimenting with various configurations of centrifuge cascades at the site.<sup>74</sup>

### **Additional Protocol to the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement**

On 29 January, the Islamic Republic of Iran informed IAEA that, according to a new law passed by its Parliament, its Government would stop Agency inspections beyond the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement required by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.<sup>75</sup> Similarly, on 15 February, it informed IAEA that, as of 23 February, it would stop the implementation of voluntary transparency measures contained in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, including provisions of the Additional Protocol to the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and Modified code 3.1 of the subsidiary arrangements to its Safeguards Agreement.<sup>76</sup>

IAEA stated that such moves would have “a serious impact on the Agency’s ability to report on the implementation of Iran’s commitments and undermine the critical confidence in the peaceful nature of Iran’s nuclear programme” and that “the Agency may be unable to continue to provide factual reports on Iran’s nuclear programme or to recover the knowledge necessary to resume such a verification role in future”.<sup>77</sup>

On 21 February, during a visit by the IAEA Director General to Tehran, the Islamic Republic of Iran and IAEA announced a temporary, bilateral, technical understanding, whereby IAEA would continue with its necessary verification and

<sup>67</sup> IAEA, report of the Director General on verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) (document [GOV/INF/2021/2](#)).

<sup>68</sup> IAEA, report of the Director General on verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) (document [GOV/INF/2021/26](#)).

<sup>69</sup> IAEA, report of the Director General on verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) (document [GOV/2021/51](#)), para. 45.

<sup>70</sup> IAEA, report of the Director General on verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) (document [GOV/INF/2021/11](#)).

<sup>71</sup> [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action](#), annex I, para. 24.

<sup>72</sup> IAEA, reports of the Director General on verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) (documents [GOV/INF/2020/10](#), para. 2; [GOV/INF/2021/15](#), para. 2 and [GOV/INF/2020/17](#), para. 2; [GOV/INF/2021/19](#), para. 3, [GOV/INF/2021/24](#), para. 2.; and [GOV/INF/2021/27](#), para. 2).

<sup>73</sup> IAEA, reports of the Director General on verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) (documents [GOV/2021/10](#), para. 22; [GOV/2021/28](#), para. 23; [GOV/2021/39](#), para. 34; and [GOV/2021/51](#), para. 21).

<sup>74</sup> IAEA, documents [GOV/2021/10](#), paras. 25–26; [GOV/2021/28](#), paras. 25–26; [GOV/2021/39](#), paras. 37–38; and [GOV/2021/51](#), paras. 23–26.

<sup>75</sup> IAEA, communication dated 29 January 2021 from the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Agency (document [INFCIRC/9053](#)).

<sup>76</sup> IAEA, document [GOV/2021/10](#), para. 44.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 7.

monitoring activities for up to three months.<sup>78</sup> While that technical understanding expired on 24 May, on the same day, IAEA and the Islamic Republic of Iran agreed on the following: (a) the information collected by the Agency's monitoring equipment covered by the technical understanding would continue to be stored for a further period of one month; and (b) the equipment would continue to operate and be able to collect and store further data for that period.<sup>79</sup> The agreement was intended to enable IAEA to recover and re-establish the necessary continuity of knowledge.

While there was no official communication from the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding the application of provisions in the agreement of 24 May beyond 24 June, the Government informally indicated that IAEA monitoring and surveillance equipment covered by the technical understanding would continue to operate and the information collected would continue to be stored after 24 June.<sup>80</sup>

In August, IAEA requested access to its monitoring and surveillance equipment in all relevant locations in the Islamic Republic of Iran for periodic maintenance and replacement of storage media. IAEA also requested the Government to allow the Agency to verify the status of four previously installed surveillance cameras that the Government had removed from the centrifuge component manufacturing workshop at the TESA Karaj complex after an incident at that location on 23 June. When IAEA was given access to the Karaj complex on 4 September, it discovered that one camera had been destroyed and the other one had been severely damaged. Moreover, the data storage medium and the recording unit from the destroyed camera could not be located, thereby preventing the Agency from recovering continuity of knowledge for the activities recorded by the cameras.<sup>81</sup>

On 12 September, during a visit by the IAEA Director General to Tehran, IAEA and the Islamic Republic of Iran issued a joint statement mentioning, inter alia, that IAEA inspectors were permitted to service the identified equipment and replace their storage media, which would be kept under the joint seals of IAEA and the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran.<sup>82</sup>

From 20 to 22 September, the Islamic Republic of Iran permitted IAEA inspectors to service the identified Agency monitoring and surveillance equipment and to replace storage media at all necessary locations in the country, except for the centrifuge component manufacturing workshop at the TESA Karaj complex.<sup>83</sup> The

Government maintained that equipment at the complex was not part of the identified equipment. After repeated requests by IAEA to be granted access to the complex, as well as a discussion in Tehran between the IAEA Director General and the Agency on 23 November, the two sides reached an agreement on 15 December to allow IAEA to reinstall cameras and perform other related technical activities at the Karaj complex before the end of December.<sup>84</sup>

### **Implementation of Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty safeguards**

Throughout 2021, IAEA continued to report on the implementation of its 1974 agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran on the application of safeguards in connection with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the additional protocol provisionally applied by the Government pending entry into force. The Agency's findings in that regard were contained in its quarterly reports<sup>85</sup> to the IAEA Board of Governors and, beginning in March 2020, in separate, dedicated reports.

In 2021, IAEA also continued to report on its efforts to obtain clarification from the Islamic Republic of Iran with respect to information related to anthropogenic uranium particles found at an undeclared location in the country in early 2019,<sup>86</sup> as well as possible undeclared nuclear material and nuclear-related activities at three locations that had not been declared.<sup>87</sup>

The Director General of IAEA travelled to Tehran on 20 and 21 February to discuss safeguards issues, as well as IAEA verification and monitoring activities. During the visit, the Director General stressed his concern to the Government at the lack of progress in clarifying those safeguards issues.<sup>88</sup>

On 4 March, during the meeting of the Board of Governors, the Director General expressed his readiness to engage the Islamic Republic of Iran in a proactive and focused effort to break the impasse. The Government accepted the offer and subsequently held meetings with the Agency in Vienna in April and May, and in Tehran in May. During those meetings, IAEA presented the Government with several questions to which it did not receive satisfactory answers. IAEA expressed concern that the technical discussions had not yielded the expected results and explained the consequent lack of progress in clarifying the safeguards issues.<sup>89</sup>

From 14 to 16 November, to clarify issues related to one of the three undeclared locations mentioned above, the Agency conducted verification activities under the Safeguards Agreement at a declared facility. IAEA also sought clarification

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., annex I.

<sup>79</sup> IAEA, report of the Director General on verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) (document [GOV/INF/2021/31](#)).

<sup>80</sup> IAEA, document [GOV/2021/39](#), para. 15.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., paras. 16–20.

<sup>82</sup> IAEA, report of the Director General on verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) (document [GOV/INF/2021/42](#)), annex.

<sup>83</sup> IAEA, report of the Director General on verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) (document [GOV/INF/2021/43](#)), para. 5–6.

<sup>84</sup> IAEA, report of the Director General on verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) (document [GOV/INF/2021/47](#)).

<sup>85</sup> IAEA, documents [GOV/2021/15](#), [GOV/2021/29](#), [GOV/2021/42](#) and [GOV/2021/52](#).

<sup>86</sup> IAEA, document [GOV/2021/15](#), paras. 5–8.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., paras. 3–4.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., para. 23.

<sup>89</sup> IAEA, document [GOV/2021/29](#), para. 28.

from the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding other undeclared locations by presenting information obtained from commercially available satellite imagery.<sup>90</sup>

In its November report, IAEA expressed deep concern that, after more than two years, the safeguards issues related to the four locations in the Islamic Republic of Iran that were not declared to the Agency remained unresolved and there was a lack of substantive engagement by the Government to try to resolve those issues. The Agency said that lack of progress seriously affected its ability to provide assurances of the exclusively peaceful nature of the nuclear programme of the country.<sup>91</sup>

### **Implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015)**

By its resolution 2231 (2015) on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to report every six months on the resolution's implementation. In his eleventh and twelfth reports,<sup>92</sup> issued on 21 June and 8 December, the Secretary-General continued to focus on the resolution's provisions on restrictions applicable to nuclear-related, ballistic-missile-related and arms-related transfers to/from the Islamic Republic of Iran; asset freezes; and travel bans.

In the June report, the Secretary-General referred to information and views provided to him by Member States regarding several ballistic missile launches and test of a space launch vehicle undertaken by the Islamic Republic of Iran. In the December report, the Secretary-General welcomed a series of “diplomatic engagements in and around the Joint Commission” overseeing the Plan of Action, which took place from April to June. He also expressed hope for a swift and successful conclusion of those diplomatic engagements, which had resumed in November, and he encouraged the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States to return to full implementation of the Plan and resolution 2231 (2015) as soon as possible. In the same report, the Secretary-General noted that the Secretariat was examining and analysing information related to debris recovered in Saudi Arabia from ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and uncrewed aerial vehicles, as well as debris from an intercepted uncrewed aerial vehicle recovered in Israel, all of which were alleged to have been transferred in a manner inconsistent with resolution 2231 (2015).

## **Democratic People's Republic of Korea**

In 2021, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continued test launches of missiles using ballistic missile technology, in contravention of Security Council resolutions.<sup>93</sup> The new round of launches, which also included tests of a so-called “hypersonic” boost-glide vehicle, followed a nearly 12-month-long period of

relative calm brought about by inter-Korean engagement and talks with the United States, which did not yield further progress towards sustainable peace on the Korean Peninsula.

The year 2021 opened with the country's eighth Party Congress, held in Pyongyang from 5 to 12 January. In connection with the meeting, state media reported that Kim Jong Un—General Secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea, Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army—had called the United States his nation's “principal enemy”. In that regard, Chairman Kim stated that the key to establishing a new relationship between the two countries “lies in the United States' withdrawal of its hostile policy”. Further assessing that inter-Korean relations had regressed to their state before the April 2018 inter-Korean summit,<sup>94</sup> Chairman Kim vowed to advance his nation's nuclear weapons programme.<sup>95</sup> The Party Congress also issued a new five-year economic plan.

On 9 January, the country's state media unveiled a report on its military modernization with a long “wish list” of new items, which reportedly included new solid propellant intercontinental-range ballistic missiles, multiple warheads, better warheads, tactical nuclear weapons, a military reconnaissance satellite, new unmanned aerial systems (with ranges of 500 km), a 15,000 km-range intercontinental ballistic missile and a “hypersonic gliding flight warhead”.<sup>96</sup>

Early in the term of President Biden, which started on 20 January, the Republic of Korea and the United States had reaffirmed the strength of their alliance and signalled their intention to continue coordinating closely on a strategy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.<sup>97</sup> They also continued to conduct joint military exercises, drawing stark criticism from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea despite the drills being of a generally smaller scale than in previous years. The United States reportedly received no response to a behind-the-scenes attempt at diplomatic outreach in February.<sup>98</sup>

On 25 March, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea test-launched two short-range missiles using ballistic missile technology. It described the weapons as “newly developed tactical guided missiles”.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>90</sup> IAEA, document GOV/2021/52, paras. 5–6.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., para. 14.

<sup>92</sup> S/2021/582 and S/2021/995.

<sup>93</sup> Security Council resolutions 1718 (2006), 1874 (2009), 2087 (2013), 2094 (2013), 2270 (2016), 2321 (2016), 2356 (2017), 2371 (2017), 2375 (2017), and 2397 (2017).

<sup>94</sup> Chairman Kim met with the President of the Republic of Korea, Moon Jae-in, at the third inter-Korean summit, held in Panmunjom on 27 April. The first and second inter-Korean summits took place in 2000 and 2007, respectively.

<sup>95</sup> Korean Central News Agency, “On Report Made by Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un at 8th Congress of WPK”, 9 January 2021.

<sup>96</sup> Korean Central News Agency, “Great Programme for Struggle Leading Korean-style Socialist Construction to Fresh Victory On Report Made by Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un at Eighth Congress of WPK”, 9 January 2021.

<sup>97</sup> Jim Garamone, “U.S.-Korean Alliance is Key to Peace, Stability in Northeast Asia”, United States Department of Defense News, 18 March 2021.

<sup>98</sup> Phil Stewart (Reuters), “North Korea unresponsive to behind-the-scenes Biden administration outreach - U.S. official”, 13 March 2021.

<sup>99</sup> Korean Central News Agency, “New-type tactical guided missiles test-fired”, 26 March 2021.

In April, after completing a review of relevant policy, the United States announced that it would opt for a “calibrated, practical approach that is open to and will explore diplomacy” with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, with an emphasis on flexibility.<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, President Biden confirmed that the new policy was intended to build on the [joint statement](#) issued in Singapore on 12 June 2018, whereby the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the United States, under then-President Donald Trump, had agreed to establish new relations, join efforts to build a lasting and stable peace regime on the Korean Peninsula, and reaffirm the inter-Korean [Panmunjom Declaration](#) issued on 27 April 2018. By the joint statement, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea committed to working towards the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and recovering the remains of missing soldiers. Unlike his predecessor, however, President Biden said that he would only meet with the country’s leader if there was a clear commitment to discuss its nuclear arsenal.

After meeting with President Biden, the President of the Republic of Korea, Moon Jae-in, described the policy as “gradual, step-by-step ... and very flexible”.<sup>101</sup> The foreign ministry of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea issued a response in which it criticized President Biden and the United States Department of State for making statements in which they condemned human rights abuses.<sup>102</sup>

In July, the Republic of Korea announced the re-establishment of a key communications channel that had been severed a year prior, in June 2020. It was also announced that the two Koreas had been in communication since April 2021 through letters between their respective leaders. However, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea did not respond to calls made on the hotline around the time of the joint exercises of the Republic of Korea and the United States in August.

In September, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea carried out a series of missile tests, along with a military parade, to celebrate its seventy-third anniversary. On 15 September, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea fired two missiles from a railway, using ballistic missile technology. On 28 September, it carried out the test launch of a so-called “hypersonic weapon”, with its state media showing images of a missile topped by an apparent glide vehicle. On 19 October, it carried out the test launch of an apparent sea-launched ballistic missile.

The year ended with no significant diplomatic breakthroughs and heightened tensions because of the test launches in the latter half of the year.

<sup>100</sup> United States, The White House, “[Press Gaggle by Press Secretary Jen Psaki Aboard Air Force One En Route Philadelphia, PA](#)” (press briefing), 30 April 2021.

<sup>101</sup> “[Remarks by President Biden and H.E. Moon Jae-in, President of the Republic of Korea at Press Conference](#)”, 21 May 2021.

<sup>102</sup> Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “[Statement of DPRK Foreign Ministry Director General of Department of U.S. Affairs](#)”, 2 May 2021.

## International Atomic Energy Agency verification

Since its founding in 1957, IAEA has served as the focal point for worldwide cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear technology; promoting global nuclear security and safety; and, through its verification activities, providing assurances that States’ international undertakings to use nuclear material and facilities for peaceful purposes are being honoured. The following is a brief survey of the work of IAEA in 2021 in the area of nuclear verification, nuclear security, peaceful uses of nuclear energy and nuclear fuel assurances.<sup>103</sup>

### Nuclear verification

A major pillar of the IAEA programme involves activities that enable the Agency to provide assurances to the international community regarding the peaceful use of nuclear material and facilities. The IAEA verification programme thus remains at the core of multilateral efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons by verifying that States are complying with their [safeguards](#) obligations.<sup>104</sup>

### Safeguards conclusions

At the end of each year, IAEA draws safeguards conclusions for each State with a safeguards agreement in force for which safeguards are applied, based upon the evaluation of all safeguards-related information available to it for that year. For a “broader conclusion” to be drawn that “all nuclear material remained in peaceful activities”, a State must have both a comprehensive safeguards agreement<sup>105</sup> and an additional protocol<sup>106</sup> in force, and IAEA must have been able to conduct all necessary verification and evaluation activities for the State and have found no indication that, in its judgement, would give rise to a safeguards concern. For States that have a comprehensive safeguards agreement but no additional protocol in force, IAEA draws a safeguards conclusion regarding only the non-diversion of declared nuclear material. IAEA does not have sufficient tools to provide credible assurances regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities.

For those States for which the broader conclusion has been drawn, IAEA was able to implement integrated safeguards, an optimized combination of measures available under comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols, to maximize effectiveness and efficiency in fulfilling its safeguards obligations.

<sup>103</sup> The designations employed and the presentation of material in this section, including the members cited, do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IAEA or its member States concerning the legal status of any country or territory or its authorities or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers.

<sup>104</sup> For more information, see article III (1) of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

<sup>105</sup> Comprehensive safeguards agreements are based on [INFCIRC/153 \(Corrected\)](#).

<sup>106</sup> Additional protocols are based on [INFCIRC/540 \(Corrected\)](#).

In 2021, safeguards were applied for 185 States<sup>107,108</sup> with safeguards agreements in force with IAEA. Of the 132 States that had both a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol in force, IAEA concluded that all nuclear material remained in peaceful activities in 72 States.<sup>109</sup> The Agency was unable to draw the same conclusion for 60 States, as the necessary evaluation regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities for each of them remained ongoing. For those 60 States, and the 45 States with a comprehensive safeguards agreement but with no additional protocol in force, IAEA concluded only that declared nuclear material remained in peaceful activities.

Integrated safeguards were implemented for the whole of 2021 or part thereof for 69 States.<sup>110,111</sup>

For the three States for which IAEA implemented safeguards pursuant to item-specific safeguards agreements based on INFCIRC/66/Rev.2, IAEA concluded that nuclear material, facilities or other items to which safeguards had been applied remained in peaceful activities. Safeguards with regard to nuclear material were also implemented in selected facilities in the five nuclear-weapon States party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty under their respective voluntary offer agreements. For those five States, IAEA concluded that nuclear material in selected facilities to which safeguards had been applied remained in peaceful activities or had been withdrawn from safeguards as provided for in the agreements.

As at 31 December, eight States parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty had yet to bring comprehensive safeguards agreements into force pursuant to article III of the Treaty. For those States parties, IAEA could not draw any safeguards conclusions.

### **Safeguards agreements, additional protocols and small quantities protocols**

Safeguards agreements and additional protocols are legal instruments that provide the basis for IAEA verification activities. The entry into force of such instruments, therefore, continues to be crucial to effective and efficient IAEA safeguards.

<sup>107</sup> The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is not included among those States, as IAEA did not implement safeguards for it and, therefore, could not draw any conclusion.

<sup>108</sup> Safeguards were also applied for Taiwan Province of China.

<sup>109</sup> The same conclusion was drawn for Taiwan Province of China.

<sup>110</sup> Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Botswana, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Cuba, Czechia, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Latvia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, United Republic of Tanzania, Turkey, Uruguay, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam.

<sup>111</sup> Safeguards were also implemented for Taiwan Province of China.

IAEA continued to implement the [Plan of Action to Promote the Conclusion of Safeguards Agreements and Additional Protocols](#), which was updated in September. IAEA held consultations with representatives from several member States and non-member States in Geneva, New York and Vienna at various times throughout the year. During those outreach activities, the Agency encouraged States to conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols and to amend their small quantities protocols. In addition, in 2021, the IAEA Director General sent letters to States with comprehensive safeguards agreements but without additional protocols, encouraging them to conclude and bring into force additional protocols to their comprehensive safeguards agreements. He also sent letters to non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty that had not yet concluded or brought into force comprehensive safeguards agreements in connection with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, calling upon them to do so.

In 2021, a comprehensive safeguards agreement with a small quantities protocol based on the revised standard text entered into force for Eritrea and the Federated States of Micronesia. Furthermore, an additional protocol entered into force for Eritrea and Zimbabwe. The IAEA Board of Governors approved an additional protocol for Sierra Leone.

During the year, the Director-General sent letters to relevant States with a small quantities protocol based on the original standard text, reminding them of his earlier calls for amendment or rescission of their small quantities protocols. The Director General stressed that amendment or rescission was essential to address a weakness in the Agency's safeguards system recognized by the Board of Governors more than 15 years earlier, and that small quantities protocols based on the original standard text were inadequate for the current safeguards system. In 2021, the small quantities protocols were amended for Belize, Brunei Darussalam, Maldives, Saint Lucia and the Sudan. In addition, the small quantities protocols were rescinded for Malta and the United Arab Emirates. At the end of the year, 70 States had operative small quantities protocols in force based on the revised standard text.

### **Verification activities**

The Agency continued to verify and monitor the nuclear-related commitments of the Islamic Republic of Iran under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. From 23 February onwards, however, the Agency's verification and monitoring activities in relation to the Plan of Action were seriously affected following the decision of the Islamic Republic of Iran to stop the implementation of those commitments, including the additional protocol. During the year, the Director General submitted to the Board of Governors and, in parallel, to the Security Council four quarterly reports,<sup>112</sup> and 30 individual reports<sup>113</sup> entitled "Verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231

<sup>112</sup> IAEA, documents [GOV/2021/10](#) and Corr.1, [GOV/2021/28](#) and Corr.1, [GOV/2021/39](#) and [GOV/2021/51](#).

<sup>113</sup> IAEA, "IAEA and Iran - IAEA Reports".

(2015)", providing updates on developments in between the issuance of the quarterly reports.

In 2021, the Agency continued its efforts to engage with the Islamic Republic of Iran to clarify and resolve the issues related to the presence of nuclear material particles of anthropogenic origin at three undeclared locations in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the issues related to a fourth undeclared location. The lack of progress in clarifying the Agency's questions concerning the correctness and completeness of the safeguards declarations of the Islamic Republic of Iran seriously affected the Agency's ability to provide assurance on the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. The Director General submitted four reports<sup>114</sup> to the Board of Governors entitled "Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Safeguards Agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran".

Meanwhile, in August, the Director General submitted a report<sup>115</sup> to the Board of Governors entitled "Implementation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Safeguards Agreement in the Syrian Arab Republic", covering relevant developments since the previous report<sup>116</sup> in August 2020. The Director General informed the Board of Governors that no new information had come to the knowledge of IAEA that would have an impact on the Agency's assessment that it was very likely that a building destroyed at the Dair Alzour site was a nuclear reactor that should have been declared to IAEA by the Syrian Arab Republic.<sup>117</sup> In 2021, the Director General urged the country to cooperate fully with IAEA in connection with all unresolved issues and expressed willingness to engage with the Syrian Arab Republic to take concrete steps towards a mutually acceptable solution to that matter. The Government had yet to respond to those calls.

Based on the evaluation of information provided by the Syrian Arab Republic and all other safeguards-relevant information available to IAEA, the Agency found no indication of the diversion of declared nuclear material from peaceful activities. For 2021, IAEA concluded that declared nuclear material in the Syrian Arab Republic remained in peaceful activities.

In August, the Director General submitted a report<sup>118</sup> to the Board of Governors and the General Conference entitled "Application of Safeguards in the Democratic

People's Republic of Korea", providing an update on developments since the Director General's report<sup>119</sup> of September 2020.

Since 1994, IAEA had not been able to conduct all necessary safeguards activities provided for in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Safeguards Agreement of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.<sup>120</sup> From the end of 2002 until July 2007 and since April 2009, IAEA was not able to implement any verification measures in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and, therefore, IAEA could not draw any safeguards conclusion regarding the country.

During the year, no verification activities were implemented in the field, but IAEA continued to monitor developments in the nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and to evaluate all safeguards-relevant information available to it, including open-source information and satellite imagery.

In 2021, the IAEA secretariat continued to maintain the Agency's enhanced readiness to play its essential role in verifying the nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The secretariat has further refined its collection and analysis of safeguards-relevant, open-source information on the country's nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, collected and analysed a wide range of high-resolution commercial satellite imagery, maintained necessary equipment and supplies, held training workshops to prepare Agency inspectors for verification and monitoring activities in the country, and continued to document the Agency's knowledge of its nuclear programme. Once a political agreement has been reached among the countries concerned, the Agency is ready to return to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in a timely manner, if requested to do so by the Government and subject to approval by the Board of Governors.

## Export controls

### Nuclear Suppliers Group

The Nuclear Suppliers Group is made up of nuclear supplier countries seeking to contribute to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons through the implementation, on a national basis, of export controls for nuclear and nuclear-related dual-use equipment, materials, software, and related technology, without hindering international cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>114</sup> IAEA, documents [GOV/2021/15](#), [GOV/2021/29](#), [GOV/2021/42](#) and [GOV/2021/52](#).

<sup>115</sup> IAEA, document [GOV/2021/41](#).

<sup>116</sup> IAEA, document [GOV/2020/43](#).

<sup>117</sup> The Board of Governors, in its resolution [GOV/2011/41](#) of June 2011 (adopted by a vote), had, inter alia, called on the Syrian Arab Republic to urgently remedy its non-compliance with its Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Safeguards Agreement and, in particular, to provide IAEA with updated reporting under its Safeguards Agreement and access to all information, sites, materials and persons necessary for IAEA to verify such reporting and resolve all outstanding questions so that IAEA could provide the necessary assurance as to the exclusively peaceful nature of the nuclear programme of the Syrian Arab Republic.

<sup>118</sup> IAEA, document [GOV/2021/40-GC\(65\)/22](#).

<sup>119</sup> IAEA, document [GOV/2020/42GC\(64\)/18](#).

<sup>120</sup> IAEA document [INFCIRC/403](#).

<sup>121</sup> As at the end of 2021, the participating Governments of the Group were Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom and United States. The

In 2021, the Group convened its thirtieth plenary meeting, which had been postponed in 2020 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. Held on 24 and 25 June and chaired by Werner Bauwens (Belgium), the plenary meeting reaffirmed the Group's commitment to preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and discussed activities that the Group's participating Governments had undertaken since its last plenary, held in Nur-Sultan in 2019. On a procedural note, the Group welcomed the smooth transition resulting from holding the plenary meeting at the conclusion of the Chair's term.<sup>122</sup>

The participating Governments exchanged information on global proliferation challenges. In that connection, the Nuclear Suppliers Group expressed support for diplomatic efforts to achieve the complete denuclearization of, and lasting peace on, the Korean Peninsula. The Group also reaffirmed its commitment to the full implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions to that end, noting its prohibition on supplying the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with any items on its control lists. The Group also expressed support for ongoing efforts by parties to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, as well as the United States, to ensure the full implementation of the Plan and a return by the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran to their commitments under the Plan. The Group noted that it continued to receive briefings from the Coordinator of the Procurement Working Group of the Plan's Joint Commission<sup>123</sup> regarding the work of the [Procurement Channel](#).

The Group reiterated its firm support for the full, complete and effective implementation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime. Furthermore, the participating States highlighted the importance of effective export controls, as well as the concrete contribution of their agreed updated guidelines and understandings to the Treaty's tenth Review Conference.

The Group also discussed membership and participation of States not party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty; technical issues important to the implementation of the control lists; the significance of updating the Group's Guidelines to "keep pace with the evolving non-proliferation landscape and a fast-paced nuclear and nuclear-related industry"; and best practice in implementing the Guidelines.

Outreach continued to be a priority for the Nuclear Suppliers Group in 2021, as it welcomed the efforts by many non-participants to harmonize their national export control systems with the Group's Guidelines and control lists. The Group agreed on

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European Commission and the Chair of the Zangger Committee participated as permanent observers.

<sup>122</sup> Nuclear Suppliers Group, "[Public Statement: Plenary Meeting of the Nuclear Suppliers Group](#)", 25 June 2021.

<sup>123</sup> The Joint Commission comprises the parties to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy serves as its Coordinator.

the value of outreach activities to non-participants, as well as to industry and academic and research institutions. In particular, the plenary meeting welcomed the launch of a Russian-language version of the Group's website. The incoming Chair for the period 2021–2022, Tomasz ŁękarSKI (Poland), stated that the crucial aspect of outreach activities was to "broaden understanding of the role, mission and work of the [Nuclear Suppliers Group], to encourage non-participating Governments to adhere to the [Group's] Guidelines, and to facilitate an open dialogue on issues of common interest and concern related to nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear export controls".<sup>124</sup>

### Missile Technology Control Regime

Owing to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Missile Technology Control Regime was not able to meet in Innsbruck, Austria, as planned. Its thirty-third plenary meeting instead took place from 4 to 8 October in Sochi, Russian Federation, chaired by Grigory Mashkov (Russian Federation).<sup>125</sup>

The Partner States conducted extensive discussions on, and expressed concern about, global missile proliferation activities, in particular ongoing missile programmes in Asia and the Middle East, which they considered might fuel missile proliferation activities elsewhere. They also encouraged relevant bodies and institutions to pay attention to the role of export controls in preventing the proliferation of missiles capable of carrying weapons of mass destruction.

Regarding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Partner States recalled relevant resolutions of the Security Council, including [2371 \(2017\)](#), [2375 \(2017\)](#) and [2397 \(2017\)](#). They took note of the international community's continued obligations under the resolutions and confirmed their support for ongoing diplomatic processes and efforts to achieve lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula. Bearing in mind the ballistic missile launches over the past two years and continual missile technology development by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Partner States reiterated the need for full compliance by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with those Security Council resolutions and their commitment to exercising the necessary vigilance when controlling transfers that could contribute to the country's ballistic missile programme.

Regarding the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Partner States recalled Security Council resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), taking note of the international community's continued obligations under the resolution, including its ballistic missile provisions in Annex B. In addition, concerns were expressed in relation to the implementation of the resolution.

The Partner States agreed to continue exchanging views on those and other global missile programme developments.

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<sup>124</sup> Nuclear Suppliers Group, "[Chair's Corner](#)".

<sup>125</sup> Missile Technology Control Regime, "[Public Statement from the Plenary Meeting of the Missile Technology Control Regime Sochi](#)", 8 October 2021.

### The Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation

The twentieth annual regular meeting of the Subscribing States to The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation took place on 7 and 8 July in Vienna, chaired by Argentina, and with the participation of 77 delegations.<sup>126</sup> No additional States had subscribed since the 2020 annual meeting, and the total number of Subscribing States remained at 143.

The Subscribing States reaffirmed the importance of the Code as a unique multilateral confidence-building and transparency instrument against ballistic missile proliferation, which contributes to the process of strengthening existing national and international security arrangements and disarmament and non-proliferation objectives and mechanisms.

They stressed the importance of achieving the full implementation of the Code, in particular concerning the timely submission of pre-launch notifications and annual declarations, and reiterated their intention to encourage and achieve improved performance in those areas. They also stressed the ongoing need to prevent and curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, and to encourage new subscriptions to the Code, particularly by countries with space launch vehicle and ballistic missile capabilities.

The Subscribing States reaffirmed the threat to international peace and security posed by the proliferation in various regions of the world of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, which they regarded as a serious concern of the international community. They also discussed developments related to the missile programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the context of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Additionally, the Subscribing States reaffirmed the right to exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes as provided for in the Outer Space Treaty. It was emphasized that States needed to exercise necessary vigilance in considering assistance for space launch vehicle programmes so as not to contribute to, support or assist any ballistic missile programme in contravention of international norms and obligations.

The Subscribing States agreed to continue efforts to universalize the Code through various outreach activities. Argentina, as Chair for the period 2021–2022, announced that the main objectives of its chairmanship would be to continue efforts for the Code's universalization and implementation, as well as the preparations to mark its twentieth anniversary.

<sup>126</sup> [Press release](#) on the twentieth regular meeting of the Subscribing States of The Hague Code of Conduct, Vienna, 7–8 July 2021.

### Political declarations and other initiatives

#### Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament

The Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament was launched in 2019 by States parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to strengthen disarmament diplomacy within the context of the Treaty, as well as build bridges between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States.

The members<sup>127</sup> of the Initiative held three ministerial meetings in 2021: in Amman on 6 January; in Madrid on 5 July; and in Stockholm on 14 December. At the Amman meeting, the co-hosts released a [press statement](#), noting that the members had, inter alia, called on the nuclear-weapon States to reduce nuclear risks and advance nuclear disarmament. They had also called on Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty States parties to support the “[Stepping Stones for Advancing Nuclear Disarmament](#)”, which were actions to reinforce the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and its implementation.<sup>128</sup> In a [press release](#), the co-hosts of the Madrid meeting communicated that the Initiative's members had endorsed a working paper<sup>129</sup> by Switzerland on reducing nuclear risks while also agreeing to strengthen outreach and dialogue with other Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty States parties.

After holding their final meeting of the year in Stockholm on 14 December, the participating ministers issued a joint [press statement](#). Building on many of the previously mentioned elements, they underscored their resolve to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons and to reduce the risks they posed in the interim in advance of the tenth Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

#### Affirmations that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought

At their summit in Geneva on 16 June, the presidents of the Russian Federation and the United States agreed on a [joint statement on strategic stability](#), in which they reaffirmed “that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought”. They also agreed to launch an integrated bilateral strategic stability dialogue to lay the groundwork for future measures for arms control and risk reduction.

Additionally, in the context of preparations for the twentieth anniversary of the [Treaty of Good Neighbourliness and Friendly Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China](#), President Xi Jinping of China and President Putin released a [joint statement](#) on 28 June, in which they, inter alia, stated their conviction that “nuclear war has no winners and should never be unleashed”. Given the risks of escalation, they pledged to do their utmost to prevent armed conflicts between “any States with military nuclear capabilities”.

<sup>127</sup> Argentina, Canada, Ethiopia, Finland, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

<sup>128</sup> Germany, Federal Foreign Office, “[The NPT at 50](#)” (press release), 25 February 2020, annex.

<sup>129</sup> [NPT/CONF.2020/WP.9](#).

## **P5 process**

The five nuclear-weapon States recognized by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (the P5)<sup>130</sup> met in Paris on 2 and 3 December for the tenth P5 Conference in anticipation of the Treaty's tenth Review Conference. The participants adopted a [joint communiqué](#) on 3 December in which they “reaffirmed their commitment under the [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty] to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control”. In addition, they expressed their intention to continue their work on strategic risk reduction, endorsed the second edition of the P5 Glossary of Key Nuclear Terms,<sup>131</sup> reaffirmed their commitment to nuclear-weapon-free zones, expressed support for the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty and stressed the shared benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Secretary-General welcomed the joint statement, especially the commitment to existing obligations and risk reduction, and reiterated his willingness to work with the nuclear-weapon States and all Member States to achieve the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States.

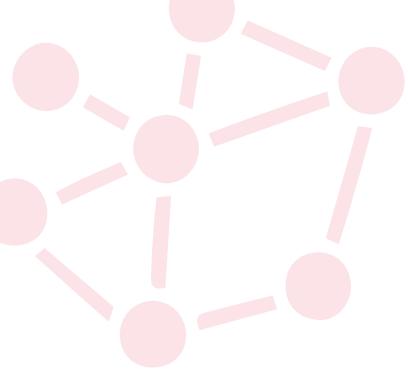
<sup>131</sup> [NPT/CONF.2020/WP.51](#).

<sup>132</sup> [Statement](#) by Stéphane Dujarric, Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, on the joint statement of the leaders of the five nuclear-weapon States on preventing nuclear war and avoiding arms races, New York, 3 January 2022.



CHAPTER II

**BIOLOGICAL  
AND CHEMICAL  
WEAPONS**



*Any use of chemical weapons is unacceptable and a clear violation of international law. Identifying those responsible and holding them to account is of paramount importance. We have a responsibility, particularly to the victims, to ensure accountability for the use of these heinous weapons.*

ANTÓNIO GUTERRES, UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL<sup>1</sup>



At a briefing for Member States on 22 November 2021 in New York on the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons.

## CHAPTER II

### Biological and chemical weapons

#### Developments and trends, 2021

IN 2021, THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC continued to pose challenges to efforts aimed at upholding the global ban on chemical weapons. Nonetheless, by adjusting its working arrangements throughout the year, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) fulfilled its mandate and commitment to ensuring the full and effective implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention).

As OPCW took forward its critical work of verifying the ongoing destruction of the world's remaining declared chemical weapons stockpiles, it continued to carry out chemical industry inspections as conditions in the pandemic allowed.<sup>2</sup> The OPCW Executive Council held its regular sessions under adapted modalities, thus fulfilling its obligation to ensure the Convention's continued implementation.

Meanwhile, the OPCW Technical Secretariat continued working to build capacities among States parties to prevent chemical weapons from re-emerging. The Technical Secretariat used online platforms and modules to continue its capacity-building programmes, assisting States parties and other stakeholders in promoting

<sup>1</sup> Secretary-General's [message](#) on the Day of Remembrance for All Victims of Chemical Warfare, 30 November 2021.

<sup>2</sup> The inspections took place in line with article VI, on activities not prohibited under the Convention. For more information about article VI inspections, see the OPCW [website](#).



the peaceful uses of chemistry; advancing scientific and technological cooperation; countering the threats posed by non-State actors; and expanding partnerships with international organizations, non-governmental organizations, the chemical industry and other entities.

Other activities of OPCW in 2021 included notable progress in constructing its Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre) within the planned timeline and budget. Additionally, OPCW continued to advocate for the universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention, urging the remaining States not party to the Convention to join without delay or preconditions.

OPCW faced delays, however, in its activities to ensure that the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic resolves all gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies that had arisen from the initial declaration of its chemical weapons programme. Despite those delays, the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission continued its work to establish the facts surrounding allegations of chemical weapons use in the Syrian Arab Republic. Likewise, the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team kept up its activities to identify the perpetrators of chemical weapons use in the country.<sup>3</sup> The Team issued its second report<sup>4</sup> in April. In the same month, the Conference of the States Parties decided to suspend certain rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic, in accordance with article XII of the Convention.<sup>5</sup>

The Secretary-General, for his part, continued to underscore the need to identify and hold accountable those who have used chemical weapons. In that regard, the Office for Disarmament Affairs supported the Secretary-General's good offices in furthering the implementation of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) on the elimination of the chemical weapons programme in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Office also worked with members of the Security Council in their efforts to build unity and restore adherence to the global norm against chemical weapons.

Separately, as the global health situation permitted, States held several previously postponed meetings within the framework of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (Biological Weapons Convention).<sup>6</sup> The 2020 Meetings of Experts took place in Geneva from 30 August to 8 September 2021, and the 2020 Meeting of States Parties was held in Geneva from 22 to 25 November 2021. Then, as agreed upon at the Meeting of States Parties, the Preparatory Committee for the ninth Review Conference held its first meeting in

<sup>3</sup> OPCW, "Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use" (decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 of 27 June 2018).

<sup>4</sup> OPCW, document S/1943/2021.

<sup>5</sup> Article XII of the Chemical Weapons Convention concerns measures to redress a situation and to ensure compliance, including sanctions. For more information, visit the OPCW website.

<sup>6</sup> In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic prompted the decision by the States parties to postpone all meetings on the Biological Weapons Convention for that year, including the Meetings of Experts and the Meeting of States Parties. Those postponements had implications for the ninth Review Conference and its Preparatory Committee meeting, which was due to take place no later than 2021.

Geneva on 20 December.<sup>7</sup> The Committee decided to resume work in April 2022 and to schedule the ninth Review Conference later that year, from 8 to 26 August 2022.<sup>8</sup> The States parties decided to hold both meetings in Geneva in an in-person format, in accordance with past practice for sessions of the Biological Weapons Convention.

## Chemical weapons

The Chemical Weapons Convention prohibits the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention, transfer or use of chemical weapons by States parties. As at 31 December, it had 193 States parties. One additional State had signed the Convention but not yet ratified or acceded to it.<sup>9</sup>

### Twenty-fifth session (part II) and twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the States Parties

Owing to delays caused in 2020 by the COVID-19 pandemic, the second part of the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention took place the following year, in The Hague from 20 to 22 April 2021.<sup>10</sup> Representatives of 149 States parties and one signatory State attended, while 73 civil society organizations participated remotely, along with representatives from the chemical industry and the scientific community.<sup>11</sup> The session was also attended by officials from 10 international organizations, specialized agencies and other international bodies.<sup>12</sup>

In the second part of the twenty-fifth session, the States parties addressed the agenda items that they had not covered in 2020. That work included reviewing the status of implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention—specifically with respect to disarmament activities, the prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons, assistance and protection, and international cooperation, among other areas. Delegates also heard a briefing on recent progress in the destruction operations of the United States, the last declared possessor State party. Additionally, participants received a report on efforts to resume Japan's recovery and destruction of abandoned chemical weapons on the territory of China.<sup>13</sup> The Conference adopted, by a vote,

<sup>7</sup> All meetings took place in an in-person format under strict health measures.

<sup>8</sup> The ninth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention was rescheduled to take place from 28 November to 16 December 2022.

<sup>9</sup> For the Convention's text and adherence status, see the Office for Disarmament Affairs Disarmament Treaties Database.

<sup>10</sup> The first part of the session was held from 30 November to 1 December 2020.

<sup>11</sup> For the list of participating States, see OPCW, "Report of the twenty-fifth session for the Conference of the States Parties" (document C-25/5), paras. 1.2–1.3. For the list of participants from non-governmental organizations, see OPCW, document C-25/DEC.3, annex. For the list of participants from the chemical industry and the scientific community, see OPCW, document C-25/DEC.2, annex.

<sup>12</sup> For the list of international organizations, see OPCW, document C-25/DEC.1, annex.

<sup>13</sup> The operations had been suspended in 2020 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

a decision<sup>14</sup> entitled “Addressing the possession and use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic”, suspending certain rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic under the Chemical Weapons Convention, pursuant to paragraph 2 of article XII. By that decision, the States parties would reinstate the suspended rights and privileges once the OPCW Director-General has reported that the Syrian Arab Republic has fulfilled all measures as required in a July 2020 decision<sup>15</sup> taken by the OPCW Executive Council.

The Conference of the States Parties convened for its twenty-sixth session in The Hague from 29 November to 3 December. Representatives of 152 States parties and one signatory State attended in person.<sup>16</sup> In addition, officials of 76 civil society organizations participated remotely, along with representatives from the chemical industry and the scientific community.<sup>17</sup> The session was also attended by representatives of eight international organizations, specialized agencies and other international bodies.<sup>18</sup>

The Conference reviewed the status of the Convention’s implementation, received briefings on progress in the destruction operations of the United States, and heard updates on the recovery and destruction of abandoned chemical weapons by Japan and China. The States parties also considered and approved the OPCW Technical Secretariat’s first biennial programme and budget, providing it with the necessary resources for its activities over the period 2022–2023. In addition, the Conference adopted a decision<sup>19</sup> to provide more clarity on its understanding of the aerosolized use of central nervous system-acting chemicals for law enforcement purposes, drawing on extensive work by the OPCW Scientific Advisory Board. Furthermore, the Conference approved a decision<sup>20</sup> to renew the appointment of the OPCW Director-General, Fernando Arias, for a second four-year term.

### Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

As at 31 December, 98.97 per cent (69,764 metric tons) of the total amount (70,494 metric tons) of Category 1 chemical weapons declared by States parties had been destroyed.

The destruction of all Category 1 chemical weapons stockpiles declared by six States parties had been completed previously.

<sup>14</sup> OPCW, document [C-25/DEC.9](#).

<sup>15</sup> OPCW, “Addressing the possession and use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic” (decision [EC-94/DEC.2](#) of 9 July 2020).

<sup>16</sup> For the list of participating States parties, see OPCW, document [C-26/INF.3/Rev.1](#).

<sup>17</sup> For the list of non-governmental organizations, see OPCW, document [C-26/DEC.3](#), annex. For the list of organizations that represented the chemical industry and the scientific community, see OPCW, document [C-26/DEC.2](#), annex.

<sup>18</sup> For the list of international organizations, specialized agencies and other international bodies, see OPCW, document [C-26/DEC.1](#), annex.

<sup>19</sup> OPCW, decision [C-26/DEC.10](#) of 1 December 2021.

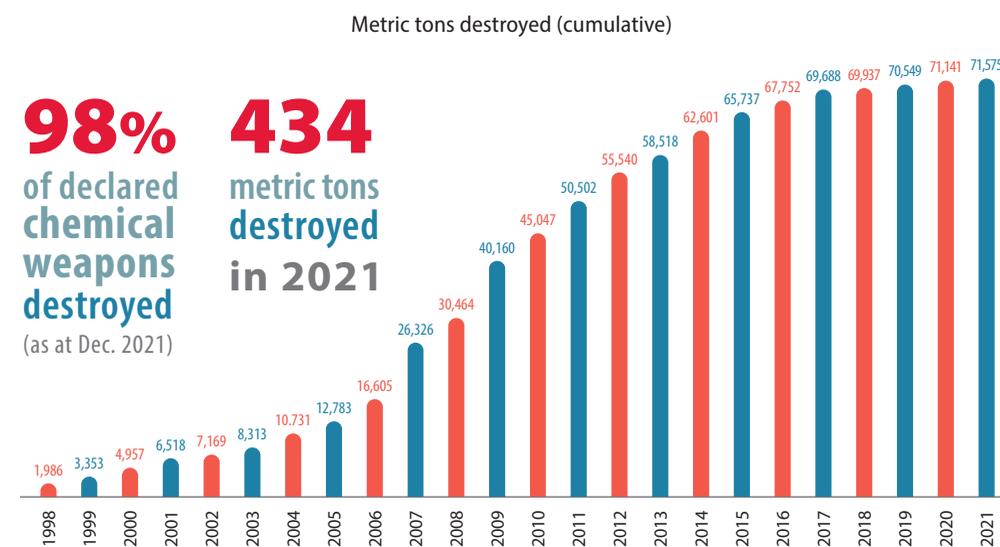
<sup>20</sup> OPCW, decision [C-26/DEC.9](#) of 30 November 2021.

The aggregate amount of Category 2 chemical weapons destroyed stood at 1,811 metric tons, or 100 per cent of the total amount declared. Albania, India, Libya, the Russian Federation, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United States had completed the destruction of all declared Category 2 chemical weapons.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the United States continued to make progress in its efforts to destroy all of its declared chemical weapons. As at 31 December, it had eliminated 97.37 per cent of its Category 1 chemical weapons and all of its Category 2 and Category 3 chemical weapons.

After the suspension of activities related to abandoned chemical weapons in 2020, China and Japan reported the resumption, from May to October 2021, of excavation, recovery and destruction operations in Haerbaling, China. In addition, transportation operations to the destruction sites in Haerbaling and Harbin, China, restarted from August to September 2021. Then, on 18 November, China, Japan and

### Progress in the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles, 1998–2021



Since the Chemical Weapons Convention entered into force, some 72,000 metric tons of chemical weapons have been declared by eight possessor States parties. As at the end of 2021, more than 98 per cent of those declared chemical weapon stockpiles have been destroyed, all under verification by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. In 2021, 434 metric tons were destroyed.

Source: Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

the OPCW Technical Secretariat held their thirty-fifth trilateral meeting, virtually, to discuss practical and technical aspects of current projects to destroy abandoned chemical weapons.

As a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, OPCW was able to carry out only 80 of the 241 inspections pursuant to article VI planned for 2021. Nonetheless, despite the challenge, the organization succeeded in completing all its planned inspections for the year for chemicals listed in Schedule 1 of the Convention.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, OPCW completed two additional inspections for Schedule 1 chemicals at newly declared facilities.

OPCW also continued to maintain a global network of designated laboratories that must meet its proficiency criteria for performing off-site analysis of samples collected by the organization's inspectors. In 2021, 56 laboratories from 36 States parties participated in OPCW confidence-building exercises and proficiency tests for the analysis of chemicals related to the Chemical Weapons Convention. The official OPCW proficiency test programme took place uninterrupted, despite the pandemic.

OPCW made significant progress during the year in constructing its new Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre). As at the end of 2021, the organization had achieved the project's funding target of €33.5 million, having received over €33.74 million in financial contributions and pledges from 52 countries, the European Union and other donors. On-site construction activities began in June and, on 23 September, OPCW held a ceremony to mark the symbolic placement of the project's first pillar. The ChemTech Centre is due to be completed by the end of 2022, with its inauguration scheduled for 2023. By increasing the ability of OPCW to respond to new threats, prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons, and keep pace with scientific and technological developments, the Centre is expected to enhance the organization's achievement of the object and purpose of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

### **Partnership with the chemical industry**

The OPCW Technical Secretariat and the chemical industry continued efforts to strengthen their cooperation in accordance with the relevant recommendations of the Convention's third Review Conference.

The Chemical Industry Coordination Group held two meetings in 2021, using a virtual format for both owing to restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants representing the International Council of Chemical Associations, the International Chemical Trade Association and the OPCW Technical Secretariat discussed, among other issues, the impact of the pandemic, as well as current trends and challenges in the global chemical industry. The participants also

<sup>21</sup> To implement the Convention, the schedules in the [annex on chemicals](#) identify chemicals in respect of which special verification measures are applied in accordance with the provisions of the Convention's verification annex.

continued to exchange information on joint capacity-building activities, particularly regarding chemical safety and security.<sup>22</sup>

### **Education and outreach**

The OPCW Advisory Board on Education and Outreach met for its tenth session<sup>23</sup> on 9 and 10 February, and for its eleventh session<sup>24</sup> on 26 and 27 July. It held both sessions online owing to COVID-19-related travel restrictions. At its tenth session, the Board adopted its strategic plan,<sup>25</sup> setting out priorities for its work and target audiences in line with the priorities of OPCW.

In addition, the Advisory Board's Temporary Working Group on e-Learning prepared its final report<sup>26</sup> and adopted it through correspondence in July. In the report, the Working Group provided a series of recommendations for improving the e-learning offerings of OPCW. Following the final report's issuance, the Advisory Board was expected to continue focusing on e-learning, active learning and the creation of new educational resources as areas of work to raise awareness about OPCW and its mission.

### **National implementation, assistance and protection against chemical weapons, and international cooperation in promoting peaceful uses of chemistry**

The OPCW Technical Secretariat continued to assist States parties in working towards the full and effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention in the areas of national implementation, assistance and protection against chemical weapons, and international cooperation in promoting peaceful uses of chemistry. In 2021, despite operational restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Technical Secretariat conducted 83 online capacity-building and knowledge-sharing sessions, benefiting 4,162 participants from 156 States parties. In addition, the Technical Secretariat worked to strengthen Convention-related capacities through other support modalities, such as laboratory twinning, research grants, fellowships and equipment exchange.

Notwithstanding COVID-19 restrictions, the OPCW Technical Secretariat provided ongoing technical assistance and capacity-building support to States parties through a wide range of activities designed to support the effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. In providing that support, the Technical Secretariat adapted its delivery of programmes in response to evolving operational

<sup>22</sup> For a detailed account of the OPCW engagement with the chemical industry see OPCW, "Note by the Director-General: Engaging the Chemical Industry Associations" (document [C-26/DG.15](#)).

<sup>23</sup> For the report of the Board's tenth session, see OPCW, document [ABEO-10/1](#).

<sup>24</sup> For the report of the Board's eleventh session, see OPCW, document [ABEO-11/1](#).

<sup>25</sup> OPCW, document [ABEO-10/1](#), annex 2.

<sup>26</sup> OPCW, "Note by the Director-General: Report on the activities of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach covering the period 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021" (document [EC-98/DG.17 \(C-26/DG.13\)](#)), annex.

conditions, while also implementing new modalities to ensure that States parties could continue to access remote assistance and capacity-building opportunities.

To that end, representatives of national authorities and other stakeholders received tailored training for meeting their national obligations related to declarations and inspections under the Convention. Through dedicated training courses, States parties could enhance their knowledge of chemical security legislation and regulations while receiving guidance for reviewing national legislation relevant to the Convention. Likewise, customs authorities continued to receive advisory support aimed at strengthening their capacities to train customs officers on the Convention's transfer regime of scheduled chemicals. Furthermore, customs officers continued to participate in regional training courses on monitoring the transfer of toxic chemicals.

The OPCW Technical Secretariat also engaged with and supported national authorities at the international and regional levels, as in previous years. In 2021, it organized one global meeting and four regional meetings, in an online format, in which national stakeholders discussed issues related to the Convention's implementation while promoting subregional, regional and international cooperation. In addition, over the course of the year, 925 participants from 129 States parties attended 17 events to support States parties' implementation of the Convention.

Additionally, the Technical Secretariat delivered 35 online training courses as part of its ongoing assistance and protection efforts related to article X<sup>27</sup> of the Convention. Those programmes provided 2,102 participants from 110 States parties with information, knowledge and expertise to enhance their capacity to respond to chemical incidents.

To further assist medical practitioners providing care to victims of chemical weapons, OPCW translated a guide, published in 2016, into two languages, Farsi and Turkish.<sup>28</sup> Those translations of the *Practical Guide for Medical Management of Chemical Warfare Casualties* received funding from a trust fund<sup>29</sup> established by the Conference of the States Parties in 2011.

Meanwhile, the OPCW Technical Secretariat launched an Online Self-Assessment Tool to help provide the States parties of the Southern African Development Community with tailored support to strengthen their capacities under article X.

The Technical Secretariat also continued to implement article XI<sup>30</sup> of the Convention in three thematic areas: integrated chemicals management; enhancement of laboratory capabilities; and chemical knowledge promotion and exchange. It

<sup>27</sup> Article X of the Chemical Weapons Convention concerns assistance and protection against chemical weapons. For more information, visit the OPCW [website](#).

<sup>28</sup> The guide is scheduled to be translated into Russian in 2022.

<sup>29</sup> For more information on the establishment of the trust fund, see OPCW, decision [C-16/DEC.13](#) of 2 December 2011.

<sup>30</sup> Article XI of the Chemical Weapons Convention concerns economic and technological development. For more information, visit the OPCW [website](#).

organized 29 online capacity-building events around those themes during the year, benefiting 1,022 experts from 118 States parties.

To further support the implementation of article XI, the Technical Secretariat maintained its support for a process that allowed stakeholders to review and evaluate its activities, as well as those of States parties, to promote the peaceful uses of chemistry. On 10 November, it held the sixth "Review & Evaluation Workshop of the Components of an Agreed Framework for the Full Implementation of Article XI" in an online format, reaching 79 delegates from 48 States parties.<sup>31</sup>

Engaging further with national authorities, the Technical Secretariat delivered a set of online modules for intersessional training as part of its Associate Programme, the flagship capacity-building initiative of OPCW. The interactive training provided 27 professionals from 18 States parties with enhanced knowledge of the Convention, practical advice about its implementation and best practices in relation to the chemical industry.

Furthermore, the OPCW Technical Secretariat cooperated with a panel of experts to produce the *Indicative Guidelines for Chemical Safety and Security in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises to Foster the Peaceful Uses of Chemistry*, which was an outcome of a series of workshops on developing tools for chemical safety and security. The non-binding reference document was the first of its kind, containing a series of best practices that the chemical industry could use in its efforts to strengthen safety and security management and, ultimately, to prevent and reduce incidents and accidents at chemical facilities.

Throughout 2021, OPCW continued to place special emphasis on supporting African States parties in their implementation of the Convention. Acting through its Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the Chemical Weapons Convention (Africa Programme), the organization held a total of 51 capacity-building events that benefited 1,000 participants from 40 African States parties. Those events included 25 organized specifically for the Africa region.

In addition, OPCW continued to promote the exchange of scientific and technical information and resources in Africa by sponsoring scientific conferences, fellowships, research projects and equipment transfers in support of African States parties.

Meanwhile, the Technical Secretariat persisted in its efforts to integrate gender perspectives into its capacity-building work, in line with the General Assembly's resolution on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control (75/48). In one indication of progress, OPCW moved closer to achieving equal gender representation among attendees at its capacity-building events on promoting the peaceful uses of chemistry. The Technical Secretariat also initiated a special capacity-building programme, targeting women first-responders and

<sup>31</sup> For more information, see OPCW, "Decision: Components of an agreed framework for the full implementation of article XI" (decision [C-16/DEC.10](#) of 1 December 2011).

military personnel, on addressing gender considerations and challenges in response procedures and emergency management.

### **Mission to eliminate the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic**

In 2021, OPCW pressed ahead with its mission to verify the elimination of the Syrian Arab Republic's declared chemical weapons programme.

In that regard, the OPCW [Fact-Finding Mission](#)<sup>32</sup> continued to gather all available information related to allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Mission conducted several deployments during the year, while continuing to engage with the Syrian Arab Republic and other States parties on a variety of allegations. The Fact-Finding Mission also analysed all information obtained by its team and provided by the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Mission transmitted information to the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team,<sup>33</sup> in accordance with a 2019 note<sup>34</sup> by the Technical Secretariat. The Team was preparing to transfer additional information to the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011.<sup>35</sup>

Meanwhile, the OPCW [Declaration Assessment Team](#) continued working with the Syrian Arab Republic to ensure that the country met all its declaration-related requirements in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention, relevant decisions of the OPCW policymaking organs and resolutions of the Security Council. The Team conducted one round of consultations with the Syrian Arab Republic in February, and the OPCW Director-General reported the outcome of those consultations to the OPCW Executive Council in a report<sup>36</sup> dated 5 March. The OPCW Technical Secretariat began contacting the Syrian Arab Republic in April to schedule the twenty-fifth round of consultations between the Declaration Assessment Team and the Syrian National Authority in Damascus. As of December, the Team had not been deployed. The Team's deployment for the twenty-fifth round of

consultations was hampered by delays in responses from the Syrian Arab Republic to correspondence regarding planned deployments and in the issuance of entry visas.

In other respects, pursuant to an OPCW Executive Council decision<sup>37</sup> reached in 2016, the Technical Secretariat dispatched inspectors in December to conduct the eighth round of inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre of the Syrian Arab Republic.

On 12 April, the OPCW Technical Secretariat issued a document entitled "Second report by the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team pursuant to paragraph 10 of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 'Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use', Saraqib (Syrian Arab Republic) – 4 February 2018".<sup>38</sup> The report sets out the findings of the investigations conducted in the period between April 2020 and March 2021, which focused on the incident that took place in Saraqib, Syrian Arab Republic, on 4 February 2018. Based on all the information obtained and its analysis, the Investigation and Identification Team concluded that there were reasonable grounds to believe that, on 4 February 2018, the Syrian Arab Air Force, under the control of the Tiger Forces, hit eastern Saraqib by dropping at least one cylinder of chlorine, affecting 12 named individuals. As required by decision [C-SS-4/DEC.3](#), the Technical Secretariat transmitted the report to the OPCW Executive Council and to the United Nations Secretary-General.

Despite travel restrictions and other challenges stemming from the COVID-19 situation, the Investigation and Identification Team continued requesting to meet with key representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic to discuss the Team's work, the provision of any relevant information and access to locations that the authorities of the Syrian Arab Republic may be able to facilitate. As at the end of the year, the Syrian Arab Republic had not responded to the Team's repeated requests.

### **Science and technology-related activities**

The OPCW Technical Secretariat continued to engage with broad sectors of the global scientific community throughout 2021, both to maintain strong ties with scientists and scientific societies and to keep fully abreast of developments in science and technology. To support those efforts, the Scientific Advisory Board met three times over the course of the year for its thirty-first, thirty-second and thirty-third sessions, held in March, June and November respectively.<sup>39</sup> The Board was expected to continue its work with a focus on preparing its scientific report in support of the fifth special session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, scheduled for 2023.

<sup>32</sup> The OPCW Director-General announced the creation of the Fact-Finding Mission on 29 April 2014. The Mission was mandated to establish the facts surrounding allegations of the use of toxic chemicals for hostile purposes in the Syrian Arab Republic.

<sup>33</sup> In accordance with Conference of the States Parties decision [C-SS-4/DEC.3](#) of 27 June 2018, the OPCW Technical Secretariat established the Investigation and Identification Team in 2019, with a mandate to identify individuals or entities directly or indirectly involved in the use of chemical weapons by investigating and reporting on all information potentially relevant to the origin of those weapons.

<sup>34</sup> See OPCW, "Note by the Technical Secretariat: Work of the Investigation and Identification Team established by decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 (dated 27 June 2018)" (document [EC-91/S/3](#)).

<sup>35</sup> The General Assembly established the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism by resolution [71/248](#) of 21 December 2016. For more information, see the Mechanism's [website](#).

<sup>36</sup> OPCW, "Report on the Work of the Declaration Assessment Team" (document [EC-96/HP/DG.1](#)).

<sup>37</sup> OPCW, "Decision: OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism reports on chemical weapons use in the Syrian Arab Republic" (document [EC-83/DEC.5](#) of 11 November 2016).

<sup>38</sup> OPCW, document [S/1943/2021](#).

<sup>39</sup> For more information see the reports of the Scientific Advisory Board at its thirty-first and thirty-second sessions (OPCW, documents [SAB-31/1](#) and [SAB-32/1](#)). The Board's report at its thirty-third session is forthcoming.

Following the work of the Temporary Working Group on investigative science and technology, and at the recommendation of the Scientific Advisory Board, the OPCW Director-General decided to establish a new Temporary Working Group on the Analysis of Biotoxins. The new Working Group began its activities on 26 January with an initial two-year mandate.<sup>40</sup> It met three times over the course of the year, in May, June and November.<sup>41</sup>

## Biological weapons

The Biological Weapons Convention was opened for signature on 10 April 1972 and entered into force on 26 March 1975, becoming the first multilateral treaty banning an entire category of weapons. The Convention effectively prohibits the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of biological and toxin weapons.

As at 31 December, the Convention had 183 States parties. Four signatory States had yet to ratify the Convention, and 10 States had neither signed nor acceded to it.<sup>42</sup>

### Meetings of Experts to the Biological Weapons Convention

In 2021, the States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention held five Meetings of Experts that had been postponed from the previous year owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. Convened back-to-back in August and September, the five Meetings respectively addressed the following topics: cooperation and assistance, with a particular focus on strengthening cooperation and assistance under article X; review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention; strengthening of national implementation; assistance, response and preparedness; and institutional strengthening of the Convention.

Owing to their technical nature and the limited time available to address all their subtopics, none of the Meetings had any general debate. At the conclusion of each Meeting, States parties adopted a concise procedural report<sup>43</sup> that included, as an annex, the Chair's summary of considerations, lessons, perspectives, recommendations, conclusions and proposals drawn from the presentations, statements, working papers and interventions. In consultation with States parties, the

Chairs of the five Meetings produced the summary reports on their own initiative and assumed responsibility for them.

At each Meeting of Experts, the Chair closed by expressing satisfaction with the substantive discussions and the large number of concrete proposals presented. Cleopa Kilonzo Mailu (Kenya), Chair of the Meeting of States Parties held in November, highlighted the importance of the Meetings of Experts: "This year is the last in the current intersessional programme and therefore serves as an important bridge as we begin to shift our focus towards the ninth Review Conference. We all, members of the [Biological Weapons Convention] bureau, worked in a concerted and consistent manner to ensure a common strong message."

### **Meeting of Experts on Cooperation and Assistance, with a Particular Focus on Strengthening Cooperation and Assistance under Article X**

The [Meeting of Experts on Cooperation and Assistance, with a Particular Focus on Strengthening Cooperation and Assistance under Article X](#)<sup>44</sup> took place in Geneva on 30 and 31 August. It was chaired by Kimmo Laukkanen (Finland), who had been nominated by the Western Group. The Meeting was attended by representatives from 89 States parties, one signatory State and two States not party to the Convention.<sup>45</sup> The national delegations were joined by officials from four United Nations entities, seven specialized agencies or other international organizations, one guest of the Meeting of Experts and 11 non-governmental organizations and research institutes.<sup>46</sup> The topics that the Meeting considered were listed in its agenda.<sup>47</sup>

During the Meeting, many States parties outlined domestic and international initiatives, training and activities undertaken since 2019, when the most recent previous official meeting of the Convention was held. States parties also underlined the importance of voluntary national reports on the implementation of article X as a means of sharing information and strengthening cooperation, especially in the context of the global pandemic.

Moreover, all States parties recognized the importance of the Assistance and Cooperation Database under article X, noting it as one of the major tools for supporting cooperation under the Biological Weapons Convention. However, States parties stressed the need for further in-depth discussion to explore how the Database could be further improved and promoted to reach its full potential.

In discussing obstacles to international cooperation, assistance and exchange, States parties exchanged views on the need to bridge gaps between developed and developing countries in biotechnology, genetic engineering, microbiology and other related areas. The States parties also underscored the importance of promoting

<sup>40</sup> For the terms of reference of the Temporary Working Group on the Analysis of Biotoxins, see OPCW, document [SAB-31/1](#), annex 2.

<sup>41</sup> For more information, see the summaries of the first and second meetings of the Temporary Working Group on the Analysis of Biotoxins (OPCW, documents [SAB-32/WP.1](#) and [SAB-33/WP.1](#)).

<sup>42</sup> For the Convention's [text and adherence status](#), see the Office for Disarmament Affairs Disarmament Treaties Database. The States that had not signed nor acceded to the Convention were Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Israel, Kiribati, Micronesia (Federated States of), Namibia, South Sudan and Tuvalu.

<sup>43</sup> For the reports of the five Meetings of Experts, see [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/2](#), [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.2/2/Rev.1](#), [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.3/2](#), [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.4/2](#) and [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.5/2](#).

<sup>44</sup> Article X of the Biological Weapons Convention provides for the Convention to be implemented in a manner that encourages the peaceful uses of biological science and technology.

<sup>45</sup> [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/2](#), paras. 8–10.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 11–14. For the list of participants, see [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/INF.1](#).

<sup>47</sup> [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/1](#).

South-South cooperation in the field of capacity-building and encouraging further measures to facilitate such initiatives.

States parties further acknowledged the merit in continued coordination and cooperation with international and regional organizations that were playing important roles in disease surveillance, prevention, detection and response. Sustained cooperation and assistance were highlighted as important elements to face new transnational challenges in the aftermath of the pandemic. From that perspective, many States parties underlined synergies between article VII and article X of the Biological Weapons Convention.

### **Meeting of Experts on Review of Developments in the Field of Science and Technology Related to the Convention**

The Meeting of Experts on Review of Developments in the Field of Science and Technology Related to the Convention took place in Geneva on 1 and 2 September. It was chaired by Kazuhiro Nakai (Japan), who had been nominated by the Western Group. The Meeting included representatives from 93 States parties, one signatory State and two States not party to the Convention.<sup>48</sup> The national delegations were joined by two guests of the Meeting of Experts, as well as officials from four United Nations entities, six specialized agencies or other international organizations, and 12 non-governmental organizations and research institutes.<sup>49</sup> The topics that the Meeting considered were listed in its agenda.<sup>50</sup>

Participants discussed different proposals for establishing a science and technology review mechanism under the Biological Weapons Convention. It was noted that the various recent initiatives on exploring options for establishing such a mechanism had triggered substantive attention and contributed towards potential converging views among States parties. Several States parties expressed their willingness to further engage on the issue with a view to finding a compromise at the ninth Review Conference.

Discussions also revolved around biosecurity regulations. Several States parties underlined the usefulness of industrial biosafety norms, such as [ISO 35001](#),<sup>51</sup> to assist in the implementation of article IV,<sup>52</sup> while others expressed reservations

towards such norms, which could, in their view, constrict the development of national biosecurity standards.

During consideration of the potential development of a voluntary model code of conduct, the “[Tianjin Biosecurity Guidelines for Codes of Conduct for Scientists](#)”<sup>53</sup> received wide recognition and support from several States parties. Many States parties stressed that any code of conduct needed to be voluntary in nature and based on a bottom-up approach involving scientists. Participants acknowledged that the proposed Guidelines could be easily adapted to national circumstances and were practical in nature, making them suitable for domestic adoption. Many States parties expressed their hope that the Guidelines could be adopted at the upcoming ninth Review Conference.

### **Meeting of Experts on Strengthening National Implementation**

The Meeting of Experts on Strengthening National Implementation took place in Geneva on 3 September. It was chaired by Arman Baissuanov (Kazakhstan), who had been nominated by the Eastern European Group. The Meeting included representatives from 95 States parties, one signatory State and two States not party to the Convention.<sup>54</sup> Those national delegations were joined by officials from five United Nations entities, six specialized agencies or other international organizations, one guest of the Meeting of Experts and 13 non-governmental organizations and research institutes.<sup>55</sup> The topics that the Meeting considered were listed in its agenda.<sup>56</sup>

States parties shared their views on measures related to article IV of the Convention and described their ongoing national activities, which included implementing relevant legislation, establishing handbooks and certification mechanisms for institutions dealing with biosecurity and biosafety, conducting peer review exercises, and carrying out laboratory inspections.

Participants also considered the importance of confidence-building measures as tools for enhancing transparency and building confidence among States parties. In that regard, they noted as a positive trend the increasing rate of annual submissions of confidence-building measures, which in 2020 had reached their highest level to date. Moreover, participants presented several concrete proposals for enhancing the utility and use of such measures.

Furthermore, States parties informed the Meeting of Experts about different voluntary actions they were taking to improve transparency and build confidence in implementing the Convention in the absence of a compliance mechanism. Their approaches included peer reviews, voluntary visits and transparency exercises.

acquisition or retention of biological weapons within a State’s territory, under its jurisdiction or control.

<sup>53</sup> InterAcademy Partnership, July 2021.

<sup>54</sup> [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.3/2](#), paras. 8–10.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 11–14. For the list of participants, see [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.3/INF.1](#).

<sup>56</sup> [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.3/1](#).

<sup>48</sup> [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.2/2/Rev.1](#), paras. 8–10.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 11–14. For the list of all participants, see [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.2/INF.1](#).

<sup>50</sup> [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.2/1](#).

<sup>51</sup> The ISO 35001 biorisk management system establishes the biorisk management principles that enable laboratories and related facilities to achieve their biosafety and biosecurity objectives; defines the essential components of a biorisk management system framework to be integrated into the overall governance, strategy and planning, management, reporting processes, policies, values, and culture of a laboratory or other related facility; describes a comprehensive biorisk management process that mitigates biorisks (biosafety and biosecurity risks); and provides guidance on the implementation and use of the standard, where appropriate.

<sup>52</sup> Under article IV of the Biological Weapons Convention, States parties are required to take any national measures necessary to prohibit and prevent the development, production, stockpiling,

Participants also discussed the potential creation of an exchange platform for voluntary transparency exercises.

While considering the role of international cooperation and assistance under article X, the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit presented the first online training course devoted to that subject.<sup>57</sup> In that context, many States parties noted the value of educational activities that had been launched to support the Biological Weapons Convention during the current pandemic. Because such courses could provide important opportunities for national contact points to network and receive training on confidence-building measures, those supporting States parties encouraged others to regard the new course on international cooperation and assistance under article X as a model for future training activities.

States parties also discussed issues related to article III,<sup>58</sup> exchanged views regarding its implementation and shared proposals to further strengthen export controls.

### **Meeting of Experts on Assistance, Response and Preparedness**

The [Meeting of Experts on Assistance, Response and Preparedness](#) took place on 6 and 7 September in Geneva. It was chaired by Elena Kuzmanovska Biondic (North Macedonia), who had been nominated by the Eastern European Group. The Meeting included representatives from 96 States parties, one signatory State and two States not party to the Convention.<sup>59</sup> Those national delegations were joined by officials from five United Nations entities, six specialized agencies or other international organizations, and 12 non-governmental organizations and research institutes.<sup>60</sup> The topics that the Meeting considered were listed in its agenda.<sup>61</sup>

While discussing the practical challenges facing the implementation of article VII<sup>62</sup> as well as possible solutions, several States parties noted the need to operationalize the article's provisions, reiterating the current lack of institutional and operational structures. The exchange included reference to the role of the Security Council in related decision-making, as well as the challenge of distinguishing between natural and deliberate disease outbreaks. States parties also noted the potential coordination role of the United Nations in response to a request for assistance under article VII.

Discussions on the guidelines and formats for such an assistance request featured prominently in the deliberations. Lauding previous work to develop

guidelines for requesting assistance under article VII, several States parties expressed their willingness to adopt such guidelines at the upcoming ninth Review Conference.

Another focus was the development of a database to support the implementation of article VII by matching offers and requests for assistance. In that regard, some States parties identified a potential overlap between potential offers of assistance under article VII and article X. States parties further discussed a proposal on mobile biomedical units that they could deploy under the aegis of articles VI, VII or X of the Convention. The proposal's financing, its implementation, its varied and potentially conflicting tasks, and its relationship to the Secretary-General's investigative mechanism were considered.

### **Meeting of Experts on Institutional Strengthening of the Convention**

The [Meeting of Experts on Institutional Strengthening of the Convention](#) took place in Geneva on 8 September. It was chaired by Grisselle del Carmen Rodriguez Ramirez (Panama), who had been nominated by the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention. The Meeting included representatives from 96 States parties, one signatory State and two States not party to the Convention.<sup>63</sup> Those national delegations were joined by officials from five United Nations entities, five specialized agencies or other international organizations, and 12 non-governmental organizations and research institutes.<sup>64</sup> The topics that the Meeting considered were listed in its agenda.<sup>65</sup>

States parties expressed strong support for strengthening the Convention and making progress in the framework of the Meeting of Experts. Furthermore, Panama presented the first working paper<sup>66</sup> on enhancing gender quality and women's empowerment as an integral part of strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention, prompting accolades from many States parties. Kazakhstan also presented a proposal<sup>67</sup> to establish an international agency for biological safety.

Additionally, several States parties provided the first indications of their possible priorities for the ninth Review Conference. Most notably, those goals included the following: strengthening of article X and article VII; science and technology-related proposals; confidence-building measures; additional legally binding measures in the framework of the Convention; verification; strengthening of the Implementation Support Unit; and the Convention's financial stability and sustainability.

### **Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention**

The 2020 [Meeting of States Parties](#) took place in Geneva from 22 to 25 November 2021. It was chaired by Cleopa Kilonzo Mailu (Kenya), who had been

<sup>57</sup> The Implementation Support Unit had organized the training course, which was directed towards national contact points under the Convention.

<sup>58</sup> Pursuant to article III of the Biological Weapons Convention, States parties commit not to transfer, or in any way assist, encourage or induce anyone else to acquire or retain biological weapons.

<sup>59</sup> [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.4/2](#), paras. 8–10.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 11–13. For the list of participants, see [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.4/INF.1](#).

<sup>61</sup> [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.4/1](#).

<sup>62</sup> Pursuant to article VII of the Biological Weapons Convention, States parties commit to assist States that have been exposed to danger as a result of a violation of the Convention.

<sup>63</sup> [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.5/2](#), paras. 8–10.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 11–13. For the list of participants, see [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.5/INF.1](#).

<sup>65</sup> [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.5/1](#).

<sup>66</sup> [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.5/WP.6](#).

<sup>67</sup> [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.5/WP.4](#).

nominated by the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention. Robertas Rosinas (Lithuania), nominated by the Eastern European Group, and Thomas Göbel (Germany), nominated by the Western Group, served as the two Vice-Chairs.

The Meeting was attended by representatives from 106 States parties, two signatory States and four States not party to the Convention.<sup>68</sup> The national delegations were joined by officials from three United Nations entities, six specialized agencies or other international organizations and 13 non-governmental organizations and research institutes.<sup>69</sup>

In line with its mandate, the Meeting considered the factual reports of the Meetings of Experts, a report<sup>70</sup> from the Chair on universalization activities and the annual report<sup>71</sup> of the Convention's Implementation Support Unit. The Meeting also reviewed a report<sup>72</sup> by the Chair on the overall financial situation of the Convention.

The United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, delivered remarks<sup>73</sup> to the Meeting of States Parties via a pre-recorded video message. After adopting the agenda, programme of work<sup>74</sup> and rules of procedure,<sup>75</sup> the Meeting entered a general debate, in which 56 States parties, one signatory State and six observer organizations participated.<sup>76</sup> Following the general debate, during an informal session, the Meeting heard a joint statement endorsed by several non-governmental organizations and individuals, as well as statements by seven individual non-governmental organizations.

The Meeting reviewed a report<sup>77</sup> by the Chair on the overall financial situation of the Convention, and the Implementation Support Unit gave a briefing on the status of contributions and the financial outlook. States parties stressed the need to continue monitoring the Convention's financial situation and to explore possible further stabilization measures for consideration at the ninth Review Conference. They also noted the measures endorsed at the 2018 Meeting of States Parties, including a proposal to be reviewed at the ninth Review Conference on establishing a working capital fund.

The Chairs of each of the five Meetings of Experts orally introduced the reports<sup>78</sup> of those Meetings and submitted their personal reflections and proposals

for possible outcomes of the Meeting of States Parties. The Meeting of States Parties welcomed the substantive discussions of the Meetings of Experts, but it did not reach a consensus on the deliberations or any possible outcomes.

The Meeting of States Parties also reviewed progress towards the universality of the Convention and considered the report<sup>79</sup> from the Chair on universalization activities, as well as reports from States parties on their activities to promote universalization. Reaffirming the particular importance of achieving universality, the participants urged signatory States to ratify the Convention without delay and urged those States that had not signed the Convention to accede without delay. In that context, the Meeting took note of the reports from States parties and called on all States parties to continue to promote universalization and support the Chair's universalization activities with the assistance of the Implementation Support Unit.

The Meeting of States Parties also considered the arrangements for the ninth Review Conference and its Preparatory Committee's meetings. The Meeting decided that the opening of the Preparatory Committee meeting would be held in Geneva in an in-person format on 20 December to consider the agenda items on organizational aspects of the Review Conference. Under the extraordinary circumstances resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, States parties also agreed on the following technical adjustments to the original schedule agreed upon at the eighth Review Conference in 2016: (a) the Preparatory Committee would resume its work in Geneva in an in-person format from 4 to 11 April 2022; (b) the ninth Review Conference would be held in Geneva in an in-person format from 8 to 26 August 2022;<sup>80</sup> and (c) the mandate of the Implementation Support Unit would be extended until the ninth Review Conference, when its mandate would be reviewed.

States parties further agreed that the nomination of the President of the ninth Review Conference and the Chair of the Preparatory Committee would be passed on to the Preparatory Committee for consideration.

### Preparatory Committee for the ninth Review Conference

As agreed upon at the Meeting of States Parties, the [Preparatory Committee](#) held its first meeting at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 20 December. A total of 73 States took part in the Preparatory Committee meeting (71 States parties,<sup>81</sup>

<sup>68</sup> "Report of the 2020 Meeting of States Parties" (BWC/MSP/2020/7), paras. 8–10.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 11–13. For the list of participants, see BWC/MSP/2020/INF.1.

<sup>70</sup> BWC/MSP/2020/3.

<sup>71</sup> BWC/MSP/2020/4.

<sup>72</sup> BWC/MSP/2020/5.

<sup>73</sup> [Statement](#) to the 2020 Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, 22 November 2021.

<sup>74</sup> BWC/MSP/2020/2.

<sup>75</sup> BWC/CONF.VIII/2.

<sup>76</sup> For the list of speakers, see BWC/MSP/2020/7, paras. 15–16.

<sup>77</sup> BWC/MSP/2020/5.

<sup>78</sup> BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/2, BWC/MSP/2020/MX.2/2/Rev.1, BWC/MSP/2020/MX.3/2, BWC/MSP/2020/MX.4/2 and BWC/MSP/2020/MX.5/2.

<sup>79</sup> BWC/MSP/2020/3.

<sup>80</sup> The ninth Review Conference was rescheduled to take place from 28 November to 16 December 2022.

<sup>81</sup> Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bhutan, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, Holy See, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Nepal, Netherlands, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Zambia.

one signatory State<sup>82</sup> and one State<sup>83</sup> neither party nor signatory to the Convention). The Committee saw a significant decrease in attendance compared with the previous such meeting in 2016, likely owing to the significant health measures and travel restrictions imposed on participants in connection with the global pandemic. The national delegations were joined by United Nations entities that included the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. The European Union participated as an observer.<sup>84</sup>

The Preparatory Committee unanimously elected Florian Antohi (Romania), nominated by the Eastern European Group, and Tancredi Francese (Italy), nominated by the Western Group, as Vice-Chairs of the Preparatory Committee. The Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention said it would need more time to consult on its nomination of the President of the ninth Review Conference and Chair of the Preparatory Committee.

Focusing its first meeting on the organizational aspects of the Review Conference, the Preparatory Committee reached several understandings for final adoption at its resumed session in April 2022. The understandings concerned recommendations on the following issues: the distribution of posts of Vice-Presidents of the Conference, and Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the subsidiary bodies among the various regional groups; the provisional agenda; the draft Rules of Procedure; the composition of the General Committee; and the decision that the Committees may decide to hold certain meetings in public.

Furthermore, the Preparatory Committee decided to request the Implementation Support Unit to prepare eight background information documents, five to be issued before its April meeting and three comprising inputs from States parties to be issued before the Review Conference. The Committee also endorsed the decision of the 2020 Meeting of States Parties that the ninth Review Conference should take place in Geneva from 8 to 26 August 2022.<sup>85</sup>

### Work of the Implementation Support Unit

Housed within the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Biological Weapons Convention's Implementation Support Unit continued to carry out its mandate in 2021 while adapting as necessary to restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. During the year, the Unit organized webinars and training courses and participated in virtual meetings and discussions.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Syrian Arab Republic.

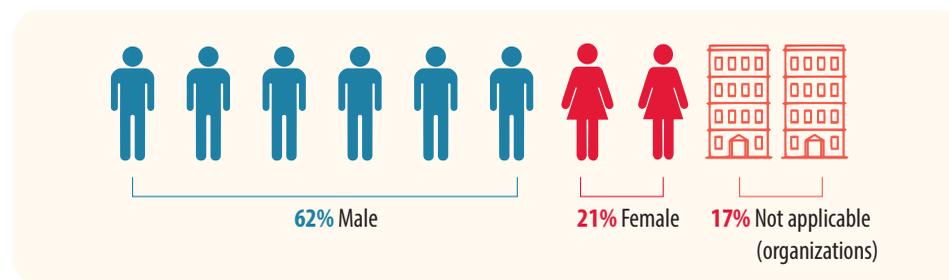
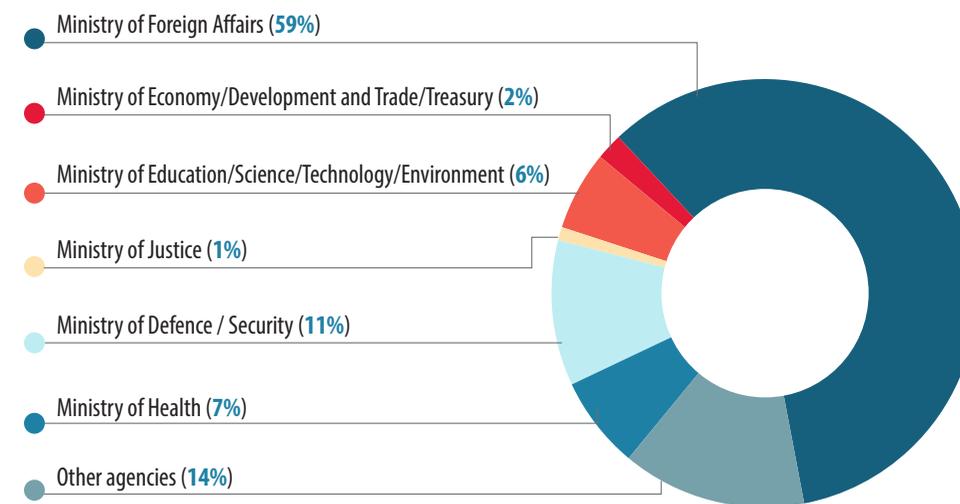
<sup>83</sup> Israel.

<sup>84</sup> For the list of participants, see [BWC/CONF.IX/PC/INF.1](#).

<sup>85</sup> The ninth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention was rescheduled to take place from 28 November to 16 December 2022.

<sup>86</sup> For the list of meetings and events attended by the Unit, see annex I of its report ([BWC/MSP/2020/4](#)).

### Global distribution of Biological Weapons Convention national contact points, by affiliation and gender



This infographic displays the worldwide affiliation of national contact points, by national agencies or ministries, as well as distribution by gender.

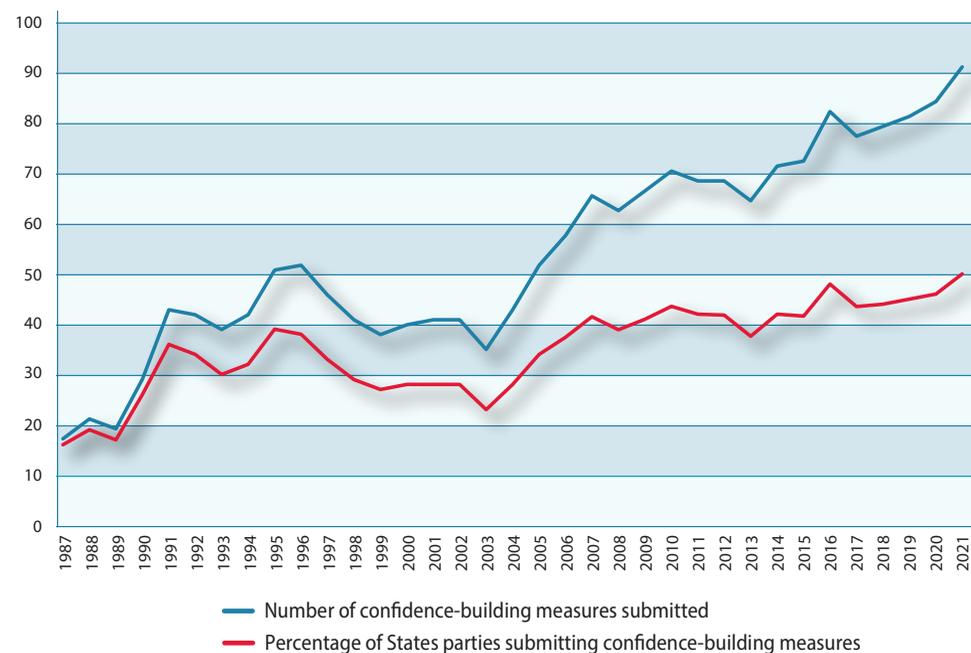
To support the Convention's national implementation, the Unit continued to collect and update details on relevant national contact points. As at 31 December, 129 States parties had nominated a national point of contact.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>87</sup> The Implementation Support Unit made those contact details available to all States parties on a restricted-access webpage. Contact the Unit for information on accessing this page.

To facilitate participation in the Convention's confidence-building measures, the Unit maintained capabilities for States parties to electronically submit reports on such measures, compiled and distributed submissions, provided routine administrative assistance and advice, organized webinars to promote such measures, and provided States parties with written reminders ahead of the submission deadline. During the year, the Unit received reports from 92 States parties, the most ever submitted, as shown in the graph below.

### Trends in confidence-building measures

#### Participation of States parties in the Biological Weapons Convention confidence-building measures



This graph shows the confidence-building measures submissions made by States parties since their introduction in 1987. While the overall level of participation in the confidence-building measures has remained low over the years, a slightly positive trend can be seen in the recent years. In 2021, 92 States parties submitted confidence-building measures, resulting in a participation rate of more than 50 per cent, the highest so far.

Meanwhile, the Implementation Support Unit continued to maintain and administer the Assistance and Cooperation Database and facilitate contacts between States parties offering or requesting assistance. In that regard, the Unit continued to record a significant increase in the number of States parties, regional and international organizations and other entities seeking assistance with the implementation of the Convention or other aspects.<sup>88</sup>

In 2021, the Implementation Support Unit did not carry out any official travel owing to the COVID-19 pandemic; it nonetheless participated in many virtual events.

Owing to travel restrictions related to the pandemic, the Unit operated only a limited sponsorship programme for the Meetings of Experts and the Meeting of States Parties in 2021.<sup>89</sup> However, the European Union Council decision 2019/97 included substantial funds to support the programme,<sup>90</sup> and the United States sponsored several national experts bilaterally. The Implementation Support Unit hopes to be able to run a larger sponsorship programme for the ninth Review Conference and its Preparatory Committee's meeting in 2022.

#### European Union support to the Biological Weapons Convention

Despite continued restrictions from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Office for Disarmament Affairs made further efforts to advance the implementation of European Union Council decision 2019/97 in support of the Biological Weapons Convention. While most activities were held virtually, one event took place in an in-person format in Geneva.<sup>91</sup>

In line with the emphasis of the European Union on advancing the Convention's universalization, the Office for Disarmament Affairs organized a virtual workshop for African States not party to the Convention in March. Furthermore, thanks to the European Union's contribution to the Biological Weapons Convention sponsorship programme, two African States not party to the Convention participated for the first time as observer States in the Meeting of States Parties in November. In total,

<sup>88</sup> Such interest is expressed in the form of national assistance requests submitted either bilaterally or through the cooperation and assistance database or by seeking help from the Implementation Support Unit. The requests concerned national or regional activities in the context of, inter alia, European Union Council decision 2019/97 (see details in the next section), Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) or the European Union Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence.

<sup>89</sup> Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant postponement of meetings in 2020, the sponsorship programme did not operate in 2020. Unused funds were reallocated for subsequent years.

<sup>90</sup> Financial support from the European Union for the sponsorship programme, as mandated by Council decision 2019/97, covered the period from 2019 to 2021.

<sup>91</sup> The Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit and a delegation from Kyrgyzstan held an in-person meeting in Geneva from 12 to 14 October in preparation for a peer review exercise within the framework of European Union Council decision 2019/97.

14 States<sup>92</sup> benefited from the European Union's contribution to the sponsorship programme in 2021.

The Office for Disarmament Affairs also made significant progress in advancing two assistance initiatives funded under the Council decision: the Extended Assistance Programmes and the National Preparedness Programmes.<sup>93</sup> In that regard, the Office successfully launched six of its eight planned national assistance programmes, carrying out activities that included virtual introductory workshops on the Biological Weapons Convention, training sessions on elaborating and submitting reports on confidence-building measures, and other tailored capacity-building activities. The Office's implementing partners included other States parties and United Nations entities, including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre. Meanwhile, the independent Verification Research, Training and Information Centre continued to provide legislative assistance to four beneficiary States.

The Office for Disarmament Affairs initiated preparations for a peer review exercise, requested by Kyrgyzstan, that was expected to conclude in the summer of 2022. During a three-day preparatory meeting in Geneva in October 2021, participants prepared a draft programme and timeline for the exercise, while also discussing the draft law of Kyrgyzstan on biosafety as it underwent review at the national level.

In addition, the Office adopted a new virtual format for conducting its second Biosecurity Diplomacy Workshop for young scientists from the Global South. The workshop was held as a series of virtual sessions in February and March, resulting in strengthened cooperation among various youth expert networks and, ultimately, the launch of the [Youth Declaration for Biosecurity](#)<sup>94</sup> on the margins of the Convention's Meeting of States Parties. As at the end of the year, preparations were under way for the third workshop in the series, scheduled to commence in February 2022.

Meanwhile, the Council of the European Union extended the implementation period of decision [2019/97](#) by one year, until February 2023, given the delays caused by the pandemic. Additionally, in November, the Council adopted a new decision<sup>95</sup> in support of building resilience in biosafety and biosecurity through the Biological

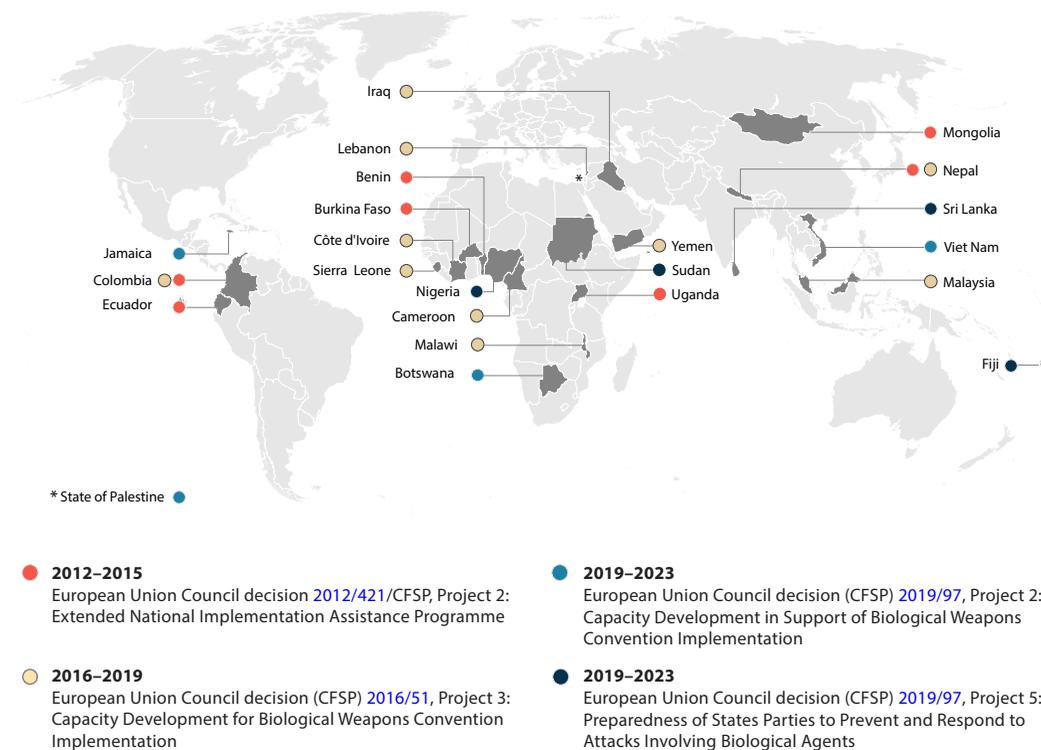
<sup>92</sup> Botswana, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Guatemala, Kenya, Mexico, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sudan and Suriname.

<sup>93</sup> The States selected under the Extended Assistance Programmes were Botswana, Jamaica, the State of Palestine and Viet Nam. They will receive technical assistance to develop their national capacities to implement the Convention. The selected beneficiaries of the National Preparedness Programmes were Fiji, Nigeria, Sri Lanka and the Sudan. They will receive technical assistance and support to develop their capabilities to prepare for, prevent and respond to a biological attack or incident.

<sup>94</sup> Tessa Alexanian, Mayra Ameneiros, Fatima Aziz, Gabrielle Essix, Christopher Isaac, Suryesh K. Namdeo and Maryam S. Lawal, "Youth Declaration for Biosecurity", Office for Disarmament Affairs, November 2021.

<sup>95</sup> European Union, Council decision (CFSP) [2021/2072](#) of 25 November 2021, *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 421 (26 November 2021), pp. 56–64.

### Beneficiary States of Biological Weapons Convention capacity-building projects funded by the European Union



In the context of the support provided by the European Union to the Biological Weapons Convention, 23 States parties have so far benefited from assistance programmes to strengthen their capacities to implement the Convention at the national level.

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

Weapons Convention. The decision provided for a two-year project that would complement decision [2019/97](#) by placing particular focus on strengthening biosafety and biosecurity capabilities in Africa, building capacity for national contact points of the Biological Weapons Convention, facilitating the review of developments in science and technology relevant to the Convention, and broadening support for voluntary transparency exercises.

## Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons

The Secretary-General has a mandate<sup>96</sup> to carry out investigations when Member States bring to his attention the alleged use of chemical or biological weapons. To fulfil that mandate, the United Nations relies on countries to designate technical experts to deploy to the field on short notice, as well as analytical laboratories to support such investigations.

In 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to have a significant impact on activities planned to support the Secretary-General's Mechanism. However, despite the postponement of specialized skills training courses and field exercises owing to the pandemic, the Office for Disarmament Affairs continued efforts to strengthen the Mechanism through virtual and hybrid means, as well as through in-person activities when they were deemed safe to conduct.

Experts nominated to the Mechanism's roster took part in training activities that included a series of five virtual table-top exercises in August and a refresher course in November on hazardous environment awareness training. Both events were hosted by the Robert Koch Institute in Germany, with support from the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

Additionally, in September, laboratories nominated to the roster participated in an external quality assurance exercise on analysing viral sequences. The exercise was organized by the Technical University of Denmark, the Swedish Defence Research Agency and the Robert Koch Institute. During the same month, the Office for Disarmament Affairs supported the Mechanism's sixth annual Designated Laboratories Workshop, hosted virtually by Spiez Laboratory in Switzerland.

In October, the RefBio Project<sup>97</sup> at the Robert Koch Institute launched three external quality assurance exercises—on biotoxins, bacteria and viruses, respectively.<sup>98</sup> The Office for Disarmament Affairs also hosted a virtual coordination meeting in October for the United Nations entities that would be critical in carrying out a mission through the Mechanism.

<sup>96</sup> See General Assembly resolution 42/37 C of 30 November 1987, para. 4. The Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons is not a standing body, but rather Member States nominate experts and laboratories that are rostered and may be called upon to carry out investigations on an as-needed basis. The Office for Disarmament Affairs serves as the custodian of the Mechanism, which includes maintaining the roster of experts and laboratories and conducting activities to ensure the preparedness of the Mechanism. For more information, see Office for Disarmament Affairs, "Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons".

<sup>97</sup> Since 2017, the RefBio Project has offered such exercises for the three main classes of biological agents relevant to potential biological weapons: bacteria, viruses and biological toxins.

<sup>98</sup> Notably, in September, the Robert Koch Institute hosted a virtual RefBio Project workshop to discuss experiences of an external quality assurance exercise conducted in 2020 and 2021 with respect to SARS-CoV-2.

## Secretary-General's Mechanism: Nominated expert consultants, qualified experts and analytical laboratories, by region

As at 23 December 2021

### 494 QUALIFIED EXPERTS

Africa (63 from 7 Member States)

Western Europe and others (191 from 17 Member States)

Latin America and the Caribbean (35 from 5 Member States)

Eastern Europe (95 from 14 Member States)

Asia and the Pacific (110 from 13 Member States)

Qualified experts are dispatched to the field to investigate the alleged use of weapons.

### 39 EXPERT CONSULTANTS

Africa (1 from 1 Member State)

Western Europe and others (29 from 9 Member States)

Latin America and the Caribbean (1 from 1 Member State)

Eastern Europe (6 from 1 Member State)

Asia and the Pacific (2 from 2 Member States)

Expert consultants advise and assist in the overall conduct of investigations, from planning and deployment to operation and reporting.

### 83 ANALYTICAL LABORATORIES

Africa (7 from 3 Member States)

Western Europe and others (44 from 13 Member States)

Latin America and the Caribbean (1 from 1 Member State)

Eastern Europe (13 from 7 Member States)

Asia and the Pacific (18 from 4 Member States)

Nominated analytical laboratories test for the presence of chemical, biological or toxin agents.

The Secretary-General has a mandate to carry out investigations when Member States bring to his attention the alleged use of chemical or biological weapons. To fulfil this mandate, the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons was established. Under the Mechanism, a roster of experts and laboratories is maintained. The United Nations relies on countries to fill the roster by designating technical experts to deploy to the field on short notice, as well as analytical laboratories to support such investigations. Member States facilitate further training of qualified experts and expert consultants in close cooperation with the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

In 2021, the Office for Disarmament Affairs prioritized regular engagement with experts and laboratories nominated to the Mechanism's roster, including in activities beyond training events and external quality assurance exercises. To support the goal, the following activities were carried out:

- In April, the Office for Disarmament Affairs conducted a call-out exercise (a routine, unannounced exercise to test response time and check the continued availability of experts nominated to the Mechanism's roster). The Office included, for the first time, points of contact for nominated laboratories.
- In June, the Office conducted the first onboarding sessions for qualified experts, expert consultants and points of contact for analytical laboratories nominated by their Governments to the Mechanism's roster. Over 180 participants from 40 countries joined the sessions across multiple time zones to learn about the fundamentals of the Mechanism. Going forward, such sessions are expected to be held on an annual basis for newly nominated experts and laboratories. (See chart on opposite page.)
- In December, the Office hosted a virtual workshop for nominated expert consultants. Seventeen expert consultants from eight countries joined the workshop and discussed the training available to rostered qualified experts.
- Also, in December, the Office hosted a virtual round-table discussion for nominated qualified experts. Sixty-one qualified experts from 27 countries joined the event, which featured a presentation by a biological weapons expert and two short scenario-based discussions on aspects of a potential mission.

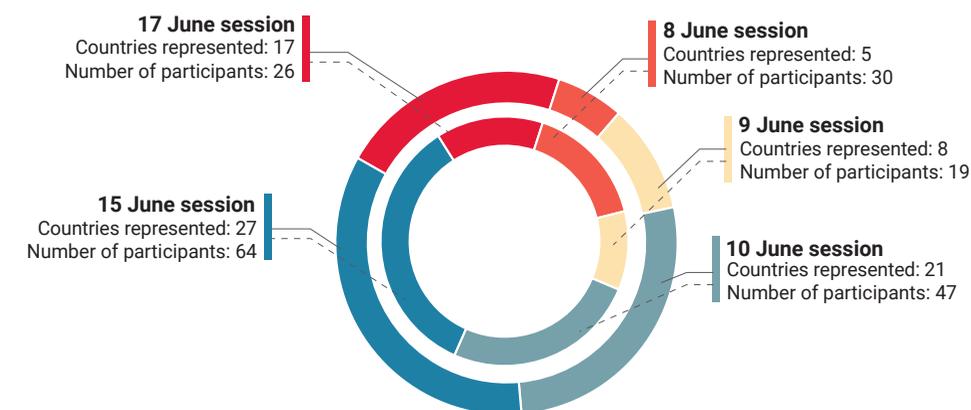
Outreach was another priority for the Office for Disarmament Affairs, which sought to raise awareness about the Mechanism and enhance the diversity of its rostered experts and laboratories with respect to geography, gender balance and subject-matter expertise. To support that goal, the Office organized a briefing on the Mechanism for Member States at the United Nations Headquarters in New York in November. In her opening remarks,<sup>99</sup> the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs highlighted the crucial role of Member States in maintaining and strengthening the Mechanism. Those remarks were followed by a presentation on the nomination process for the Mechanism's roster. After the briefing, the Office distributed the annual note verbale to Member States requesting the nomination of experts and laboratories for the roster.

In 2021, the Office for Disarmament Affairs gave several presentations on the Mechanism as part of its outreach efforts:

- In October, the Office organized a joint session with the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit and the support team working on matters related to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), held during the seventh African Conference on One Health and Biosecurity, organized by the Global Emerging Pathogens Treatment Consortium.

- In November, the Office briefed the OPCW Temporary Working Group on the Analysis of Biotoxins about the Mechanism.
- On the margins of the Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention in November, the Office joined a virtual event hosted by the Robert Koch Institute, which focused on Germany's activities to support the Mechanism. The Office also partnered with the Global Emerging Pathogens Treatment Consortium to co-organize a virtual event entitled "The Global Disarmament and Non-proliferation Framework and Biosecurity: Connecting Political Commitment and Effective Health Security in Africa".

### Participation at the first onboarding sessions for qualified experts, expert consultants and points of contact for analytical laboratories nominated to the roster of the Secretary-General's Mechanism



From 8 to 17 June 2021, the Office for Disarmament Affairs hosted five virtual onboarding sessions for all qualified experts, expert consultants and points of contact for analytical laboratories who have been nominated by their Governments to the roster of the Secretary-General's Mechanism. Over 180 participants from 40 countries joined the sessions across several time zones. That was the first time the Office conducted such onboarding sessions. Going forward, the sessions are to be held annually for newly nominated experts and laboratories.

<sup>99</sup> Izumi Nakamitsu, [statement](#) at the briefing for Member States on the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons, New York, 22 November 2021.

## **Export controls**

### **Australia Group**

The Australia Group comprises 42 States<sup>100</sup> and the European Union. In 2021, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Group continued to carry out its activities in a virtual format, capitalizing on the interest shown in its virtual meetings held in 2020 and on the successful outcomes of those meetings.

The Group convened virtual meetings of technical experts on new and evolving technologies on 11 May, on enforcement exchanges on 19 May and on implementation on 27 May. The participants expressed deep interest in the discussions, as well as enthusiasm to resume in-person meetings as soon as it was safe to do so. In that context, the Group plans to hold, in July 2022, its first in-person plenary meeting since 2019.

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<sup>100</sup> Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom and United States.



CHAPTER III

# CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS



*Threats related to the misuse, illicit transfer and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition have remained a defining factor in undermining peace and security ...*

IZUMI NAKAMITSU, HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS<sup>1</sup>



Participants in the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign join an event held in Nepal on 24 and 25 November 2021.

## CHAPTER III

### Conventional weapons

#### Developments and trends, 2021

THE YEAR 2021 saw both welcome progress and new challenges in the context of conventional arms. In much of the world, international peace and security continued to suffer from the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, as well as their ammunition. In a variety of settings, armed violence continued to be driven by the ongoing movement of weapons to and between non-State actors, including in the context of organized crime and terrorism.

Most major armed conflicts continued to varying degrees, fuelled by flows of weapons that persisted despite calls to negotiate ceasefires and observe truces to support the international response to COVID-19. Meanwhile, the pandemic continued to complicate the delivery of much-needed humanitarian assistance, particularly in conflict and post-conflict settings. As the Secretary-General noted in his 2021 report<sup>2</sup> to the Security Council, “from the Central African Republic to Libya, South Sudan, Sudan and Yemen, the proliferation of and illicit trafficking in [small arms and light] weapons have deeply aggravated situations for vulnerable populations already suffering from conflict.”

In Afghanistan, the withdrawal of the international military presence led by the United States enabled the Taliban to rapidly seize territory and, along with it, large caches of firearms and other military equipment left behind or surrendered by

<sup>1</sup> [Statement](#) at the webinar on renewing commitments on small arms and light weapons issues, 2 June 2021.

<sup>2</sup> [S/2021/839](#).

Afghan security forces.<sup>3</sup> The takeover thus gave way to credible concerns among expert observers that failure to keep the materiel out of black markets may result in Afghanistan becoming a regional hub for the illicit arms trade, contributing to violence in and beyond the region over the coming decades.

The year also brought opportunities and positive developments, with the international community marking 20 years since the adoption of two landmark instruments countering the problem of illicit manufacturing, trafficking, uncontrolled proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. The anniversaries of the Firearms Protocol<sup>4</sup> and the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons<sup>5</sup> provided an opportunity to take stock of past achievements and challenges over two decades of implementation, as well as to consider the way forward in the framework of the Decade of Action to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The seventh Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action successfully took place in New York in July, following its postponement in 2020 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. By unanimous vote, Member States agreed to adopt an outcome document containing several progressive elements; for example, they decided to consider establishing voluntary national and regional targets to help measure and strengthen local ownership of efforts to fully and effectively implement the Programme of Action and its accompanying International Tracing Instrument.<sup>6</sup> Yet, despite progress on key issues, including agreement on language concerning ammunition and the newly established concept of “national target-setting”, States continued to differ over how and when to address recent developments in manufacturing, technology and design of small arms and light weapons, particularly with respect to polymer and modular weapons.

At the end of the year, and in line with the recommendations contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Problems Arising from the Accumulation of Conventional Ammunition Stockpiles in Surplus, the General Assembly established a new Open-ended Working Group on the same matter. The Working Group was scheduled to convene in 2022 and 2023 to develop a new global framework for addressing existing gaps in the management of ammunition throughout its life cycle.

Meanwhile, in December, the Security Council adopted its first thematic resolution on small arms since 2015. In the resolution, the Council focused on the

illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and diversion of arms and related materiel in violation of Council-mandated arms embargoes.

Throughout the year, offices across the United Nations system continued to implement a decision on small arms adopted in 2020 by the Secretary-General’s Executive Committee.<sup>7</sup> In that regard, their activities included taking forward the work of the Saving Lives Entity (SALIENT)<sup>8</sup> as its pilot programmes got under way in Cameroon, Jamaica and South Sudan. The Coordinating Action on Small Arms group, consisting of 24 United Nations entities, adopted new terms of reference with an emphasis on helping countries integrate national arms control measures into their national development frameworks. In the same spirit of cooperation, the Office for Disarmament Affairs deepened its partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime as the two entities jointly assumed leadership in helping States to collect data on Target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals on significantly reducing illicit arms flows.

In 2021, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the African Union continued the collaboration they had initiated in 2020 within the framework of the Silencing the Guns initiative. They supported the collection of illegally held firearms in Madagascar, the Niger and Uganda by building capacities for community-based policing and the management of weapons and ammunition, including through record-keeping and destruction. The partners also collected several small arms through the joint assistance project.

Furthermore, the Office for Disarmament Affairs activated the quick-response mechanism of the United Nations SaferGuard programme at the request of Equatorial Guinea after an arms depot exploded in Bata in March. The explosion killed more than 100 people. Acting through that mechanism and in cooperation with the Ammunition Management Advisory Team,<sup>9</sup> the Office dispatched a team that provided technical advice while helping to clear the scene and limit the accident’s humanitarian consequences. In November, the Office deployed a similar mission to Togo, at the Government’s request, to provide technical assistance in proactively addressing obsolete arms depots.

In addition, despite the ongoing pandemic, the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR) funded 14 ongoing projects. As the administrator of the Trust Facility, the Office for Disarmament Affairs provided substantive input for those projects and supplied programming guidance

<sup>3</sup> For example, between 2002 and 2016 alone, the United States transferred 600,000 small arms and light weapons to security forces in Afghanistan. See United States Government Accountability Office, “Afghanistan Security: U.S.-Funded Equipment for the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces”, document [GAO-17-667R](#).

<sup>4</sup> The Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

<sup>5</sup> The Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

<sup>6</sup> The International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

<sup>7</sup> By its decision 2020/28, the Executive Committee highlighted the need for strengthened headquarters-level coordination with respect to the strategic role of activities to control small arms or reduce armed violence. In the decision, the Committee highlighted (a) the need for strengthened strategic and policy coordination and country-level operational cohesion in the implementation of small-arms programmes, and (b) the criticality of national ownership as the guiding principle for the approach of the United Nations to such programmes.

<sup>8</sup> SALIENT is a funding facility established in 2019 within the Secretary-General’s Peacebuilding Fund.

<sup>9</sup> The Ammunition Management Advisory Team is co-managed by the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

for 12 new proposals. In response to the 2021 call for proposals, 36 applications were received, with the final selection of funding recipients to be decided in 2022.

The Office for Disarmament Affairs also expanded the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium (MOSAIC) by developing three new modules on the following: deactivation of small arms and light weapons; gun-free zones; and criminal justice responses to the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The Office also completed the translation from English into French and Spanish of all the MOSAIC modules, enabling Member States and civil society organizations to more easily access guidance contained in the modules.

## Arms Trade Treaty

The Arms Trade Treaty<sup>10</sup> was created to establish common standards for the international trade in conventional arms and to eradicate the illicit trade in conventional weapons. As at the end of the year, its total number of States parties stood at 110, with 30 signatory States that had not yet ratified the Treaty.<sup>11</sup>

### Seventh Conference of States Parties

The seventh Conference of States Parties took place in Geneva from 30 August to 3 September, under the presidency of Lansana Gberie (Sierra Leone). Held in a hybrid format, the Conference was attended in person or virtually by 86 States parties, 15 signatory States and 2 States not party to the Treaty. In addition, 7 international and regional organizations, and 33 civil society organizations participated as observers.<sup>12</sup> In preparation, participants held virtual meetings of the Treaty's three working groups,<sup>13</sup> and a virtual informal preparatory meeting from 26 to 30 April.

The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs delivered the keynote address,<sup>14</sup> in which she welcomed the Treaty as an invaluable platform to discuss important issues in international trade. In that connection, she welcomed the priority topic, "Strengthening efforts to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and ensuring efficient stockpile management".

The Conference explored how that topic could be articulated in the context of the Arms Trade Treaty, in the meeting's final report.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, in line with

a proposal<sup>16</sup> put forward by the President, the participants considered five possible areas for further inquiry and discussion, or longer-term implementation by States parties.

The Conference decided on the following:

- Treaty stakeholders should map and better utilize existing guidance and tools developed under relevant international and regional instruments on preventing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and on strengthening stockpile management and security, in order to prevent diversion as a way to strengthen Treaty implementation.
- The Working Group on Effective Treaty Implementation should, as appropriate, formalize discussions concerning post-delivery cooperation experiences from both exporter and importer perspectives, and consider developing guidelines on cooperation and assistance to ensure ongoing compliance with export documentation, including authorized end use.
- States parties should share, as appropriate, information on effective and innovative stockpile management programmes through any of the following: updates to their Arms Trade Treaty initial reports under section 7 (a) (i) of the Treaty's initial reporting template; plenary discussions; or the restricted area of the Arms Trade Treaty Secretariat website.
- States parties are encouraged to provide information on their national practices relating to "mitigating measures" in the context of article 7 (4) on the prevention of gender-based violence, including in relation to stockpile security (what those can be and how they are implemented).
- The Working Group on Effective Treaty Implementation, with support from the Arms Trade Treaty Secretariat, should consider identifying and compiling a list of existing relevant bilateral and multilateral assistance programmes operating within and outside the Treaty. The list should include programmes on stockpile management and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and should be made available to States seeking assistance in those areas.

The Conference also continued to consider the issue of diversion, including by endorsing a draft paper<sup>17</sup> outlining the elements of a process to assess the risk of diversion, and a working paper<sup>18</sup> submitted by the President of the sixth Conference of States Parties recognizing the role of transparency and information exchange in preventing diversion. Furthermore, the Conference recognized that, because of the confidential nature of the Diversion Information Exchange Forum and the sensitivity of the relevant information, the Forum needed to be held in person and to allow broad participation by States parties and signatories. As such, (a) the President of the eighth Conference of States Parties was given the mandate to organize the Forum's

<sup>10</sup> The Arms Trade Treaty entered into force on 24 December 2014.

<sup>11</sup> For the [Treaty's text and adherence status](#), see the Disarmament Treaties Database of the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

<sup>12</sup> For the list of participants, see Arms Trade Treaty, document [ATT/CSP7/2021/SEC/680/Conf.PartList](#).

<sup>13</sup> The groups are as follows: Working Group on Effective Treaty Implementation; Working Group on Transparency and Reporting; and Working Group on Treaty Universalization.

<sup>14</sup> United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, "[High Representative delivers opening remarks via video message for the Seventh Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty](#)", video in "Spotlights (2021)", 30 August 2021.

<sup>15</sup> Arms Trade Treaty, document [ATT/CSP7/2021/SEC/681/Conf.FinRep.Rev1](#).

<sup>16</sup> Arms Trade Treaty, document [ATT/CSP7/2021/PRES/659/Conf.SALWPSSM.Rev3](#), pp. 5–6.

<sup>17</sup> Arms Trade Treaty, document [ATT/CSP7.WGETI/2021/CHAIR/675/Conf.Rep](#), annex A.

<sup>18</sup> Arms Trade Treaty, document [ATT/CSP6/2020/PRES/611/Conf.TranspInfExch.Rev4](#).

first formal meeting as soon as broad in-person participation was feasible, and (b) it was decided that the Forum's usefulness would be reviewed at the first Conference of States Parties following two cycles of Forum meetings.

In addition, the Conference considered progress concerning various aspects of the Treaty's general implementation, transparency and reporting, universalization, and financial matters. It also noted that, for some States, cooperation and assistance would be essential to universalization and implementation, and, as such, the Arms Trade Treaty Voluntary Trust Fund would assist in universalization efforts.<sup>19</sup>

After considering the reports<sup>20</sup> of the working groups on effective treaty implementation, treaty universalization, and transparency and reporting, as well as various documents submitted by the Management Committee, the Conference decided, inter alia, to take the following actions: (a) endorse the revised initial reporting template<sup>21</sup> and recommend its use by States parties in compiling their initial reports; (b) endorse the revised annual reporting template<sup>22</sup> and recommend its use by States parties in compiling their annual reports; and (c) adopt the process for making financial arrangements contemplated under Financial Rule 8.1.d proposed by the Management Committee.<sup>23</sup>

Finally, the Conference decided to hold the eighth Conference of States Parties from 30 August to 3 September 2022, at the International Conference Centre in Geneva. It elected Thomas Göbel (Germany) as the President, and Japan, Latvia, Mexico and South Africa as the four Vice-Presidents of the meeting. Furthermore, the Conference decided that the informal preparatory meetings and the meetings of the working groups would also be held in Geneva, with dates to be confirmed by the President of the eighth Conference of States Parties.

## Small arms and light weapons

### Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons

The year 2021 marked the twentieth anniversary of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Despite significant progress in implementing the Programme of Action since its adoption, full and effective implementation was still a distant goal for

many countries. Nevertheless, the Programme of Action, along with its International Tracing Instrument,<sup>24</sup> remained the only universal framework on small-arms control.

In 2021, States held the seventh Biennial Meeting of States from 26 to 30 July to consider the national, regional and global implementation of the Programme of Action and its International Tracing Instrument.<sup>25</sup> At the meeting, States again recognized the important contribution of both instruments, over the past two decades, to combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The Meeting was chaired by Martin Kimani (Kenya).

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 74/60, the Meeting considered key challenges and opportunities relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument at the national, regional and global levels for the purposes of preventing and combating the diversion and the illicit international transfer of small arms and light weapons to unauthorized recipients. The preparatory process for the Meeting took place mostly in a virtual format, owing to the continuing restrictions on in-person meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Meeting itself consisted of in-person and hybrid sessions, as well as virtual informal consultations. In August, the Secretary-General published his consolidated report<sup>26</sup> on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons which included an overview of the Meeting's main outcomes.

The Meeting adopted a substantive outcome document<sup>27</sup> by a unanimous vote of 114 to none, with no abstentions. States agreed to take forward-looking action on gender, including by strengthening connections between small-arms control and the women, peace and security agenda. They also decided to (a) consider establishing national and regional targets to help measure the implementation of both instruments, and (b) ensure considerations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law to guide decisions on arms transfers. In addition, the Meeting welcomed the proposal to establish a dedicated fellowship training programme on small arms and light weapons, with plans to consider funding and administrative arrangements at the next biennial meeting. States further agreed to (a) refer directly to the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament in the outcome document, and (b) encourage those States in a position to do so to consider financial contributions to the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR) and the Saving Lives Entity (SALIENT).

<sup>19</sup> As at the end of 2021, the Arms Trade Treaty Trust Fund had funded 52 implementation projects in different regions. See Arms Trade Treaty, "Report on the work of the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF) for the period August 2020 to August 2021", document [ATT/VTF/2021/CHAIR/678/Conf.Rep.](#)

<sup>20</sup> Arms Trade Treaty, documents [ATT/CSP7.WGETI/2021/CHAIR/675/Conf.Rep.](#), [ATT/CSP7.WGTU/2021/CHAIR/677/Conf.Rep.](#) and [ATT/CSP7.WGTR/2021/CHAIR/676/Conf.Rep.](#)

<sup>21</sup> Arms Trade Treaty, document [ATT/CSP7.WGTR/2021/CHAIR/676/Conf.Rep.](#), annex C.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, annex E.

<sup>23</sup> Arms Trade Treaty, "Draft elements for a procedure regarding Rule 8 (1) d", document [ATT/CSP7.MC/2021/MC/674/Conf.PropFinArr8\(1\)d](#).

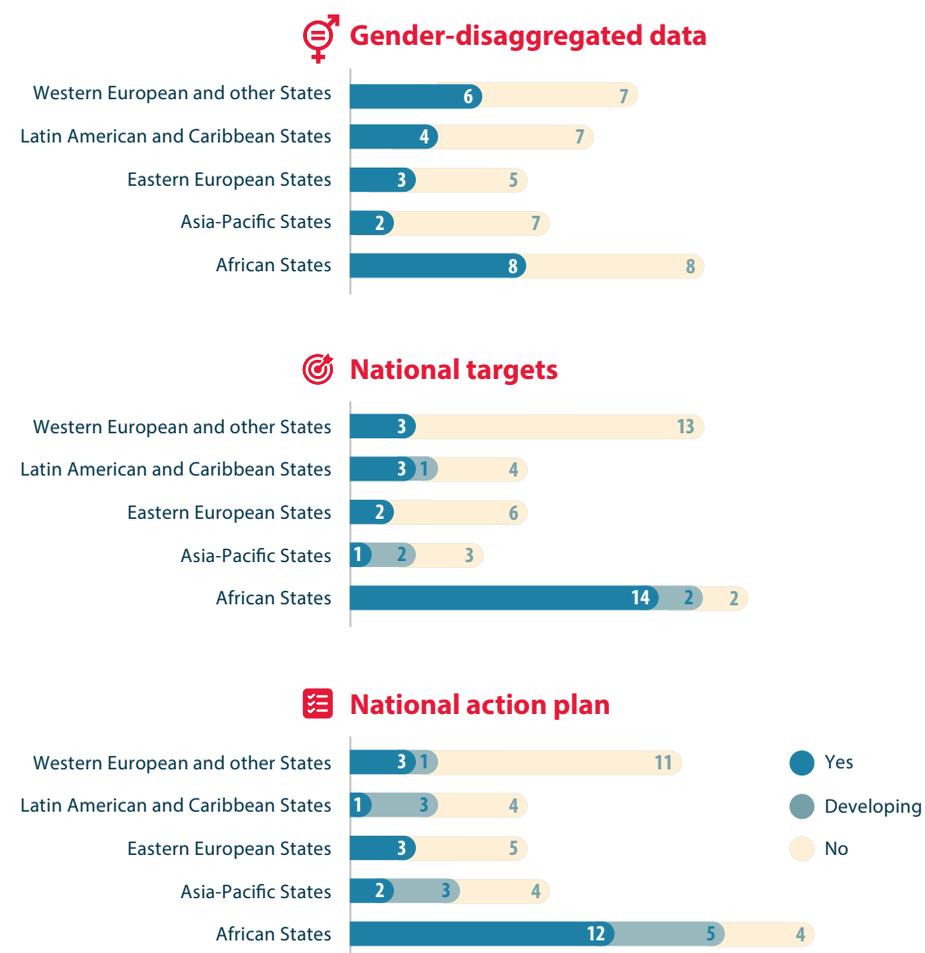
<sup>24</sup> The International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

<sup>25</sup> Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the seventh Biennial Meeting of States took place over a year later than originally scheduled. By its decision 74/552 of 14 May 2020, the General Assembly, on the proposal of its President, recalling its resolution 74/60 of 12 December 2019, and noting with concern the situation concerning the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, decided to postpone the seventh Biennial Meeting of States, scheduled for 15 to 19 June 2020, to a period in 2021 to be decided by the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session. By resolution 75/241, the General Assembly mandated the new dates for the seventh Biennial Meeting of States.

<sup>26</sup> [A/76/284](#).

<sup>27</sup> [A/CONF.192/BMS/2021/1](#).

## Programme of Action: Reported number of States with gender-disaggregated data, national targets and national action plans, by theme and region



This graph shows the varying levels of reporting on the existence of gender-disaggregated data collection, national targets and national action plans by region, as included in submitted reports for the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Overall, roughly 70 per cent of States did not report the collection of gender-disaggregated data, the establishment of national targets or the adoption of national action plans.

However, the reports received reflected the following trends and capacity by region:

- **National action plans:** Most African States have adopted or have been developing national action plans, whereas relevant efforts are at a low level for the rest of the regional groups, possibly because a national action plan may not always be necessary or a high priority for those countries. Relevant efforts should be enhanced or accelerated in those regions.
- **National targets:** The trend for national targets is similar to the trend for national action plans. Furthermore, in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, more States have established national targets than adopted national action plans, possibly reflecting priorities and practicalities between them.
- **Gender-disaggregated data:** Compared to the efforts related to national action plans and national targets, African countries need to focus more on the collection of gender-disaggregated data, whereas such efforts are relatively at a higher level for the Western European and other States. In principle, at the global level, States' efforts to collect gender-disaggregated data should be substantially strengthened.

States in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and Europe issued strong calls that led to the inclusion of two paragraphs with explicit references to ammunition. In the first such paragraph, States took note of the ongoing discussions within the Group of Governmental Experts on ammunition. In the second reference, States acknowledged that applying provisions of the Programme of Action to ammunition may enable States to integrate their small arms and ammunition policies and practices into their efforts to control small arms. In a notable shift from their long-held objection to including explicit references to ammunition in the outcome documents, some States, including the United States, did not oppose either reference.

Greater contention surrounded recent developments in the manufacturing, technology and design of small arms and light weapons, particularly with respect to polymer and modular weapons. Opportunities and challenges from those developments were the focus of dedicated informal consultations convened by Belgium at the request and on behalf of the Chair on 25 June, in advance of the Meeting.<sup>28</sup> After a round of challenging discussions and negotiations, States agreed to include a paragraph (para. 92) in the outcome document, in which they committed to continue exchanging views on the issue. Furthermore, the paragraph contained a proposal for the next biennial meeting in 2022 to consider establishing an open-ended technical expert group that could develop action-oriented next steps that, in turn, could address recent developments in the manufacturing, technology and design of small arms and light weapons. With a few States opposing the proposal, the paragraph was submitted to a vote, in which 100 States<sup>29</sup> voted in favour, 1 voted against<sup>30</sup> and 10 abstained.<sup>31</sup>

The Meeting recommended convening the eighth Biennial Meeting of States in 2022 with a mandate to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, including means of enhancing modalities and procedures for international cooperation and assistance. The General Assembly

<sup>28</sup> “Facilitator’s Summary: Informal consultations on opportunities and challenges presented by recent developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design”, 25 June 2021.

<sup>29</sup> Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Viet Nam and Yemen.

<sup>30</sup> Iran (Islamic Republic of).

<sup>31</sup> Belarus, Cambodia, Congo, Cuba, Madagascar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

endorsed the recommendation and decided to convene the meeting in New York from 27 June to 1 July 2022.<sup>32</sup>

As in past years, States continued to report on their implementation of the Programme of Action. In 2020 and 2021, the Secretariat received 93 [national reports](#) covering the implementation period 2018–2019. For the first time, international and regional organizations were also invited to report on their implementation efforts. Accordingly, six relevant organizations and mechanisms<sup>33</sup> [reported](#) on actions they had taken at the global, regional and subregional levels to support the implementation of the Programme of Action. Furthermore, the Secretariat presented an [analysis of implementation trends, challenges and opportunities](#) based on information submitted by States on the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument during the Meeting.

Also in the context of the Programme of Action, the Office for Disarmament Affairs continued implementing a [multi-year project funded by the European Union](#) to support gender-mainstreamed policies, programmes and actions in the fight against small arms trafficking and misuse, in line with the women, peace and security agenda (for more information on the project, see the section entitled “United Nations flagship project: Gender mainstreaming small arms control” in chapter VI). As the Office undertook activities to support the project, it continued to support States and the wider community of practitioners to incorporate gender considerations into their efforts to control small arms.

### Silencing the Guns in Africa: Africa Amnesty Month

In one component of the United Nations’ support for the flagship initiative of the African Union known as Silencing the Guns,<sup>34</sup> the Office for Disarmament Affairs continued to collaborate with the African Union Commission and the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States to support African States in collecting illegally owned firearms voluntarily

surrendered by civilians. The three entities had kicked off their joint assistance in September 2020, timing the launch in observance of Africa Amnesty Month.<sup>35</sup>

As at the end of 2021, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and its partners had supported 10 States in activities connected with the Silencing the Guns initiative and Africa Amnesty Month. Of those countries, the seven States<sup>36</sup> that had initiated Africa Amnesty Month campaigns in September 2020 concluded their activities in May 2021 by publicly destroying collected weapons and ammunition. Meanwhile, in September 2021, three additional States<sup>37</sup> launched Amnesty Month campaigns with activities scheduled to continue through the first quarter of 2022.

In 2021, the three beneficiary States undertook nationwide outreach to their citizens on the negative effects of illicit gun ownership and illicit small-arms trafficking. In that regard, those Governments carried out awareness-raising efforts through print media and seminars, as well as on national and local television and radio. Additionally, one of the States held a national slogan contest, in which young people were invited to voice their perspectives, building further upon their crucial support for local peacebuilding.

In another element of the joint assistance project, national law enforcement authorities in participating States benefited from capacity-building activities aimed at supporting community-based policing, and weapons and ammunition management, including record-keeping and destruction.

Beneficiaries of the assistance collected a total of 2,290 weapons in 2021. Cameroon and Kenya destroyed 1,184 of the arms collected, in May and June; the three new beneficiaries of assistance in 2021 were scheduled to destroy the remaining 1,106 weapons in the first quarter of 2022, together with any additional weapons collected through the assistance programme.

### Security Council

The Security Council engaged productively on the issue of small arms on several occasions in 2021.

<sup>32</sup> General Assembly resolution [76/232](#).

<sup>33</sup> International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL); North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe; Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States; South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons; and World Customs Organization.

<sup>34</sup> In May 2013, African States committed to “Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020” and achieving a conflict-free Africa ([Assembly/AU/Decl.3 \(XXI\)](#) (2013)). They later transformed that commitment into a “flagship initiative” for the first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063, thus establishing it as crucial to accelerating Africa’s economic growth and development and to promoting a common identity. The Security Council, by its resolution [2457 \(2019\)](#), underscored the importance of a joint United Nations-African Union partnership framework for the African Union Silencing the Guns initiative and further indicated its readiness to provide support in the implementation of the road map. On 6 December 2020, at its fourteenth extraordinary session of Heads of States, the African Union decided to extend the Silencing the Guns flagship initiative and Africa Amnesty Month to 2030.

<sup>35</sup> In 2016, the African Union prepared the Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020 and declared its theme for 2020: “Silencing the Guns in Africa: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa’s Development”. In the Master Roadmap, the African Union underlined what it considered to be crucial linkages between peace, security and inclusive socioeconomic development. (For more information, see the [remarks](#) by Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, African Union High Representative for Silencing the Guns, Addis Ababa, February 2020.) In 2017, in support of Silencing the Guns, and to accelerate its practical implementation, the African Union Assembly declared September “Africa Amnesty Month”, to be observed each year until 2020, for the surrender and collection of illicit small arms and light weapons (Assembly of the African Union, document [Assembly/AU/Dec.645 \(XXIX\)](#) (2017), para. 9).

<sup>36</sup> Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Kenya.

<sup>37</sup> Madagascar, Niger and Uganda.

### Expansion of the joint work by the United Nations, the African Union and the Regional Centre on Small Arms for “Silencing the Guns in Africa”



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined.

In September, it convened a virtual Arrria-formula meeting, organized by Mexico, to consider the threat to international peace and security posed by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. During the meeting, Council members reflected on the outcomes of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action, and on the decisions and recommendations of the seventh Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty. They also discussed how the Security Council could more effectively address the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, as well as strengthen the Council’s role in preventing conflict and its efforts towards sustaining peace.

As part of its presidency of the Security Council, in October, Kenya organized a briefing on addressing the threat posed by illicit flows of small arms and light weapons in peace operations. At that briefing, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs discussed the seventh report<sup>38</sup> of the Secretary-General on small arms and light weapons. In that context, she encouraged the Council to fully integrate the considerations of weapons and ammunition management, including measures to control small arms, into its country- and region-specific work. She also encouraged the body to incorporate those considerations into thematic discussions on topics such as the women, peace and security agenda, children in armed conflict and climate security.

In November, under the presidency of Mexico, the Security Council held a ministerial-level open debate entitled “The impact of the diversion and trafficking of arms on peace and security”. More than 50 speakers took the floor to highlight the impact of small arms and light weapons on peace, stability and development in localities, countries and regions. Speakers also explored what actions the Council and other actors could take to address the issue.

In December, the Security Council adopted resolution 2616 (2021), focusing on the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and diversion of arms and related materiel in violation of Council-mandated arms embargoes. By that resolution, the Security Council expressed grave concern that the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons in many regions of the world continued to pose threats to international peace and security. The Council further urged the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action.

By resolution 2616 (2021), the Security Council also resolved that, in considering whether to adopt or renew mandates for peace operations, the Council would examine whether and how those operations could support national authorities in combating the illicit transfer and diversion of weapons in violation of United Nations arms embargoes. In addition, the Council encouraged Member States to, among other things, ensure that adequate marking and record-keeping measures were in place to trace arms, including small arms and light weapons, as required by the international and regional instruments. The Secretary-General was also requested

<sup>38</sup> S/2021/839. See also previous reports: S/2008/258; S/2011/255; S/2013/503; S/2015/289; S/2017/1025; and S/2019/1011.

to consider, in his regular country-specific reports to the Security Council, what tasks could be performed by peace operations personnel and relevant United Nations entities to (a) assist relevant national authorities in, inter alia, monitoring mandated arms embargoes, identifying sources of illicit arms and tracing seized, found and surrendered arms, and (b) support relevant sanctions committee expert panels. The Council also requested the Secretary-General to include further information on general trends in illicit trafficking and diversion in contravention of Council-mandated arms embargoes, as well as further recommendations on that matter, in his biennial reports pursuant to resolution 2220 (2015).

### **Report of the Secretary-General**

In September, the Secretary-General issued the seventh report<sup>39</sup> on small arms and light weapons, concluding that those armaments had continued to play a central role in initiating, exacerbating and sustaining armed conflict, pervasive violence and acts of crime and terrorism.

In his report, the Secretary-General outlined global, regional and subregional efforts to address small arms and light weapons. Regarding relevant trends and developments, the Secretary-General underscored the humanitarian impact of illicit flows of small arms and light weapons, as well as their negative implications for sustainable development and sustaining peace. The report also contained a description of the highly gendered nature of small arms and light weapons; an exploration of the linkages between terrorism and transnational organized crimes; a discussion of recent developments concerning the manufacture, design and technology of small arms and light weapons; and a discussion of the role of small arms and light weapons with respect to climate-related security risks. In his recommendations, the Secretary-General encouraged States to promote the sustained and systematic integration of weapons and ammunition management into the work of the United Nations on peace and security, including when mandating peace operations. In that context, he also encouraged the Security Council to consider establishing or designating a dedicated component, unit or cell within any mission mandated to support the host State and competent national authorities in processing recovered weapons and treating recovered illicit ammunition. The Secretary-General further encouraged States to consider the relevance of weapons dynamics in its thematic discussions, including on children and armed conflict; peacekeeping; mine action; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; and women, peace and security.

### **Peace operations**

In the context of country-specific situations on its agenda, the Security Council addressed issues regarding weapons and ammunition in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Libya, Mali and Somalia.

With regard to the Central African Republic, the Council adopted three resolutions, in March, July and November, respectively. In resolution 2605 (2021), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). Condemning cross-border criminal activities, including arms trafficking, as well as the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, the Security Council outlined a range of mandated tasks, including in relation to weapons and ammunition management. The Council also requested the Mission to actively seize, record, dispose of and destroy weapons and ammunitions of disarmed combatants and armed groups and to support the national authorities in their efforts to achieve progress on the benchmarks for the review of the arms embargo measures.<sup>40</sup>

The Security Council adopted two resolutions in 2021 on the situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In June, it adopted resolution 2582 (2021), stressing the importance of enhancing the safe and effective management, storage and security of stockpiles of weapons and ammunition, including to reduce the risk of diversion to armed groups. Then, in December, the Council adopted resolution 2612 (2021), by which it (a) extended the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), and (b) expressed concern that diversions of arms from national stockpiles continued to constitute a source of supply for armed groups in the country, calling for continued national efforts to address the threat posed by the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, including with the continued support of the Mission. By the same resolution, the Council called on the Government to expand its support to its National Commission for Small Arms and Light Weapons Control and Reduction of Armed Violence. Regarding disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities, the Council mandated the Mission to advise and support the national authorities in disposing of weapons and ammunition from disarmed Congolese and foreign combatants. It added that such assistance must comply with applicable international arms-control treaties, including the Nairobi Protocol, of which the Government is a signatory party, as well as the Kinshasa Convention.

Regarding the situation in Mali, in June, the Security Council adopted resolution 2584 (2021), calling upon national authorities to address the proliferation and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, including through effective stockpile management, in line with the Programme of Action and the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials.

In October, the Security Council, by resolution 2600 (2021), extended the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti. In the resolution, the

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> The Council established the key benchmarks in a statement by its President on 9 April 2019 (S/PRST/2019/3).

Council also underlined the importance of addressing gang violence and its root causes in a comprehensive manner, including through strengthened rule of law, socioeconomic measures, violence reduction programmes, weapons and ammunition management, and cutting the linkage between political actors and gangs.

The situation in Somalia was the subject of six Security Council resolutions during the year. In resolution [2568 \(2021\)](#), adopted in September, the Council called upon the authorities of Somalia—in coordination with the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), international partners and relevant United Nations entities, including the United Nations Mine Action Service—to combat the illicit trade, transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons in all aspects; to prevent access of unauthorized recipients to all types of explosives and related materials in Somalia; and to ensure their safe and effective management and storage.

### **Terrorism**

The Security Council continued to stress the need to address the illicit traffic in and supply of small arms and light weapons to terrorists, and recognized that terrorist organizations could benefit from transnational organized crime, including the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. In a presidential statement issued in August,<sup>41</sup> the Council noted the continuing problem of transnational organized crimes committed at sea, including illicit trafficking in firearms. Acknowledging that terrorists may benefit from transnational organized crime in specific contexts and regions, the Security Council called upon Member States to consider the ratification and implementation of global instruments. It further requested Member States to consider their participation in national, regional and global initiatives aimed at building capacity to prevent and counter, among other things, illicit trade in direct support of terrorism networks and the illicit trafficking of arms, including through seaports and at sea.

In the context of threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts, the Security Council adopted resolution [2610 \(2021\)](#) in December, in which it recalled (a) its decision that Member States shall eliminate the supply of weapons, including small arms and light weapons, to terrorists, and (b) its calls on States to find ways of intensifying and accelerating the exchange of operational information regarding trafficking in arms and to enhance coordination of efforts on national, subregional, regional and international levels. The Council strongly condemned the continued flow of weapons, including small arms and light weapons, uncrewed aircraft systems and their components, improvised explosive device components, and military equipment—including portable air defence systems—to and between Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (also known as Da'esh), Al-Qaida, their affiliates and associated groups, illegal armed groups and criminals. The Security Council also encouraged Member States to prevent and disrupt procurement networks for such

<sup>41</sup> [S/PRST/2021/15](#).

weapons, systems and components between Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, including through proposing relevant listing requests.

### **Arms embargoes, including benchmark assessments**

Following a trend of recent years, the Security Council continued its practice of partially lifting arms embargoes to help select States strengthen their national security services. In parallel, the Council incorporated commitments and measures related to weapons and ammunition management into its resolutions with increasing frequency. Such steps were intended to address potential risks of those security services diverting arms and thereby contributing to illicit proliferation and misuse.

In its resolution [2562 \(2021\)](#), the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to conduct a review of the situation in the Darfur area of the Sudan, including with respect to the status of national measures for tackling arms proliferation. In addition, the Council requested recommendations for key benchmarks that could help guide the Council in its review of the embargo measures on Darfur. In his assessment<sup>42</sup> submitted pursuant to that resolution, the Secretary-General included “progress on transitional security arrangements in Darfur” as one of four recommended benchmarks, with targets such as completing the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, as well as reviewing and updating the weapons collection programme as a complement to the implementation of the national action plan<sup>43</sup> for the protection of civilians in the Sudan.

In line with a request by the Security Council in its resolution [2536 \(2020\)](#) on the Central African Republic, the Secretary-General updated the Council on progress by the Government towards achieving benchmarks previously established in relation to arms embargo measures.<sup>44</sup> In his assessment, the Secretary-General noted that the Government would need to collaborate with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), including through the Mine Action Service and international partners, to make further progress in operating an effective system for weapons and ammunition management.

The Secretary-General also submitted his second report concerning the Security Council's arms embargo measures in South Sudan. The assessment, submitted pursuant to resolution [2521 \(2020\)](#), contained three options<sup>45</sup> for developing benchmarks to assess those embargo measures by progress made in implementing the 2018 [Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan](#). In response to a request from the Council to provide specific benchmarks, he recommended three of them, including “progress on

<sup>42</sup> [S/2021/696](#).

<sup>43</sup> [S/2020/429](#), annex.

<sup>44</sup> Letter dated 15 June 2021 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council ([S/2021/573](#)).

<sup>45</sup> [S/2021/321](#), paras. 27–29.

disarmament, demobilization and security sector reform". The Council took note of the recommendations in its resolution [2577 \(2021\)](#), which contained five key benchmarks<sup>46</sup> to consider when reviewing the arms embargo measures on South Sudan. The benchmarks identified by the Council included "progress by South Sudanese defence and security forces on properly managing their existing arms and ammunition stockpiles, including by establishing planning documents, protocols and training for the recording, storage, distribution and management of weapons and ammunition".

### Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium

The [Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium \(MOSAIC\)](#) consists of 21 publicly available modules containing practical guidance for measures to control small arms. Governments and civil society organizations have widely made use of the modules, which together provide guidance on managing and controlling small arms throughout their life cycle. Developing and reviewing the modules is the responsibility of technical experts around the world, including individuals from civil society, industry and international organizations who form a dedicated expert reference group.

MOSAIC supports efforts to realize the objectives of key global agreements aimed at preventing the illicit trade, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, implementing the MOSAIC guidance can contribute towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>48</sup>

In its resolution [76/232](#) of 30 December 2021 on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, the General Assembly once again noted the role of web-based tools developed by the Secretariat, including MOSAIC. It also noted the utility of those tools in assessing progress made in implementing the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

In 2021, three additional MOSAIC modules were developed, covering the following topics: deactivation of small arms and light weapons; gun-free zones; and criminal justice responses to the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

Despite adjustments to training schedules resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, MOSAIC modules continued to be used for training, particularly by the three regional centres of the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

The Office also continued to translate MOSAIC modules into additional languages, an effort aimed at improving their accessibility. In 2021, 13 additional modules were translated into Spanish and three additional modules into French. As

a result, all MOSAIC modules published as at the end of the year were available in English, French and Spanish.

### Coordinating Action on Small Arms mechanism

Since its inception in 1998, the Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) mechanism has facilitated inter-agency coordination on efforts to reduce armed violence and address harm caused by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and ammunition. Currently, 24 United Nations entities<sup>49</sup> participate in the platform, covering a variety of thematic areas.<sup>50</sup>

To ensure that the United Nations speaks with one voice on the issue of small arms, a joint statement<sup>51</sup> was delivered in July at the seventh Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Meanwhile, the mechanism carried forward its activities pursuant to decision 2020/28 of the Secretary-General's Executive Committee, by which the Committee had reaffirmed the mechanism as the common platform for United Nations efforts to address the problem of small arms and light weapons. In 2021, the mechanism updated its terms of reference to highlight the nexus between small arms and socioeconomic development, focusing on how implementing decision 2020/28 would support country-level approaches to integrating national arms control measures into national development frameworks. In a step to strengthen those country-level approaches, the mechanism launched two other streams of work during the year: development of a concept note on the guiding principle of national ownership of programming for the control of small arms; and mapping of the expertise and regional scopes of each participating entity, as well as their respective ongoing and upcoming key activities.

<sup>49</sup> The following United Nations entities participated in 2021: Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, Department for Economic and Social Affairs, Department of Global Communications, Department of Peace Operations, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, International Civil Aviation Organization, Office for Disarmament Affairs, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), United Nations Environment Programme, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, United Nations Mine Action Service, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and World Health Organization.

<sup>50</sup> The participating entities work in thematic areas that include arms regulation, aviation safety, children's rights, counter-terrorism, economic development, gender equality, humanitarian aid, human rights, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, preventing organized crime and crime, refugees and women's rights.

<sup>51</sup> United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, "[Statement of the UN Coordinating Action on Small Arms](#)", 28 July 2021.

<sup>46</sup> Security Council resolution [2577 \(2021\)](#), operative para. 2.

<sup>47</sup> Such agreements include the Programme of Action on small Arms and Light Weapons, the International Tracing Instrument, the Firearms Protocol supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and the Arms Trade Treaty.

<sup>48</sup> In particular, the guidance supports Goal 16 on promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies, as well as its Target 16.4 on significantly reducing illicit arms flows.

Through online and other means, the mechanism continued to facilitate exchanges of views and experiences within the United Nations regarding its support to States in the area of small arms control. That support included providing substantive advice and secretariat services to deliberative bodies such as the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Human Rights Council. Furthermore, while the mechanism oversaw the development, utilization and promotion of the MOSAIC tools, it also provided advice on the implementation of UNSCAR, as well as the SALIENT trust facility, which funded several projects and programmes implemented by the mechanism's partners.<sup>52</sup> The mechanism also assisted participating entities in tackling small-arms elements of their gender-related activities. Furthermore, its participants carried out activities supporting weapons and ammunition management in the context of United Nations peacekeeping; the African Union Silencing the Guns flagship initiative; Sustainable Development Goals Target 16.4 on reducing illicit arms flows; and the United Nations joint project on counter-terrorism.<sup>53</sup>

### Firearms Protocol and Working Group on Firearms

In 2021, the world marked 20 years since the General Assembly adopted the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition (Firearms Protocol) supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The Protocol aims to promote, facilitate and strengthen cooperation among States Parties in order to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition.

Comoros and Germany acceded to the Firearms Protocol in observance of its twentieth anniversary, bringing the total number of States parties to 121.<sup>54</sup> In addition, the Protocol had 9 signatory States<sup>55</sup> that had not yet acceded to it.

From 10 to 12 May, the open-ended intergovernmental Working Group on Firearms held its eighth meeting in Vienna, employing a hybrid format owing to COVID-19 restrictions.<sup>56</sup> The meeting had two themes: “Reducing illicit financial

and arms flows to achieve Target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals” and “From arms transfers to firearms trafficking: application of the Firearms Protocol in the context of diversion”.<sup>57</sup>

In the meeting's final report,<sup>58</sup> the Working Group on Firearms identified the following discussion points for further consideration by States parties to the Convention:

- States could address illicit firearms trafficking and illicit financial flows as a multidimensional security threat.
- States could conduct parallel or joint financial investigations and financial criminal analysis as a standard aspect of investigations into illicit firearms trafficking and related crimes and establish multidisciplinary groups to that end.
- States could harmonize domestic legislation on the marking of essential parts and components of firearms and record those markings in national record-keeping systems that address the entire life cycle of all firearms.
- States could establish strict export criteria and risk assessment procedures to make use of end-user and end-use certificates and take appropriate post-delivery verification measures.
- States could hold private entities and individuals—including shipping and transport companies, brokers and suppliers—to account for involvement in illicit firearms transfers, particularly in connection with violations of arms embargoes.

For the ninth meeting of the Working Group planned for 2022, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime planned to prepare and propose a multi-year workplan for the Group's discussion and possible adoption.

### Saving Lives Entity: Creating conducive environments for security and sustainable development

The Saving Lives Entity (SALIENT) began with a commitment by the Secretary-General, in his 2018 Agenda for Disarmament, to help finance a more comprehensive, sustainable response across the United Nations system to the challenge of illicit small arms, including their impacts on the most affected countries.<sup>59</sup> It is a United Nations funding facility dedicated to supporting national ownership of domestic efforts both to prevent armed violence and to tackle illicit small arms and light weapons. Supported activities constitute one part of a

<sup>52</sup> For more information, see the sections on MOSAIC and the two trust facilities in this chapter.

<sup>53</sup> To support the implementation of Security Council resolution 2370 (2017) on collective efforts to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons, the joint project was launched in 2020 to address the nexus between terrorism, arms trafficking and organized crime, focusing on Central Asia. Its implementing partners were the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Member entities of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact provided further support.

<sup>54</sup> For the list of States parties, see the United Nations Treaty Collection, Status of Treaties ([Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime](#)).

<sup>55</sup> Australia, Canada, China, Iceland, Japan, Luxembourg, Monaco, Seychelles and United Kingdom.

<sup>56</sup> The Working Group on Firearms was established in 2010 by the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. In 2014, the Convention's States parties institutionalized the Working Group as a standing mechanism of the Conference.

<sup>57</sup> For more information, see the respective background papers prepared by the Secretariat on the themes ([CTOC/COP/WG.6/2021/2](#) and [CTOC/COP/WG.6/2021/3](#)).

<sup>58</sup> [CTOC/COP/WG.6/2020/4](#).

<sup>59</sup> SALIENT was officially established within the Peacebuilding Fund in 2020. Its development and operation have been informed by the complementary experience and mandates of its implementing partners, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme, as well as the multi-stakeholder platforms of other United Nations entities.

comprehensive approach to sustainable security and development, helping to integrate small-arms control into the broader development and security efforts of participating States. Furthermore, SALIENT-funded initiatives have placed a special emphasis on promoting gender equality and generating reliable data.

In 2021, the SALIENT Programme Coordination Team kicked off implementation with the selection of three pilot countries: Cameroon, Jamaica and South Sudan. It oversaw a virtual scoping mission for Jamaica from March to May, as well as an in-person scoping mission in Cameroon in May. The missions aimed to assess the context and needs of those countries, identify opportunities for relevant activities, and build momentum for national ownership and partnerships in SALIENT-supported initiatives. South Sudan, which was selected as a third pilot country in March, did not require a scoping mission given its *Voluntary Civilian Disarmament Strategy*, completed in September 2020.

Notwithstanding delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) worked throughout 2021 to support the scoping missions in Cameroon and Jamaica, as well as to finalize administrative aspects of proposals for the two SALIENT-funded activities.<sup>60</sup> As part of those efforts, the Office and UNDP engaged with donors<sup>61</sup> and, in September, convened the inaugural meeting of the SALIENT Programme Board.

### United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation

The United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR) is a small-scale, short-term, theme-focused and quick-impact funding mechanism for controlling conventional arms. Its projects are funded through an annual competitive selection process open to civil society organizations, as well as regional and subregional organizations. The Office for Disarmament Affairs has administered UNSCAR since 2013 to support the ongoing implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. As at the end of 2021, the financial and policy support of 15 countries<sup>62</sup> had enabled UNSCAR to fund 94 projects on a cumulative budget of \$12.5 million, benefiting 145 States.<sup>63</sup>

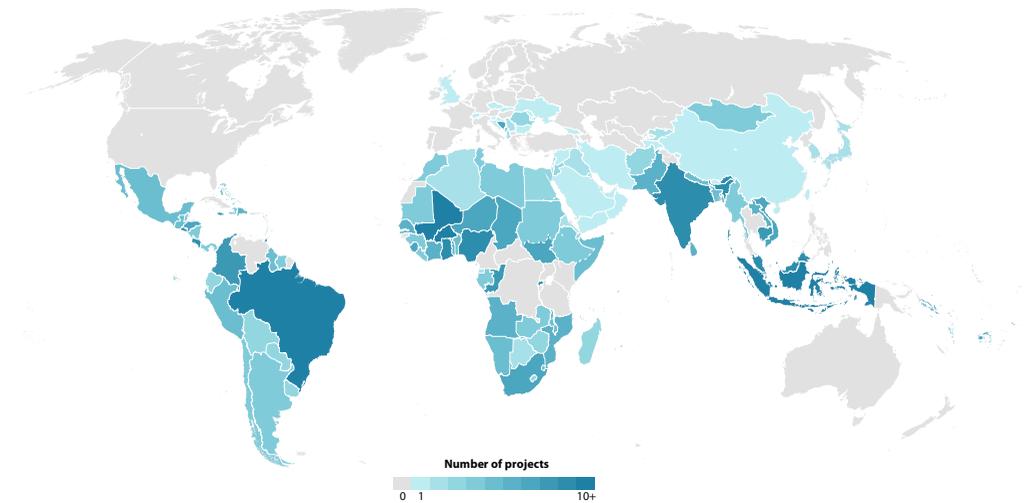
<sup>60</sup> Under SALIENT's terms of reference, project proposals must be put forward by at least two United Nations entities, in coordination with the country's resident coordinator and jointly with its host Government.

<sup>61</sup> France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Sweden and Switzerland.

<sup>62</sup> Australia, Canada, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom.

<sup>63</sup> All applications for funding from UNSCAR must meet the following requirements: fully align with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (i.e., Goal 5 on gender equality and Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, as well as relevant national development frameworks); comply with MOSAIC and the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines; support implementation of Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament; and promote gender-responsive approaches, such as the agenda on women, peace and security, in accordance with the guiding principle of assuring national ownership.

### UNSCAR beneficiary States, 2013–2021



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

In response to the 2021 call for proposals, 36 applications were received, of which 10 proposals were to be selected and implemented in 2022.

Meanwhile, 10 previously launched projects continued to be carried out in 2021. Notably, they included two projects aimed at building national data-collection capacities in the Central African region, both to support Target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals and to facilitate the submission of national reports on the implementation of the Programme of Action. Focuses of the other projects included stockpile management in Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador and Somalia; support for parliamentarians and civil society, particularly in the context of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action; and capacity-building for the control of arms transfers.

The Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Arms Trade Treaty Secretariat, as the administrators of UNSCAR and the Arms Trade Treaty Voluntary Trust Fund respectively, continued to exchange information throughout 2021, seeking both to avoid duplication in funding and to identify opportunities for their respectively funded activities to support one another. Likewise, the Office sought to ensure complementarities between activities funded through UNSCAR and SALIENT. The latter funding facility is intended for financing multifaceted, country-specific

projects advancing small-arms control as one part of a comprehensive approach to sustainable security and development.

Separately, in July, the seventh Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action specifically referred to UNSCAR in its outcome document, encouraging Member States to contribute funds.<sup>64</sup> Its call marked the first such reference to UNSCAR in an outcome document of the Programme of Action process.

## Ammunition

States actively engaged in multilateral deliberations on conventional ammunition issues throughout 2021, addressing the dual risks of unintended explosions and diversion of ammunition.

In May, the Group of Governmental Experts on Problems Arising from the Accumulation of Conventional Ammunition Stockpiles in Surplus concluded its work. In line with its recommendations, the General Assembly decided to establish an open-ended working group to be convened in 2022 and 2023. That working group would seek to develop a set of political commitments as a new global framework to address existing gaps in the management of ammunition throughout its life cycle.

Meanwhile, through the United Nations SaferGuard programme, the Office for Disarmament Affairs continued encouraging States to use the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines to enhance the safety and security of ammunition stockpiles.

### Group of Governmental Experts on Problems Arising from the Accumulation of Conventional Ammunition Stockpiles in Surplus

Pursuant to the request of the General Assembly contained in resolution 72/55, “Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus”, the Group of Governmental Experts held its final session in a hybrid format at the United Nations Headquarters from 7 to 10 September.<sup>65</sup> At its last meeting, the Group adopted by consensus a final report<sup>66</sup> that was later submitted to the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. The 2020–2021 Group of Governmental Experts on ammunition was the second intergovernmental expert group to convene on the topic of surplus ammunition stockpiles.

The Group adopted a comprehensive approach to understanding the safety and security risks posed by conventional ammunition, agreeing that such risks extended well beyond national stockpile facilities into every stage of the life cycle of ammunitions. With that understanding, the Group explored the full range of safety

<sup>64</sup> A/CONF.192/BMS/2021/1, para. 118.

<sup>65</sup> The Group held its first session at the United Nations Headquarters from 20 to 24 January 2020. Its second session took place from 17 to 21 May 2020 in a hybrid format at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

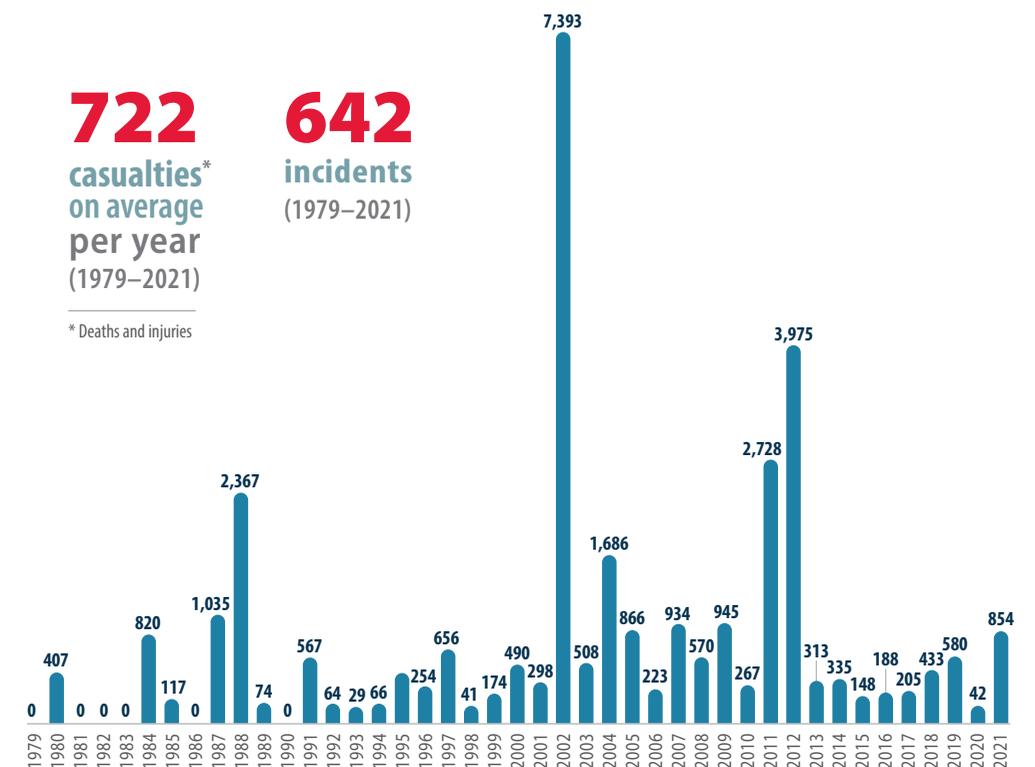
<sup>66</sup> A/76/324.

## Deaths and injuries from unplanned explosions at munitions sites

**722**  
casualties\*  
on average  
per year  
(1979–2021)

**642**  
incidents  
(1979–2021)

\* Deaths and injuries



### CASUALTIES, 1979–2021

From January 1979 to December 2021, more than 30,000 casualties resulting from incidents relating to unplanned explosions at munitions sites were recorded. In 2021, 854 casualties resulted from eight incidents. The highest number of casualties was recorded in 2002, mainly due to the devastating incident that occurred in Lagos, Nigeria. Similarly, the incident in Abadan, Turkmenistan, in 2011, and the one in Brazzaville, Congo, in 2012, contributed strongly to the spikes in 2011 and 2012.

Ageing, unstable and excess ammunition stockpiles pose the dual hazards of illicit proliferation and accidental explosion, which have caused humanitarian disasters and destabilization in various global regions. In view of those challenges, the United Nations developed the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines in 2011 and established the SaferGuard Programme as the corresponding knowledge management platform, at the request of the General Assembly. The Guidelines constitute practical, modular guidance on the safe and secure management of ammunition, which benefits United Nations personnel in the field, interested States and other relevant stakeholders.

Source: Small Arms Survey

and security measures applicable to ammunition in every stage of “through-life” management, from production through use or disposal. Additionally, the Group underscored that through-life management of ammunition applied to all types of conventional ammunition.

Regarding applicable frameworks and commitments at the global and regional levels, the Group recognized multilateral efforts on ammunition to be fragmented and limited in scope, despite ammunition issues featuring in multiple international and regional instruments. In its final report, the Group recommended specific safety and security measures while also tackling overarching issues, including international cooperation and assistance, as well as the integration of gender considerations. Notably, the Group recommended that the United Nations oversee the development of voluntary, operational guidelines related to security aspects of through-life ammunition management, considering and complementing existing standards, guidelines and best practices, including the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines. The new voluntary guidelines would focus beyond ammunition stockpiles to address the entire ammunition supply chain, from production to use or disposal.

The Group put forward practical, concrete recommendations for a comprehensive framework on conventional ammunition, aiming to support the prevention of both unplanned explosions and diversion. In that regard, the Group explored a multi-layer framework composed of global commitments, regional and subregional activities and national measures.

Welcoming the report of the 2020–2021 Group, the General Assembly decided, by resolution [76/233](#), to establish an open-ended working group to develop a set of political commitments as a new global framework that would address existing gaps in through-life ammunition management. The Working Group was mandated to hold a two-day organizational session followed by two five-day sessions in 2022 and one five-day session in 2023, preceded by informal consultations, as needed. The Group was expected to report on its work to the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly, including recommendations on a set of political commitments that would constitute a new global framework on conventional ammunition.

### **International Ammunition Technical Guidelines and United Nations SaferGuard activities**

#### ***Ammunition Management Advisory Team***

Established in 2019 as a joint initiative of the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, in 2021, the Ammunition Management Advisory Team continued to provide relevant technical advice and assistance in accordance with international standards—namely, the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines. The Advisory Team supported

several States—including Equatorial Guinea, Kosovo,<sup>67</sup> Kyrgyzstan, Peru, the Republic of Moldova and Togo—in enhancing their capacities to improve the safety and security of ammunition stockpiles. In so doing, the Advisory Team contributed to the implementation of the Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament, specifically Action 22 on securing excessive and poorly maintained stockpiles. Furthermore, at the request of Togo, the Advisory Team collaborated with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa to conduct assessments of a series of ammunition stockpiles in December, providing technical advice on storage and disposal.

#### ***Quick-response mechanism***

The Office for Disarmament Affairs activated the quick-response mechanism of the United Nations SaferGuard programme<sup>68</sup> following a series of explosions in March at a military camp in Bata, Equatorial Guinea.

The Office initiated an assistance mission under the quick-response mechanism at the Government’s request, deploying a team comprising personnel from the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and the Ammunition Management Advisory Team. The mission team assisted Equatorial Guinea in assessing the cause of the incident, as well as in identifying and reducing risks of further explosions and potential environmental impacts. The team also provided immediate technical advice on ammunition management and explosives safety and security risks based on the internationally accepted good practices contained in the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines.

#### ***Validation process***

Under the United Nations SaferGuard programme, the Office for Disarmament Affairs continued its efforts to promote the global application of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines. In 2021, its work included further developing a process to validate the expertise of ammunition management specialists. The aim was to build a diverse roster of experts who possess knowledge and skills compatible with the Guidelines.

In August, the Office joined the Ammunition Management Advisory Team to resume a Spanish-language validation process that had been postponed in 2020 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. Following an in-person validation exercise held in Madrid, nine experts from six countries were added to the roster. Then, in December, another validation exercise was held in Dubai for English-speaking experts coming mostly from the Asia-Pacific region. Six experts from three countries completed the process and joined the roster. The addition of the new experts

<sup>67</sup> References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution [1244 \(1999\)](#).

<sup>68</sup> The United Nations SaferGuard quick-response mechanism was established to facilitate the rapid deployment of ammunition experts to assist States, upon request, in the urgent management of ammunition stockpiles, including in the aftermath of unintended explosions of ammunition.

enhanced the ability of the United Nations SaferGuard programme to respond to emergency requests from States for assistance related to ammunition stockpiles.

### **Technical Review Board**

In June, the United Nations SaferGuard programme released Version 3 of the Guidelines, following a comprehensive review by the Technical Review Board with support from the United Nations SaferGuard Strategic Coordination Group.<sup>69</sup> As at the end of the year, translations of Version 3 into French, Spanish and Arabic were under way and scheduled for release in 2022.

Then, at a virtual meeting held in July, the Technical Review Board approved revisions to the Guidelines based on a gender review conducted by the Office for Disarmament Affairs with Small Arms Survey, an independent research organization. The aim of the revisions was to ensure the full integration of gender considerations in the Guidelines, specifically by incorporating gender-inclusive language, as well as general considerations and principles related to gender.

In December, the Technical Review Board and the Strategic Coordination Group held their annual meeting virtually. Participants exchanged information on existing projects, resources and opportunities to support the application of the Guidelines, and they discussed likely technical amendments to Version 3, in anticipation of the next formal update in five years.

### **Ammunition management in United Nations peace operations**

In 2021, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations continued to develop training materials on weapons and ammunition management in United Nations peace operations. The aim of such materials was to ensure that United Nations personnel, and troop- and police-contributing countries acquired the competencies necessary to effectively apply ammunition-management guidance set out in United Nations policies and manuals.

In close partnership with the Ammunition Management Advisory Team and other United Nations entities, the Office for Disarmament Affairs organized three virtual workshops—in May, July and October—for participants to review the training materials and provide technical feedback for further development. Then, at an in-person workshop held in Lomé in November, participants from the partner entities reviewed the materials in detail with rostered experts of the United Nations SaferGuard programme, providing final feedback. The Office completed work on the first version of the training materials in December.

<sup>69</sup> Technical Review Board members are national ammunition technical experts from Austria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland and the United States. The Board receives inputs and guidance from the wider Strategic Coordination Group, which is composed of implementing partners for the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines.

## **Improvised explosive devices**

The threat posed by improvised explosive devices continued to draw the attention of Member States, the United Nations, humanitarian organizations and non-governmental organizations throughout 2021. Incidents involving improvised explosive devices were recorded across multiple regions during the year in the context of armed conflict, as well as crime and terrorism. Heavily impacted countries included Afghanistan, Somalia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.

According to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), the use of improvised explosive devices by anti-Government elements in non-suicide attacks was the main cause of civilian casualties in the country during the first half of the year. Consequently, the number of civilian casualties was nearly triple the figure recorded over the same period in 2020. Notably, “pressure-plate” improvised explosive devices were the cause of 42 per cent more civilian casualties in the first six months of 2021 than during the same period in 2020.<sup>70</sup>

United Nations peace operations also continued to suffer attacks that used improvised explosive devices, especially in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and Somalia. In August, the Security Council adopted resolution [2589 \(2021\)](#), aimed at facilitating accountability for crimes committed against peacekeepers. By the resolution, the Council expressed grave concern over security threats and targeted attacks against peacekeepers, including threats posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices.

The use of improvised explosive devices in Mali was of particular concern to United Nations peacekeepers in 2021. There, the Secretary-General reported 53 incidents involving improvised explosive devices in the last three months of the year alone. That figure represented the country’s highest monthly total since the inception of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).<sup>71</sup>

### **Security Council**

The Security Council remained seized of the issue of improvised explosive devices throughout the year. In March, Kenya held an Arria-formula meeting on the threat posed by those weapons to peace operations, focusing on their use by armed groups and terrorist organizations to inflict harm on civilians, humanitarian workers and peacekeepers. In April, Viet Nam presided over a Security Council open debate on mine action, resulting in the adoption of a presidential statement,<sup>72</sup> in which the Council (a) cited deep concerns about the increase in civilian casualties caused

<sup>70</sup> United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, “[Report on the Protection of Civilians, Mid-year Report](#)”, 2021.

<sup>71</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali ([S/2021/1117](#)).

<sup>72</sup> [S/PRST/2021/8](#).

by improvised explosive devices, and (b) stressed the need to combat the illicit procurement of precursor materials and mitigate their threat to civilians.

In May, the Security Council issued another presidential statement,<sup>73</sup> in which it requested the Secretary-General to conduct an independent strategic review of United Nations peacekeeping operations' response to improvised explosive devices, as well as the broader effect of explosive ordnance on civilians. As part of the investigation, the review team was deployed to the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali to assess capabilities and necessary measures. Most of the team's recommendations referenced ways to improve the safety and security of uniformed and civilian mission personnel. The team's overarching recommendations included the following: (a) addressing drivers of instability that lead to the use of explosive ordnance and strengthening an integrated planned response; (b) mitigating threats by disrupting supply chains, including trafficking of precursor material; (c) providing medical support to missions, including verified casualty evacuation capability; and (d) adopting a more robust pre-deployment training for units assigned to missions affected by explosive ordnance. The team's final report, entitled "The United Nations response to explosive ordnance threats: A more coherent approach is needed", was presented to the Security Council in December. The Council was expected to consider the report's recommendations in 2022.

In November, the Security Council adopted resolution [2607 \(2021\)](#), renewing both the arms embargo on Somalia and the mandate of the Panel of Experts on Somalia. In the resolution, the Council noted an increase in attacks undertaken by Al-Shabaab using improvised explosive devices. In that context, it decided that States should continue to prevent the direct or indirect sale or transfer of potentially dangerous precursor items if there was sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the items would be used, or a significant risk that they might be used, to manufacture improvised explosive devices.

In relation to its agenda item on Yemen, the Security Council adopted resolution [2564 \(2021\)](#) in February. By the resolution, the Council requested the Panel of Experts on Yemen<sup>74</sup> to provide a mid-term update by 28 July, with information on what commercially available components designated by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [2140 \(2014\)](#) were still being used in assembling uncrewed aerial vehicles, waterborne improvised explosive devices and other weapon systems. Earlier, in January, the Panel of Experts reported that it continued to observe commercially available imported parts—such as uncrewed aerial vehicle engines, servo actuators and electronics—being locally integrated into waterborne improvised explosive devices and uncrewed aerial vehicles.<sup>75</sup> Separately, in his third report<sup>76</sup> on the situation of children and armed conflict in Yemen, the

Secretary-General noted that explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices had caused 466 child casualties in 2019 and 2020.

### General Assembly

In December, the General Assembly decided to consider the decision entitled "Countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices" ([76/516](#)) during its next session in 2022.

### Amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

States also took up the issue of improvised explosive devices at two meetings held in the framework of the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-traps and Other Devices as amended on 3 May 1996, also known as Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (for more information on relevant activities under Amended Protocol II, see pp. [118–120](#)).

### United Nations Mine Action Service

The Coordinating Task Force on a Whole-of-System Approach to Improvised Explosive Devices,<sup>77</sup> chaired by the United Nations Mine Action Service, continued in 2021 to coordinate responses across the United Nations system to the threat of such devices. Specifically, the Mine Action Service coordinated activities to map the cycle of responses to improvised explosive devices by relevant international organizations, as well as considered efforts by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to explore financial disruption as a means of dismantling networks that facilitate the manufacture and deployment of improvised explosive devices.

In addition, the Mine Action Service revamped its process for tracking relevant resources and skills within the United Nations in the areas of prevention, protection, threat mitigation and law enforcement. Specifically, it integrated several interactive elements into an online "toolbox" designed to facilitate cross-pillar cooperation and dialogue; support the sharing of resources, data and expertise; and provide United Nations entities with consolidated information related to the devices.

Meanwhile, at the request of Bangladesh and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Mine Action Service deployed the Mobile Training Team of its Improvised Explosive Device Threat Mitigation Advisory Team to provide those countries with training on explosive ordnance disposal and threat mitigation. The Mobile Training Team also reviewed the curriculum at the International Peace Support Training Centre in Kenya and conducted an assessment in Ghana of capacity-building needs related to explosive ordnance disposal.

<sup>73</sup> [S/PRST/2021/11](#).

<sup>74</sup> The Panel of Experts was established pursuant to resolution [2140 \(2014\)](#).

<sup>75</sup> Final report of the Panel of Experts on Yemen ([S/2021/79](#)).

<sup>76</sup> [S/2021/761](#).

<sup>77</sup> In 2020, consistent with Action 18 of the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, the United Nations Mine Action Service convened a new coordinating task force to consider a whole-of-system approach to improvised explosive devices, bringing together colleagues across the counter-terrorism, development, humanitarian, political and security spectrum.

At the Peacekeeping Ministerial held in Seoul in December, 25 Member States pledged to contribute explosive ordnance disposal teams, training or funding, with several specifically pledging training or services for United Nations peace operations on countering improvised explosive devices. The pledges were expected to increase demand for support from the Mobile Training Team, potentially necessitating its expansion.

Additionally, the Secretary-General identified the response to improvised explosive devices to be among the 2021–2023 priorities of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative. In the document, the Secretary-General committed to providing additional training to help protect peacekeepers from improvised explosive devices.<sup>78</sup>

### Explosive weapons in populated areas

Throughout 2021, the harm caused by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas remained a key concern for States, civil society and the United Nations. The use of explosive weapons with wide-area impacts in population centres continued to result in devastating harm to civilians and destruction of civilian objects, including health facilities, schools and water supplies. Independent research published during the year showed that, when explosive weapons were used in populated areas, 89 per cent of those killed and injured were civilians, compared with 10 per cent in other areas. Civilian casualties from such use were particularly high in Afghanistan, Iraq, the State of Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.<sup>79</sup>

The Secretary-General, in his annual report<sup>80</sup> to the Security Council on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, noted that conflict in urban areas had affected more than 50 million people in 2020, and the use of explosive weapons in cities continued to expose civilians to a high risk of indiscriminate effects. The Secretary-General further noted that the use of those weapons in urban areas took a devastating toll on essential infrastructure and services. In that regard, he highlighted the impact to health-care services, which were disrupted when (a) medical personnel were killed and injured, (b) ambulances and medical personnel were unable to reach the wounded, and (c) hospitals, electricity and water supply lines were damaged and destroyed. The Secretary-General urged parties to avoid the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas and to reassess and adapt their choice of weapons and tactics to avoid those well-documented consequences to civilians. The Secretary-General also expressed support for efforts to develop a political declaration in which States would commit themselves to (a) avoiding the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas, and (b) developing operational policies based on a presumption against such use.

<sup>78</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping, “Capabilities and mindsets” (section 3), *A4P+: Action for Peacekeeping priorities 2021-2023, March 2021*.

<sup>79</sup> Action on Armed Violence, “Explosive Violence Monitor 2021”, April 2022.

<sup>80</sup> S/2021/423.

### Use of explosive weapons in populated areas devastates lives



57% of all deaths and injuries from explosive weapons were civilians

Total reported deaths and injuries: **19,473**  
Total civilian deaths and injuries: **11,102**

= civilian casualties = armed actor casualties

#### Populated areas



89% of all deaths and injuries from explosive weapons used in populated areas were civilians

#### Non-populated areas



10% of deaths and injuries from explosive weapons used in non-populated areas were civilians

10% decrease in average number of civilian deaths per day from explosive weapons from 2020 to 2021

#### Civilian deaths and injuries by weapon-launch method



When explosive weapons are used in populated areas, civilians bear the brunt.

In the Agenda for Disarmament, the Secretary-General places special emphasis on addressing the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and has committed to supporting Member States in their efforts to develop a political declaration, as well as appropriate limitations, common standards and operational policies, in conformity with international humanitarian law.

Source: Action on Armed Violence

### Informal consultative process to develop a political declaration

Member States continued their efforts to develop a political declaration on the humanitarian harm arising from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Ireland, which continued to lead the process, circulated a revised draft declaration in January. It issued an additional draft in March, following another round of informal consultations.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Ireland, Department of Foreign Affairs, “Protecting Civilians in Urban Warfare”.

Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the informal consultations in March were held virtually. Many participants considered the draft declaration circulated by Ireland to provide a solid basis for finalization. Discussions revolved around various aspects of the text, including its relationship to existing international humanitarian law. Several States, United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations called for the declaration to include a clear commitment not to use explosive weapons with wide-area impacts in populated areas. Many participants continued to argue that the humanitarian consequences of the use of explosive weapons must remain central to the text and should thus be further highlighted. Participants also discussed the gendered impacts of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, as well as the matters of victim assistance and international cooperation. The importance of collecting data and conducting a dedicated follow-up process was another focus of the deliberations.

The Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Children's Fund delivered a joint statement, reiterating support for language that referred to avoiding the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and the development of policies based on a presumption against their use in such circumstances, in line with the position of the Secretary-General. The three United Nations entities also welcomed the focus on the humanitarian impact of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, irrespective of the legality of such use.

Ireland planned to issue another draft of the political declaration and complete negotiations on the text in early 2022.

### Data collection and civilian casualty recording

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) continued its efforts to report on incidents resulting in casualties. When possible, it disaggregated the data by location, type of victim, weapon used and actors to whom casualties were attributed. Those data have been used for a range of purposes, including to support prevention efforts and inform decision-making.

In its capacity as custodian agency for Sustainable Development Goals Indicator 16.1.2 on reducing conflict-related deaths, OHCHR reported on casualties in 12 of the deadliest armed conflicts in 2020. The data demonstrated that five civilians per 100,000 people were killed in those armed conflicts. Moreover, one in seven of those killed was a woman or a child. Civilian deaths in the 12 conflicts were most commonly caused by small arms and light weapons (27 per cent), followed by heavy weapons and explosive munitions (24 per cent). Although annual civilian deaths decreased globally from 2015 to 2020, they increased in sub-Saharan Africa. Over that same period, the main cause of death shifted from heavy weapons and explosive munitions to small arms and light weapons.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>82</sup> For more information, see United Nations Statistics Division, “[The Sustainable Development Report 2021: Extended Report](#)” and the report’s statistical annex, entitled “[Global and regional data for Sustainable Development Goal indicators](#)” (E/2021/58, annex).

In December, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution [46/22](#), OHCHR provided an update on the extent of conflict-related deaths in the Syrian Arab Republic from March 2011 to March 2021. The Office found that 350,209 identified individuals had been killed,<sup>83</sup> and it initiated further work to disaggregate available data by the type of weapon that caused the death and whether or not the victim was a civilian. OHCHR also planned to estimate the number of deaths that were not included, either because of missing data or owing to uncertainty surrounding the findings.<sup>84</sup>

## Export controls

### Wassenaar Arrangement

As the Participating States of the Wassenaar Arrangement marked 25 years since its establishment, they continued efforts to promote transparency and greater responsibility in transfers of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies, thus helping to prevent destabilizing accumulations.

Although disruptions from COVID-19 continued to affect the work programme, Participating States resumed some in-person meetings and cooperated on an intersessional basis to exchange information and experiences on effectively controlling exports of conventional arms, as well as dual-use goods and technologies. The Participating States also continued their comprehensive and systematic review of the Arrangement’s control lists, aiming to ensure their ongoing relevance.

International security developments, technological change and market trends continued to inform the work of the Wassenaar Arrangement. Accordingly, the Participating States decided to update its munitions and dual-use lists, as well as to continue implementing its work programme and supporting the work of its secretariat.

Changes to the Wassenaar Arrangement control lists included the introduction of controls for computer-assisted design software tools for high-end components, as well as new classes of metallic and organic substrates used in highly sophisticated applications. Some controls were relaxed, including for fluorinated silicon fluids, metal working parameters for commercial applications, the performance level of “high-performance computers” and multi-mode lasers, and radars used in automotive anti-collision applications.

<sup>83</sup> Individuals were considered “identified” where records existed of their full names, dates of death and the governorates in which they had died. Records missing any of that information were excluded from the data.

<sup>84</sup> For more information, see Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, “[Committee on the Rights of the Child reviews the report of the United Kingdom](#)” (24 May 2016) and “[Oral Update on the Extent of Conflict-Related Deaths in the Syrian Arab Republic: Background Note on the Statistical Analysis](#)” (24 September 2021).

The Wassenaar Arrangement also held a practical webinar workshop for 46 countries that regularly partner with the Arrangement on outreach.

Meanwhile, the Participating States decided that on 1 January 2022, Ireland would become the Chair of the Wassenaar Arrangement's plenary, South Africa would become the Chair of its General Working Group, Malta would continue to chair its Experts Group, and Switzerland would become the Chair of the Licensing and Enforcement Officers Meeting. The Arrangement planned to hold its next regular plenary meeting in Vienna in December 2022.

## Transparency in conventional arms transfers and military expenditures

### United Nations Register of Conventional Arms

Member States continued to voluntarily report their imports and exports of conventional weapons to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. In 2021, the Register received reports on arms transfers from the prior year in seven categories: (a) battle tanks; (b) armoured combat vehicles; (c) large-calibre artillery systems; (d) combat aircraft and unmanned combat aerial vehicles; (e) attack helicopters; (f) warships; and (g) missiles and missile launchers. Several States also reported on their imports and exports of small arms and light weapons under the “seven plus one” option, as recommended by the 2019 Group of Governmental Experts on the Register.<sup>85</sup> Some provided background information, additional data on procurement through national production, military holdings and national policies on arms transfers.

Meanwhile, the Office for Disarmament Affairs prepared for the meetings, scheduled for 2022, of the Group of Governmental Experts on improving the operation of the Register.

### Annual reporting to the Register

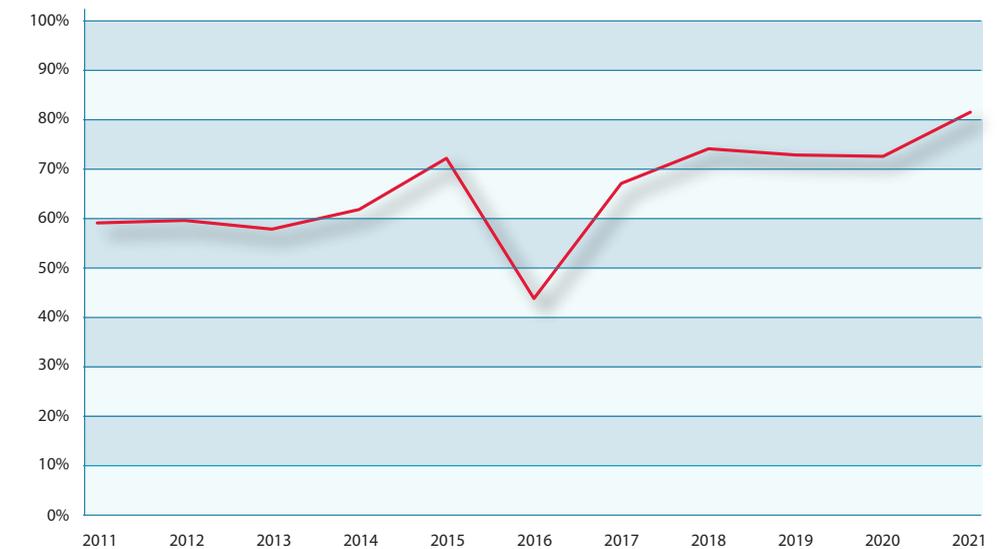
In 2021, 34 States submitted reports on their transfers of conventional arms in 2020. Those reports were added to the relevant report<sup>86</sup> of the Secretary-General, as well as the Register's electronic database ([www.unroca.org](http://www.unroca.org)). The number of reports submitted in 2021 increased from 33 reports submitted in 2020.

Of the 34 reports received in 2021, 1 was a “nil report,” indicating that the reporting Member State had undertaken no transfers of weapons in the Register's seven categories in 2020. Among the other 33 reports, 21 contained information on exports and 21 contained information on imports in the seven categories. In addition, 18 States provided background information on military holdings, 8 States submitted

<sup>85</sup> A/74/211, para. 114.

<sup>86</sup> A/75/152. Late submissions do not figure in the report but are included in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms [database](#).

### Reported small arms and light weapons transfers in submitted reports



details on procurement of conventional weapons through national production, and 28 States shared information concerning international transfers of small arms and light weapons (see the graph entitled “Reported small arms and light weapons transfers in submitted reports” above).

With regard to participation in the Register, a long-standing pattern of significant regional variation continued through 2021. The number of reports submitted by African States fell from 2 in 2020 to 0 in 2021, and the number of reports by States in Latin America and the Caribbean stood at 1, a decrease from 3 in 2020. Western European and other States submitted 18 reports, four more than in 2020. The number of reporting States in Asia and the Pacific increased from 2 in 2020 to 3 in 2021, and the number of reports submitted by Eastern European States in 2021 remained the same at 12.

### Database

The data that States submitted to the Register continued to be made available on its interactive, map-based information platform, “[The Global Reported Arms Trade](#)”, featuring information submitted to the Register since 1992.

## Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures

### United Nations Report on Military Expenditures

The General Assembly established the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures in 1980 to help enhance transparency in military spending.<sup>87</sup> States could provide information on their military expenditures using standardized or simplified templates developed by the United Nations, and any Member State without such expenditures may simply provide a nil report. Furthermore, any Member State wishing to report only its total military expenditure may complete the “single-figure” form, which was adopted following a recommendation by the 2016–2017 Group of Governmental Experts to review the Report.

As with the separate United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, the Office for Disarmament Affairs made the submitted information publicly available through a report<sup>88</sup> of the Secretary-General, as well as an online database ([milex.un-arm.org](http://milex.un-arm.org)).

### Annual reporting on military expenditures

In accordance with the General Assembly’s most recent resolution on objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures (74/24), the Office for Disarmament Affairs, in February, sent all Member States a note verbale in which it requested national reports on military expenditures to be submitted by 31 May. In response, the Office received 40 reports from States, 7 more than in 2020. The new figure included five single-figure reports and one nil report. All national reports submitted in 2021 were included in the report<sup>89</sup> of the Secretary-General on the matter, and the United Nations placed every report received in an [electronic database](#).

The rates of submission continued to vary by region. The regional distribution of the States that reported in 2021 was as follows: 1 from Africa (up from none in 2020); 4 from Asia and the Pacific (up from 3 in 2020); 3 from Latin America and the Caribbean (up from 2 in 2020); 20 from Eastern Europe (up from 15 in 2020); and 12 from the Western Europe and Other States group (down from 13 in 2020).

### Confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms

The Secretary-General and others have acknowledged military confidence-building measures as essential to resolving and preventing conflict.<sup>90</sup> Such measures

serve to increase transparency, which in turn can help prevent military escalation and arms competition, as well as reduce the likelihood of excessive military spending.

The Office for Disarmament Affairs continued its efforts in 2021 to strengthen international understanding of military confidence-building measures, further to the most recent biennial General Assembly resolution on information on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms (75/54).<sup>91</sup>

In the context of Action 23 of the Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament,<sup>92</sup> the Office for Disarmament Affairs consulted with the Republic of Korea, a State “champion” of the Action, about organizing a round-table discussion on confidence-building measures and developing a project proposal on the matter, scheduled to be implemented in 2022.

Meanwhile, the Office prioritized examining trends in regional security and related military matters, as well as identifying situations in which the greater pursuit of military confidence-building measures could help to reduce tensions and the risk of armed conflict. Accordingly, the Office maintained and further expanded its online [repository of military confidence-building measures](#) in the areas of communication and coordination, observation and verification, military constraint, training and education, and cooperation and integration.

## Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons<sup>93</sup> entered into force in 1983 with the aim of banning or restricting for humanitarian reasons the use of weapons considered to be indiscriminate or to cause unnecessary or unjustifiable suffering. By allowing the negotiation of further protocols, the Convention provides unique flexibility to address new weapon technologies or developments in armed conflict.<sup>94</sup> As at 31 December, the Convention had 125 High Contracting Parties.

<sup>91</sup> By resolution 75/54 of 14 December 2020, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to assist Member States, at their request, in the organization of seminars, courses and workshops aimed at enhancing developments in that field.

<sup>92</sup> Action 23 states: “The Office for Disarmament Affairs, in partnership with relevant entities, including regional organizations, will explore opportunities for regional dialogue on building confidence on military matters. Such dialogue will aim at, inter alia, encouraging mutual restraint in military expenditures and arms acquisitions, holdings and transfers, including through enhancing participation in United Nations transparency and confidence-building instruments.”

<sup>93</sup> 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 entered into force with its first three protocols (on fragments undetectable by X-ray, landmines and other devices, and incendiary weapons) on 2 December 1983. Protocol IV on blinding laser weapons entered into force in 1998 and Protocol V on explosive remnants of war in 2006. In 2014, the High Contracting Parties to the Convention began discussions on questions related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapon systems. For the Convention’s [text and adherence status](#), see the Disarmament Treaty Database of the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

<sup>94</sup> The umbrella treaty sets the framework for all protocols, each of which serves as a stand-alone legal instrument and addresses a specific type of conventional weapon in accordance with the

<sup>87</sup> In the resolution entitled “Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures” (74/24), the General Assembly calls on Member States to voluntarily provide information on their military expenditures for the latest fiscal year for which data are available.

<sup>88</sup> [A/76/129](#).

<sup>89</sup> [A/75/140](#).

<sup>90</sup> António Guterres, *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*, 24 May 2018.

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to pose challenges for activities under the Convention. Owing to the cancellation of conferences planned for 2020 during which decisions for 2021 activities should have been made, the mandates for 2021 were only adopted in April 2021 following lengthy procedural debates among the High Contracting Parties. Three meetings originally scheduled for July 2021 had to be postponed to August 2021 owing to ongoing restrictions on international travel and in-person meetings in the first half of the year while questions related to meeting organization persisted throughout 2021.

### **Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems**

The Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems met in Geneva for 20 days during the year,<sup>95</sup> in accordance with a decision<sup>96</sup> taken by the High Contracting Parties on 14 April. Marc Pecsteen de Buytsverve (Belgium) chaired the meetings of the Group in 2021.

During the deliberations, the Group explored and sought agreement about possible recommendations on options related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems. It did so in the context of the objectives and purposes of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, taking into account all proposals (past, present and future) and agenda items reflected in the report of its 2019 session.<sup>97</sup>

In that regard, delegations presented different options that the Group had set out in its 2018 report.<sup>98</sup> The options under consideration included a legally binding instrument; a political declaration; clarity on the implementation of existing obligations of international law, in particular international humanitarian law; and the option that no further legal measures were needed. Other non-legally binding instruments were also presented.

The Group considered different proposals for reporting its deliberations, including possible conclusions and recommendations, but it could not reach a consensus. It did agree, however, to annex to its report a summary of the discussions, prepared under the Chair's responsibility.

In the summary,<sup>99</sup> the Chair included possible elements based on the work carried out in 2021 in order to contribute to the clarification, consideration and development of aspects of the normative and operational framework on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems. In addition to the

specific approach required by the weapon. To become a party to the Convention, a State should join the umbrella convention and at least two of its protocols.

<sup>95</sup> In 2021, the Group met from 3 to 13 August, from 24 September to 1 October, and from 2 December to 8 December.

<sup>96</sup> CCW/GGE.1/2021/3, para. 2.

<sup>97</sup> CCW/GGE.1/2019/3, para. 11 and annex I.

<sup>98</sup> CCW/GGE.1/2018/3, para. 28.

<sup>99</sup> CCW/GGE.1/2021/3, annex III.

introduction containing preambular text, the summary contained sections on the application of international law, including international humanitarian law and other applicable bodies of international law; State responsibility; human accountability; general commitments; human-machine interaction; legal weapon reviews; risk mitigation; and the way forward.

The section on general commitments notably incorporated what many States referred to as a dual-track approach, comprising prohibitions and regulations.

The section on prohibitions contained the following proposal: "States should commit not to use, or to develop, produce, acquire, possess, deploy or transfer with a view towards use, any weapons system based on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems that can perform the critical functions of selecting and engaging to apply force against targets without further intervention by a human operator, if: (a) It is of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering, or it is inherently indiscriminate; (b) Its autonomous functions are designed to be used to conduct attacks outside a responsible chain of human command and control; (c) The incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, and damage to civilian objects expected to result from the use of the weapon to conduct attacks cannot be reasonably foreseen or are not fully understood by a human operator; or (d) It is otherwise incapable of being used in accordance with international humanitarian law."

With respect to regulations, the following recommendation was suggested: "States should commit to exercise appropriate human involvement throughout the life-cycle of the weapons system that is sufficient to ensure human judgment and control necessary in the circumstances to comply with international humanitarian law over the use of all other types of weapons systems based on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems. This may include but is not limited to: (a) Limits on the type of target; (b) Limits on the duration, geographical scope and scale of use; (c) Requirements for human-machine interaction and necessary intervention or deactivation; or (d) Clear procedures to ensure that human operators are informed and capable of controlling the weapon systems."

Regarding "the way forward", it was proposed that the High Contracting Parties, at their sixth Review Conference,<sup>100</sup> (a) endorse the recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts; (b) consider and adopt a political declaration, on the basis of the report of the Group; and (c) decide that the Group shall develop and adopt by consensus, as appropriate, an instrument on the regulation of weapons systems based on emerging technologies in the area of autonomous weapons systems, on the basis of the relevant paragraphs of the Group's 2021 report.

<sup>100</sup> For more information about the sixth Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, see p. 121.

### Amended Protocol II: Group of Experts and the twenty-third Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties

The Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-traps and Other Devices as amended on 3 May 1996, also known as Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, was designed to limit indiscriminate harm from such weapons by requiring all feasible precautions by parties to protect civilians from their use. As at the end of 2021, the Protocol had 106 High Contracting Parties.

On 16 and 17 August, a [Group of Experts](#) met in preparation for the twenty-third Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Protocol. Building on its work on the matter since 2009, the Group, under the overall responsibility of the Coordinators (Colombia and France), held discussions on improvised explosive devices, including a general exchange of views and thematic panel discussions on new types of improvised explosive devices, methods of clearance, “protection of civilians: risk education and other methods”, and updates on relevant developments in other forums addressing the threat posed by improvised explosive devices.

Throughout the expert discussions, delegations expressed concern over the continued widespread use of improvised explosive devices, including their detrimental impact on civilians owing to their indiscriminate use and effects. They also stressed the particularly severe humanitarian implications of such weapons in urban environments, as well as their negative effects on security, stability and socioeconomic development. In addition, delegations expressed concern about the frequent use of improvised explosive devices to perpetrate terrorist acts.

Many delegations underscored the need for a comprehensive approach towards improvised explosive devices, focusing on raising awareness about their scope and characteristics while also increasing international cooperation and information-sharing at the national, regional and multilateral levels. They also called for closer cooperation among and between Governments, industries, research institutions and civil society. Accordingly, the Group of Experts (a) commended the ongoing discussions and exchange of information within its framework as important contributions towards those ends, and (b) called for the universalization of Amended Protocol II. Several delegations also highlighted the usefulness of the voluntary [self-assessment tool](#) developed by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) to assist High Contracting Parties in identifying gaps and challenges in their national regulation and preparedness with respect to improvised explosive devices, pursuant to General Assembly resolution [73/67](#). Furthermore, in accordance with the technical decisions<sup>101</sup> adopted by the High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II for 2021, the Coordinators presented the Group with proposed revisions to the original questionnaire<sup>102</sup> from 2015 on countering improvised

explosive devices. Following the meeting, the Coordinators issued a report<sup>103</sup> on the relevant discussions held.

On 10 December, Ichiro Ogasawara (Japan) presided over the [twenty-third Annual Conference of Amended Protocol II](#). Of the 106 High Contracting Parties to the Protocol, 64 participated in the Conference along with three High Contracting Parties to the Convention and one signatory State. Other participants included UNIDIR, the United Nations Mine Action Service (on behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action), the European Union, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit.

The Conference concluded with the consideration and adoption of its final document.<sup>104</sup> It decided that the Group of Experts should, as part of its mandate for the coming year, continue its voluntary information exchange on risk-education methods, campaigns or practices in the area of improvised explosive devices. Other information to be shared would include the following topics: (a) development and consolidation of coherent and coordinated national and regional responses to the threat posed by improvised explosive devices; (b) new types of improvised explosive devices, including trigger mechanisms, as well as new components used as main charges and detonators; (c) methods of clearing improvised explosive devices, with a particular focus on urban environments, as well as technical innovations and new means for clearing such weapons as part of humanitarian action; and (d) methods to protect civilians from improvised explosive devices.

Furthermore, the Conference decided that the Group of Experts should keep apprised of relevant developments in other forums addressing the threat. It called on the Group to monitor those forums with a view to ensuring complementarity of efforts, as well as to raising awareness on topics such as methods to prevent the diversion of precursors, ammunition, explosives and components that might be used to manufacture improvised explosive devices. In accordance with past decisions, the Conference also decided to include in the Group’s mandate an acknowledgement of the importance of balanced involvement by women and men. In addition, the Conference adopted the revised questionnaire<sup>105</sup> on countering improvised explosive devices, which was presented to it in accordance with the technical decisions<sup>106</sup> adopted for 2021. Delegations expressed divergent views on the need to continue considering mines other than anti-personnel mines in the framework of Amended Protocol II, and the Conference reflected those differences in its final report.

Furthermore, the Conference reached consensus on a revised declaration<sup>107</sup> on improvised explosive devices and on the text on the review of the implementation of

<sup>101</sup> [CCW/AP.II/2020/1](#).

<sup>102</sup> [CCW/AP.II/CONF.17/WP.1](#).

<sup>103</sup> [CCW/AP.II/CONF.23/2](#).

<sup>104</sup> [CCW/AP.II/CONF.23/6](#).

<sup>105</sup> [CCW/AP.II/CONF.23/5](#).

<sup>106</sup> [CCW/AP.II/2020/1](#), para. 3.

<sup>107</sup> [CCW/AP.II/CONF.23/6](#), annex V.

Amended Protocol II<sup>108</sup> and agreed to submit both to the sixth Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

The Conference decided that the 2022 session of the Group of Experts would be for a duration of two days, at a date to be decided by the sixth Review Conference. The Conference also nominated a representative of the Eastern European Group to be President-designate of the twenty-fourth Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties, scheduled for 2022.

### Protocol V: Meeting of Experts and fifteenth Conference of the High Contracting Parties

Protocol V on explosive remnants of war<sup>109</sup> was adopted in 2003 to prevent and minimize the humanitarian impact of unexploded ordnance and abandoned explosive weapons, including through provisions on clearing and destroying explosive remnants of war, protecting civilians, recording the use of explosive ordnance, and providing international cooperation and assistance. It had 96 High Contracting Parties as at the end of 2021.

In preparation for the fifteenth Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V, a [Meeting of Experts](#) took place in Geneva on 18 August under the presidency of Angus September (South Africa). During the Meeting, participants addressed the following topics: (a) universalization efforts; (b) national reporting; (c) Article 4 of the Protocol on “recording, retaining and transmission of information and generic preventative measures”; and (d) clearance of explosive remnants of war and technical assistance, as well as victim assistance.

Underscoring the importance of achieving the Protocol’s universalization, High Contracting Parties in attendance further recalled the need for international cooperation to minimize the risks and effects of explosive remnants of war. In accordance with the decisions<sup>110</sup> taken by the thirteenth Annual Conference in 2019, the Meeting held thematic sessions with panel discussions on the issues of (a) clearance and technical assistance, and (b) victim assistance. The panel discussions were chaired by the Coordinators (Austria and Pakistan).

The fifteenth Annual Conference took place on 9 December in Geneva with a hybrid format, owing to COVID-19-related health restrictions in the host country.<sup>111</sup> Of the 96 High Contracting Parties to Protocol V, 58 participated in the Conference.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., annex VI.

<sup>109</sup> For the [text and adherence status of Protocol V](#), see the Disarmament Treaty Database of the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

<sup>110</sup> See the final document of the thirteenth Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V ([CCW/P.V/CONF/2019/5](#)).

<sup>111</sup> Geneva-based delegates were physically present in the conference room and experts from national capitals participated virtually.

<sup>112</sup> Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, Holy See, Hungary, India, Iraq, Ireland, Italy,

In addition, six High Contracting Parties<sup>113</sup> to the Convention and one signatory State<sup>114</sup> took part as observers. Other participants included the United Nations Mine Action Service (on behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action), the European Union, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.<sup>115</sup>

During the Conference, delegations principally highlighted the necessity to increase efforts on universalization. They also pointed to a need for the High Contracting Parties to exchange information and experiences on implementing their commitments in the areas of victim assistance and cooperation.

The Conference concluded by considering and adopting its final document.<sup>116</sup> In addition, and in accordance with past practice, the High Contracting Parties to the Protocol agreed to a text,<sup>117</sup> for submission to the sixth Review Conference, in which they welcomed the Protocol’s achievements during the last five-year review cycle, particularly the appointment of a Victim Assistance Coordinator.

The Conference agreed to hold the next Meeting of Experts on Protocol V for one day, on a date to be decided by the sixth Review Conference. The Conference nominated Ignacio Sánchez de Lerín García-Ovies (Spain) as President-designate of the sixteenth Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V.

### 2021 Preparatory Committee and sixth Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

The [Preparatory Committee](#) for the sixth Review Conference met from 6 to 8 September, endorsing the Conference’s provisional agenda,<sup>118</sup> in addition to recommending a provisional programme of work<sup>119</sup> and draft rules of procedure.

The [sixth Review Conference](#) took place in Geneva from 13 to 17 December, under the presidency of Yann Hwang (France).<sup>120</sup> It was attended by 86 High

Kuwait, Latvia, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United States and Uruguay.

<sup>113</sup> Israel, Japan, Philippines, Serbia, Turkey and United Kingdom.

<sup>114</sup> Egypt.

<sup>115</sup> For the list of participants, see [CCW/P.V/CONF/2021/INF.1](#).

<sup>116</sup> [CCW/P.V/CONF/2021/5](#).

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., annex II.

<sup>118</sup> [CCW/CONF.VI/1](#).

<sup>119</sup> [CCW/CONF.VI/2](#).

<sup>120</sup> The other officeholders of the Review Conference were as follows:

- Main Committee I: Chair: Yuri Borrisov Sterk (Bulgaria); Vice-Chair: Alonso Martinez (Mexico)
- Main Committee II: Chair: Maria Teresa Almojuela (Philippines); Vice-Chair: Aleksandr Pytalev (Belarus)
- Credentials Committee: Chair: Laurent Masméjean (Switzerland); Vice-Chair: Emmanuel Kazahura (Uganda); Members: Simon Cleobury (United Kingdom), Florian Antohi (Romania), Patrick Hassan Morlai Koroma (Sierra Leone)
- Drafting Committee: Chair: Yann Hwang (France); Vice-Chair: Muhammad Omar (Pakistan).

Contracting Parties,<sup>121</sup> two signatory States<sup>122</sup> and two States not party to the Convention.<sup>123</sup> The participants also included two United Nations entities,<sup>124</sup> as well as three international organizations<sup>125</sup> and 29 non-governmental organizations and other entities.<sup>126</sup> Following past practice, two Main Committees were established: Main Committee I, responsible for reviewing the Convention and its Protocols; and Main Committee II, focused on lethal autonomous weapons systems.

The Conference decided that the Group of Governmental Experts related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems should continue its work, including on options related to the normative and operational framework in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems. The Conference also adopted consolidated financial measures proposed by the President to improve both the Secretariat's support to the Convention and the Convention's financial sustainability.<sup>127</sup>

In its final document,<sup>128</sup> the Conference recognized the "importance of a balanced involvement of women and men" in the Convention's meetings. Additionally, it acknowledged that the Group of Experts on Amended Protocol II, through its substantive discussions, had contributed to raising awareness of the "worldwide threat" posed by improvised explosive devices. The Conference also called on the High Contracting Parties to continue their universalization efforts, including through a coordinated approach among the office holders concerned with the Convention, Amended Protocol II and Protocol V.

The Review Conference elected Zbigniew Czech (Poland) as Chair of the 2022 Meeting of High Contracting Parties to the Convention.

<sup>121</sup> Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Holy See, Honduras, Hungary, India, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, North Macedonia, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Zambia.

<sup>122</sup> Egypt and Nigeria.

<sup>123</sup> Angola and Namibia.

<sup>124</sup> United Nations Mine Action Service and UNIDIR.

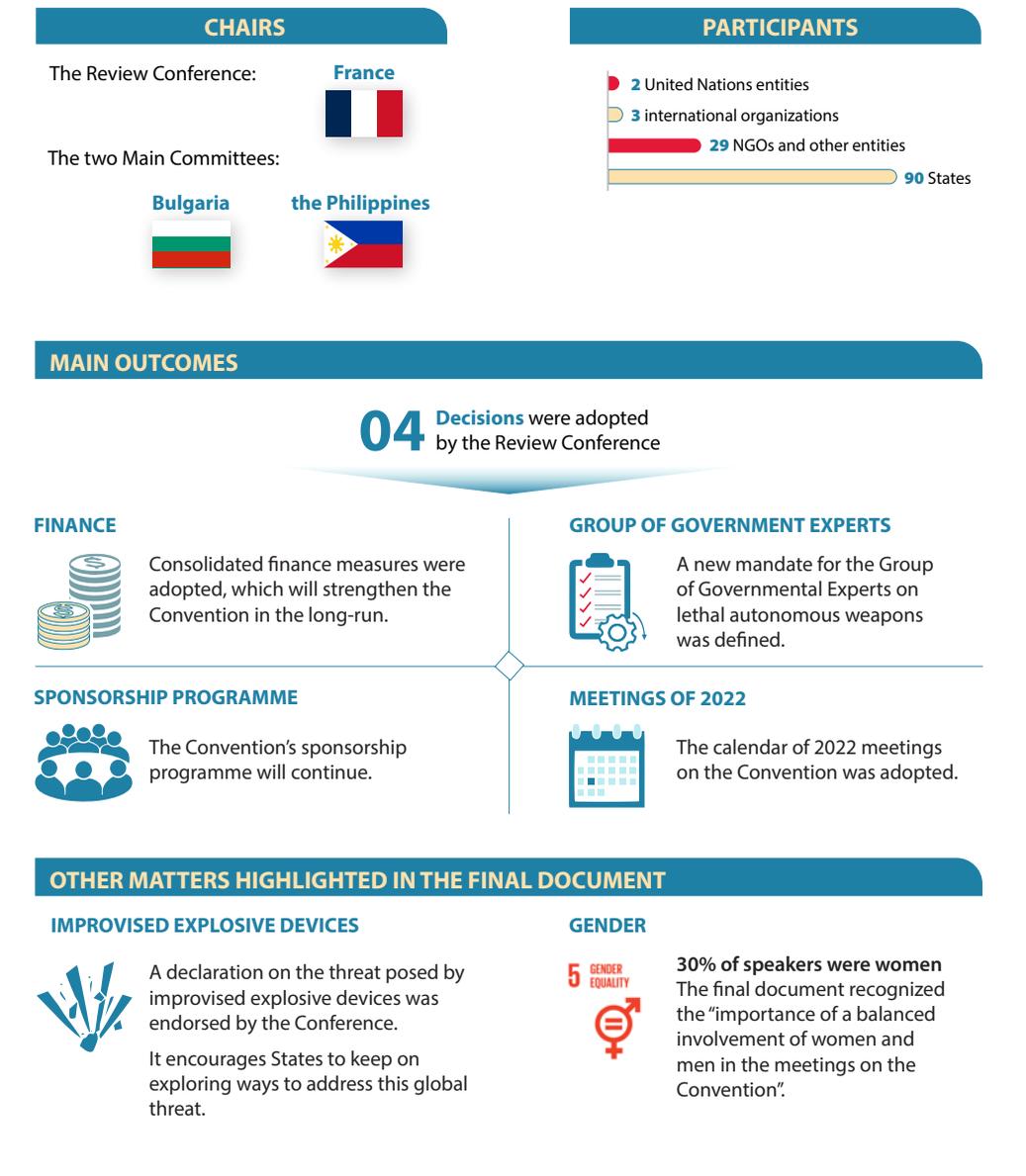
<sup>125</sup> European Union, Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining and International Committee of the Red Cross.

<sup>126</sup> CCW/CONF.VI/11, para. 20.

<sup>127</sup> The measures were developed in close coordination with the United Nations Office at Geneva and the Office for Disarmament Affairs, and based on extensive consultations with the High Contracting Parties.

<sup>128</sup> CCW/CONF.VI/11.

## Sixth Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons: A Summary



### Work of the Implementation Support Unit of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

Continued funding shortages, exacerbated by the late adoption of the 2021 budget and collection of assessed contributions, allowed only partial and temporary staffing of the Convention's Implementation Support Unit throughout the year.<sup>129</sup> However, with extensive support from the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Unit continued to engage actively in implementing the Convention.<sup>130</sup>

During the first few months of 2021, the Implementation Support Unit provided the Convention's office holders with procedural guidance, as well as technical and logistical support, for the official closure of the 2020 cycle.<sup>131</sup> That assistance included analysing the rules of procedure and previous decisions relating to the Convention, drafting information notes, organizing informal consultations, accompanying office holders in their bilateral consultations, relaying in a timely manner information on practical meeting arrangements issued by the United Nations Office in Geneva, and identifying possible meeting dates for 2021. The Unit also assisted office holders in drafting and negotiating the 2020 decision documents on the Convention, Amended Protocol II and Protocol V.

The Unit further helped prepare and organize expert meetings within the framework of the Convention by assisting in the development of the agenda and the organization of work; drafting and issuing communications to the High Contracting Parties, international organizations and non-governmental organizations; organizing informal consultations for delegations; drafting documents; recommending panellists; monitoring the Convention's financial situation and the availability of funds to hold meetings; and briefing the office holders and coordinators on their responsibilities and past practice.

For the meetings<sup>132</sup> of the Convention in December, the Unit provided support in the following areas: coordination with regional groups on the nomination of office holders; preparation of proposals to be submitted to the Review Conference; drafting of reports on the operation of the Convention; establishment and organization of work of the Committees of the Review Conference; circulation of proposals from High Contracting Parties; preparation and delivery of messages by senior United Nations officials, including the Secretary-General; and preparation of financial documents for adoption by the High Contracting Parties.

<sup>129</sup> For the decision on the establishment of the Convention's Implementation Support Unit and its core tasks, see [CCW/MSP/2009/5](#), para. 36.

<sup>130</sup> The High Contracting Parties requested the Office for Disarmament Affairs in 2018 to provide temporary staff support to the Convention's Implementation Support Unit.

<sup>131</sup> The 2020 cycle continued into the following year owing to the postponement of meetings and activities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

<sup>132</sup> Twenty-third Annual Conference of Amended Protocol II, fourteenth Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V and the sixth Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

The Unit also supported the office holders in their efforts to increase the submission rate of national annual reports. Furthermore, the Unit engaged in regular communication with States not yet party to the Convention, international and regional organizations, civil society, academia and the press to raise awareness about the Convention and provide information on its activities.

### European Union Council decision 2021/1694 supporting the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

In September, the Council of the European Union adopted decision [2021/1694](#) to support the Convention through projects to (a) prepare for its sixth Review Conference and follow up on its outcome, (b) support the Convention's universalization, and (c) facilitate discussions on relevant emerging and cross-cutting issues.

The initiation of the projects was under way by the end of 2021. The Office for Disarmament Affairs had consulted a wide range of stakeholders to develop and plan specific activities, especially for the pillar on emerging and cross-cutting issues.

### Cluster munitions

The [Convention on Cluster Munitions](#) entered into force in 2010, prohibiting the use, development, production, transfer or stockpiling of cluster munitions under any circumstances. It also created a framework for clearing contaminated areas and destroying stockpiles, as well as providing risk-reduction education in affected communities. As at the end of 2021, the Convention had 110 States parties.<sup>133</sup>

### Second Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions

The Convention's second Review Conference was presided over by Félix Baumann (Switzerland).<sup>134</sup> Pursuant to a decision taken by States parties in 2020,<sup>135</sup> the second part of the Conference took place on 20 and 21 September 2021 in a hybrid format at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

<sup>133</sup> For the [Convention's text and adherence status](#), see the Disarmament Treaties Database of the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

<sup>134</sup> Pursuant to a recommendation of the first Preparatory Meeting, held in June 2020, the Conference had four Vice-Presidents elected by acclamation: Germany, Netherlands, Nicaragua and Sri Lanka.

<sup>135</sup> By its resolution [74/62](#) of 20 December 2019, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to convene the second Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and to continue to render the necessary assistance and to provide such services as may be necessary to fulfil the tasks entrusted to him under the Convention and in the relevant decisions of the Meetings of States Parties and the first Review Conference. As a result of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, the States parties agreed to hold the second Review Conference in two parts, the first from 25 to 27 November 2020 in a virtual format, and the second on 20 and 21 September 2021 in a hybrid format.

The first and second parts of the Review Conference were attended by 87 States, including five signatories and 16 non-signatory States.<sup>136</sup> The observer organizations in attendance included the Cluster Munition Coalition, Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, United Nations Mine Action Service, the United Nations Development Programme, Handicap International (Humanity & Inclusion), James Madison University, Mines Advisory Group, Norwegian People's Aid and the HALO Trust. The Office for Disarmament Affairs served as secretariat of the Conference.

After viewing a video message<sup>137</sup> from the Secretary-General, the Conference took stock of the current status of the Convention's implementation, including progress made since the first Review Conference, held in Dubrovnik, Croatia, in 2015. In addition, States parties considered challenges that remained in fulfilling the Convention's objectives and obligations. The Conference also welcomed the Review Document<sup>138</sup> of the Dubrovnik Action Plan, which reflected the progress that had been achieved in the implementation of the Dubrovnik Action Plan as at 1 October 2020.

Furthermore, expressing their firm commitment to realizing the objective of the Convention to put an end for all time to the suffering and casualties caused by cluster munitions, States parties to the Convention adopted the "Lausanne Declaration: Protecting Lives, Empowering Victims, Enabling Development",<sup>139</sup> as well as the Lausanne Action Plan,<sup>140</sup> covering the period 2021–2026.

The Conference also granted requests by several States to extend deadlines for the full destruction of their cluster munition stockpiles in accordance with article 3.2 of the Convention.<sup>141</sup> By silence procedure, the States parties agreed to extend Bulgaria's deadline to 1 October 2022 and Peru's deadline to 1 April 2024. Furthermore, acting on a no-objection basis, the Conference agreed to grant extensions to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chile and Lebanon—until 1 September 2022, 1 June 2022 and 1 May 2026, respectively—for fully clearing and destroying cluster munition remnants in accordance with article 4.1. Additionally, in light of the prolonged duration of the second Review Conference and the postponement of the tenth Meeting of States Parties, Chile was granted a second extension until 1 June 2023.

During its second part, the Conference assessed requests by Afghanistan and Mauritania for extensions of their deadlines to finish clearing and destroying cluster munition remnants in accordance with article 4.1 of the Convention. The States

<sup>136</sup> For the list of participants, see [CCM/CONF/2021/INF.1](#).

<sup>137</sup> United Nations, "Secretary-General's video message to the Second Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions", 20 September 2021.

<sup>138</sup> [CCM/CONF/2021/6](#), annex III.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, annex I.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, annex II.

<sup>141</sup> In 2020, the Conference assessed the requests and recommended taking a decision on granting the extensions, during its second part.

parties agreed to grant both countries four-year extensions—until 1 March 2026 and 1 August 2024, respectively.

The Conference also took note of the document entitled "Elements for the decision on the Convention's machinery"<sup>142</sup> and decided to hold informal intersessional meetings in Geneva for up to two days in 2022.<sup>143</sup> In addition, the Conference decided to mandate the coordinators on the general status and operation of the Convention to act as the focal points on gender mainstreaming.

The Conference welcomed new coordinators<sup>144</sup> to guide the intersessional work programme and adopted important financial measures<sup>145</sup> aimed at ensuring greater financial sustainability for the Convention.

Looking ahead to the tenth Meeting of States Parties, the Review Conference confirmed the designation of Aidan Liddle (United Kingdom) as its President. The Conference also decided that the Meeting would take place in Geneva from 30 August to 2 September 2022.

The Conference also designated Abdul-Karim Hashim Mostafa (Iraq) as the President of the eleventh Meeting of States Parties, scheduled for September 2023.

## Anti-personnel mines

Anti-personnel mines are victim-activated weapons that can kill and maim indiscriminately, even years after active hostilities end. Most of their victims are civilians. A complete prohibition on that category of weapons took effect with the entry into force, on 1 March 1999, of the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention).

The Convention's key provisions were aimed at destroying existing mine stocks and clearing all contaminated areas within established deadlines; promoting and sustaining the Convention's unique spirit of cooperation and assistance for

<sup>142</sup> [CCM/CONF/2020/CRP.1](#).

<sup>143</sup> Final report of the second Review Conference ([CCM/CONF/2021/6](#)).

<sup>144</sup> The appointed coordinators were the following:

- Working group on the general status and operation of the Convention: Namibia (until the end of the Tenth Meeting of States Parties) and France (until the end of the Eleventh Meeting of States Parties)
- Working group on universalization: Philippines (until the end of the tenth Meeting of States Parties) and Spain (until the end of the Eleventh Meeting of States Parties)
- Working group on clearance and risk reduction: Mexico (until the end of the Tenth Meeting of States Parties) and Guyana (until the end of the Eleventh Meeting of States Parties)
- Working group on stockpile destruction and retention: Australia (until the end of the Tenth Meeting of States Parties) and Bulgaria (until the end of the Eleventh Meeting of States Parties)
- Working group on cooperation and assistance: Montenegro (until the end of the Tenth Meeting of States Parties) and Germany (until the end of the Eleventh Meeting of States Parties).

The Meeting also welcomed the coordinators to lead on the following thematic areas: reporting—Iraq; and national implementation measures—New Zealand.

<sup>145</sup> [CCM/CONF/2020/CRP.2](#).

achieving its goals; and addressing the needs of survivors, their families and affected communities in the context of the Convention's strong victim-assistance framework. To help achieve the goals of the Convention, its States parties established an implementation machinery that meets annually. As at the end of 2021, the Convention had 164 States parties.<sup>146</sup>

### Intersessional activities and the nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Pursuant to article 11 of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the relevant decisions<sup>147</sup> of its fourth Review Conference, the nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties took place in The Hague from 15 to 19 November. The Meeting built on three days of informal intersessional meetings held earlier in the year, as well as work by the Convention's four committees.<sup>148</sup> The President of the nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties, Robbert Jan Gabriëlse (Netherlands), also convened the Convention's [sixth Pledging Conference](#) in Geneva on 23 February, seeking to bolster the financial stability of the Convention's Implementation Support Unit and its 2021 workplan, as well as to secure funds for the Convention's Sponsorship Programme and the nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties. Owing to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, most of the Convention's 2021 meetings were held virtually.<sup>149</sup>

The nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties was preceded by the Convention's annual informal [intersessional meetings](#), which took place virtually from 22 to 24 June. In line with established practice, the President of the nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties shared [preliminary observations](#) about the status of implementation of the Convention's article 4 (stockpile destruction), particularly in relation to two States<sup>150</sup> that were in non-compliance with their obligations under the article, one State<sup>151</sup> that was approaching a stockpile destruction deadline in 2022, and two States<sup>152</sup> that had reported the discovery of previously unknown stockpiled anti-personnel mines. The President also updated attendees about his activities and the status of the implementation of article 3, particularly as it concerned anti-personnel mines retained for purposes permitted under that article. Furthermore, the President briefed participants on recent activities to promote the Convention's universalization.

<sup>146</sup> For the [Convention's text and adherence status](#), see the Disarmament Treaties Database of the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

<sup>147</sup> See the final document of the fourth Review Conference ([APLC/CONF/2019/5](#)).

<sup>148</sup> Committee on Article 5 Implementation; Committee on Cooperative Compliance; Committee on Victim Assistance; and Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance.

<sup>149</sup> The nineteenth Meeting was scheduled to take place in The Hague as a hybrid event with two representatives per delegation physically present in the room. It ended up being held virtually, however, owing to a considerable worsening of the COVID-19-related health situation.

<sup>150</sup> Greece and Ukraine.

<sup>151</sup> Sri Lanka.

<sup>152</sup> Gambia and Montenegro.

During the intersessional meetings, the Chairs<sup>153</sup> of the Convention's four committees outlined the activities and preliminary observations of their respective bodies. In carrying out their respective mandates, the committees met regularly throughout the year to review information from States parties on their implementation of commitments under the Oslo Action Plan,<sup>154</sup> reached in 2019 at the Convention's fourth Review Conference.

Participants also exchanged views on requests, presented informally by six States parties,<sup>155</sup> to extend deadlines for meeting obligations under article 5.<sup>156</sup> They also considered preparations for the nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties, as well as the Convention's financial status.

Additionally, several thematic discussions on the following topics took place during the intersessional meetings: victim assistance (establishing or strengthening a centralized database); integration of gender and the diverse needs of affected communities in operational planning and prioritization; completion and sustainable national capacities; mobilization of resources towards a mine-free world; and strengthening of compliance measures.

The [nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties](#) was chaired by its President, with support from eight Vice-Presidents: Colombia, Germany, Norway, Panama, Poland, Sweden, Thailand and Zambia.

Pursuant to established practice, the Meeting was opened with a high-level ceremony. The event featured messages from the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Netherlands; the United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs; the Convention's Special Envoy, Prince Mired Raad Zeid Al-Hussein of Jordan; the Vice-Minister for International Cooperation of the Netherlands; the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities; the Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross; mine survivors; the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, which represented civil society organizations; and the President of the Council of Foundation of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. The opening of the Meeting also included a high-level panel discussion, entitled "Strengthening localization through capacity building and inclusion: from rhetoric to concerted action", which was moderated by the Vice-Minister for International Cooperation of the Netherlands.

<sup>153</sup> Zambia, Chair of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation; Thailand, Chair of the Committee on Victim Assistance; Colombia, Chair of the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance; and Netherlands, Chair of the Committee on Cooperative Compliance.

<sup>154</sup> [APLC/CONF/2019/5/Add.1](#).

<sup>155</sup> Cyprus, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Nigeria, Somalia and Turkey.

<sup>156</sup> Under article 5 of the Convention, each State party undertakes to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control, as soon as possible but not later than 10 years after the entry into force of the Convention for the State party concerned. If a State party believes it will be unable to destroy or ensure the destruction of all such anti-personnel mines within that period, it may submit a request to a Meeting of the States parties or a Review Conference for an extension of the deadline for up to 10 years.

In discussing the Convention's operation and status, the Meeting focused primarily on requests by several States parties to extend their respective deadlines for destroying mines in mined areas pursuant to article 5. The Meeting also heard updates from States parties on activities to fulfil their obligations under article 5. Following established procedure,<sup>157</sup> and considering the requests submitted under article 5 and their accompanying analyses presented by the Committee on Article 5 Implementation, the Meeting granted the extension requests of Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Nigeria, Somalia and Turkey.

Once again, the Meeting expressed concern that Eritrea had not presented an extension request and was in a situation of non-compliance with article 5. The Meeting reiterated its call on Eritrea to (a) engage in a cooperative dialogue with the Committee without delay on article 5 implementation, and (b) submit a request for extension no later than 31 March 2022 for consideration by the twentieth Meeting of the States Parties. The Meeting also noted that, failing the establishment of a cooperative dialogue with Eritrea and resolution of the current status of non-compliance, the States parties should consider seeking clarification and resolving questions relating to its compliance through the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in accordance with article 8 (2) of the Convention.

Turning to updates by various States parties that had indicated a responsibility for significant numbers of landmine survivors, the Meeting expressed particular concern about continued casualties caused by anti-personnel mines and the importance of working to address the needs and rights of mine victims in all parts of the world. In that context, the Meeting reaffirmed the determination of the States parties to put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines, including anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature, and their commitment to strengthen efforts to achieve their common goals of a mine-free world and the full and equal inclusion of survivors and victims. The Meeting condemned the use of anti-personnel mines by any actor, including armed non-State actors.

The Meeting also appealed to States in non-compliance with article 4 of the Convention to intensify their efforts to complete their respective stockpile-destruction obligations. In addition, the Meeting warmly welcomed Sri Lanka's announcement that it had completed its article 4 obligations ahead of the 1 June 2022 deadline.

In addition, as per the relevant decisions of the fifteenth Meeting of the States Parties<sup>158</sup> and the fourth Review Conference,<sup>159</sup> the Meeting noted the Convention's ongoing unstable financial situation resulting from late payment and arrears of assessed contributions. In that regard, it (a) underlined the importance of ensuring

<sup>157</sup> See the final report of the seventh Meeting of the States Parties ([APLC/MSP.7/2006/5](#)).

<sup>158</sup> Final report of the fifteenth Meeting of the States Parties ([APLC/MSP.15/2016/10](#)), para. 38.

<sup>159</sup> Final document of the fourth Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention ([APLC/CONF/2019/5](#)), paras. 34 (vi) and 42.

full compliance with article 14 obligations, and (b) requested the States participating in the Meetings of the States Parties to proceed promptly with the payment of their share of the estimated costs as soon as the assessment invoices were received.

In addition, the President of the Meeting submitted a proposal to facilitate the closure by the United Nations of accounts for each financial period within 12 months of its conclusion. The Meeting welcomed the effort but took note with regret that an agreement on the proposal could not be reached. It requested the President of the twentieth Meeting of the States Parties to continue consultations with a view to submitting a proposal for adoption at the twentieth Meeting. The States parties also decided to continue dialogue on the matter, to closely monitor the Convention's financial situation and to again address the issue at the twentieth Meeting of the States Parties.

Regarding the operation of the Convention, the Meeting took decisions on the following matters: composition of the Convention's committees;<sup>160</sup> timing of the 2022 intersessional meetings;<sup>161</sup> holding of the twentieth Meeting of the States Parties in Geneva from 21 to 25 November 2022 and the twenty-first Meeting of the States Parties in Geneva during the week of 20 to 24 November 2023; and cost estimates for the twenty-first Meeting of the States Parties in 2023.<sup>162</sup>

<sup>160</sup> The committees were composed of the following:

- Committee on Article 5 Implementation: Belgium and Sri Lanka (until the end of the twentieth Meeting of the States Parties), and France and Iraq (until the end of the twenty-first Meeting of the States Parties)
- Committee on Victim Assistance: Algeria and Ecuador (until the end of the twentieth Meeting of the States Parties), and Italy and Uganda (until the end of the Twenty-first Meeting of the States Parties)
- Committee on Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance: Japan and Sudan (until the end of the twentieth Meeting of the States Parties), and the Netherlands and Thailand (until the end of the twenty-first Meeting of the States Parties)
- Committee on Cooperative Compliance: Chile and Spain (until the end of the twentieth Meeting of the States Parties), and Switzerland and Turkey (until the end of the twenty-first Meeting of the States Parties).

<sup>161</sup> The meetings were scheduled for 22 to 24 June 2022 (subject to conference room availability) in Geneva.

<sup>162</sup> [APLC/MSP.19/2021/5](#).



CHAPTER IV

# REGIONAL DISARMAMENT



*Since 1967, five nuclear-weapon-free zones have been established around the world. ... Expanding such zones to more regions will strengthen global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation norms and contribute to building a safer world.*

ANTÓNIO GUTERRES, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS<sup>1</sup>



In June 2021, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa trained 45 governmental and civil society representatives in Cameroon on the topic of gender and small-arms control.



## CHAPTER IV

### Regional disarmament

#### Developments and trends, 2021

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC CONTINUED to complicate regional disarmament activities in 2021. Substantial restrictions on travel and in-person interaction persisted in every region, posing a challenge for States and for global, regional and subregional entities seeking to advance their ambitions in support of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. In that context, virtual meeting technologies provided actors in the field of regional disarmament with valuable support in taking forward a range of projects and initiatives, even as those actors conducted their work in hybrid or in-person formats where circumstances allowed. The Office for Disarmament Affairs regularly engaged with such actors throughout the year by conducting policy dialogues, long-term projects and exchanges on subjects such as the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and counter-terrorism.

In the field of weapons of mass destruction, eight States ratified or acceded to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons during the year. In Africa, three States<sup>2</sup> ratified the Treaty. In Asia and the Pacific, two States<sup>3</sup> ratified the Treaty and one<sup>4</sup> acceded to it. In Latin America, two States<sup>5</sup> ratified the Treaty. Separately,

<sup>1</sup> [Remarks](#) at the second session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, New York, 29 November 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Comoros, Guinea-Bissau and Seychelles.

<sup>3</sup> Cambodia and Philippines.

<sup>4</sup> Mongolia.

<sup>5</sup> Chile and Peru.

Botswana acceded to the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. Moreover, Comoros ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, while Cuba both signed and ratified it. The Treaty gained no new signatory States during the year.

On conventional weapons, States achieved progress in adherence to the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Firearms Protocol). Comoros acceded to the Firearms Protocol in June, while Germany ratified the Protocol in August.

The General Assembly decided to further postpone the fourth Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, which had originally been planned for 2020, but States parties and signatories to the relevant treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, including Mongolia, continued to hold informal consultations on organizational and substantive preparations.

The Pacific Islands Forum convened the first Meeting of the Rarotonga Treaty's Consultative Committee on 15 December. The Meeting was held in response to a call by States parties in 2020 to advance a recent decision by Forum leaders to operationalize the Treaty.

The five nuclear-weapon States reiterated their commitment to the aims and objectives of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone; however, as at the end of 2021, none had signed the Protocol to commit to respect the nuclear-weapon-free status of the Treaty's parties and to forswear the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against those States. The leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) reaffirmed their commitment to engage with the nuclear-weapon States and intensify ongoing efforts to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the Treaty's objectives and principles.

Meanwhile, the second session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction was held from 29 November to 3 December. During the session, the Conference reached consensus to achieve further progress in the process by, inter alia, undertaking substantive deliberations on various key aspects of the future Middle East zone. The participating States adopted a final report and several decisions, including on the adoption of rules of procedure and the establishment of a working committee to continue deliberations during the intersessional period.

The Office for Disarmament Affairs, for its part, continued to engage intensively with numerous partner institutions through its regional centres for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia and the Pacific. Following a series of explosions on 7 March at a military barracks in Bata, Equatorial Guinea, the Centre in Africa developed a joint project proposal in coordination with the United Nations country team in Malabo to support the Government in weapons security and ammunition management. The Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean focused its efforts on assisting Governments in the region to implement international

instruments on conventional arms, in particular the [Roadmap for Implementing the Caribbean Priority Actions on the Illicit Proliferation of Firearms and Ammunition across the Caribbean in a Sustainable Manner by 2030](#) (Caribbean Firearms Roadmap), launched in 2019. The Centre for Asia and the Pacific kicked off a new project to support the establishment and maintenance of gun-free zones in that region, including through the development of an online course.

## Nuclear-weapon-free zones

Nuclear-weapon-free zones retained their important role in promoting peace and security at regional and international levels, including as a key element in strengthening global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation norms.

The legal foundation for nuclear-weapon-free zones lies in the Charter of the United Nations, which provides for “regional arrangements or agencies” for the maintenance of international peace and security. The importance of such zones is recognized in article VII of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty), which states that “nothing in this Treaty affects the right of any group of States to conclude regional treaties in order to assure the total absence of nuclear weapons in their respective territories”. In the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, nuclear-weapon-free zones are described as measures that “enhance global and regional peace and security, strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and contribute towards realizing the objective of nuclear disarmament”.

As at the end of 2021, more than 100 States were parties or signatories to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties, representing nearly 60 per cent of all United Nations Member States. Five regional nuclear-weapon-free zones have been established under the following treaties: (a) the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco, 1969); (b) the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Rarotonga Treaty, 1986); (c) the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty, 1997); (d) the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Pelindaba Treaty, 2009); and (e) the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia (2009). Furthermore, since 1998, the General Assembly has reaffirmed Mongolia's status as a self-declared, single-State nuclear-weapon-free zone on 12 occasions, most recently by resolution [75/41](#) of 7 December 2020.

During its 2021 session, the General Assembly adopted two additional relevant resolutions: “African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty” ([76/18](#)) and “Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas” ([76/44](#)). In response to the pandemic, the General Assembly adopted decision [75/575](#), further postponing the fourth Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, originally planned for 2020, to a later date to be decided by the Assembly during its seventy-sixth session. Following the decision to postpone the Conference, States

parties and signatories to the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, including Mongolia, continued to hold informal consultations on organizational and substantive preparations. Mongolia facilitated those talks in its capacity as the Conference's designated Coordinator.<sup>6</sup>

In 2021, the five nuclear-weapon States<sup>7</sup> of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty maintained varying positions on the protocols to the five nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties. Under those protocols, the nuclear-weapon States could commit to respecting the nuclear-weapon-free status of the corresponding regions and could undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against States party to the agreements. As at the end of the year, all five nuclear-weapon States adhered to Additional Protocol II to the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Furthermore, four of those States had ratified Protocols 1, 2 and 3 to the Rarotonga Treaty, Protocols I and II to the Pelindaba Treaty, and the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia. As at 31 December, the United States had signed all those protocols but had not yet ratified them.

None of the five nuclear-weapon States had signed the Protocol to the Bangkok Treaty as at the end of the year. During the general debate of the General Assembly First Committee, however, the five States reaffirmed their support for the objectives of the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone.<sup>8</sup> The nuclear-weapon States also confirmed their availability to deepen exchanges on the Bangkok Treaty with ASEAN member States.

The following table presents the status of adherence to the protocols.

#### Status of ratification of the protocols to the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones as at 31 December 2021

Protocol	Status	China	France	Russian Federation	United Kingdom	United States
Additional Protocol II to the Treaty of Tlatelolco	Signed	21 Aug. 1973	18 July 1973	18 May 1978	20 Dec. 1967	1 Apr. 1968
	Ratified	12 June 1974	22 Mar. 1974	8 Jan. 1979	11 Dec. 1969	12 May 1971
Protocol 2 to the Rarotonga Treaty	Signed	10 Feb. 1987	25 Mar. 1996	15 Dec. 1986	25 Mar. 1996	25 Mar. 1996
	Ratified	21 Oct. 1988	20 Sep. 1996	21 Apr. 1988	19 Sep. 1997	— <sup>a</sup>
Protocol to the Bangkok Treaty	Signed	—	—	—	—	—
	Ratified	—	—	—	—	—
Protocol I to the Pelindaba Treaty	Signed	11 Apr. 1996	11 Apr. 1996	5 Nov. 1996	11 Apr. 1996	11 Apr. 1996
	Ratified	10 Oct. 1997	20 Sep. 1996	5 Apr. 2011	12 Mar. 2001	— <sup>b</sup>
Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia	Signed	6 May 2014	6 May 2014	6 May 2014	6 May 2014	6 May 2014
	Ratified	17 Aug. 2015	17 Nov. 2014	22 June 2015	30 Jan. 2015	— <sup>c</sup>

Note: The status of signature and ratification of the treaties and protocols is available from the [Disarmament Treaties Database](#) of the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

<sup>a</sup> The Protocol was submitted on 2 May 2011 to the United States Senate for its consent to ratification (United States, *Message from the President of the United States transmitting Protocols 1, 2, and 3 to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, signed on behalf of the United States at Suva on March 25, 1996* (Washington, DC, United States Government Printing Office, 2011).

<sup>b</sup> The Protocol was submitted on 2 May 2011 to the United States Senate for its consent to ratification (United States, *Message from the President of the United States transmitting Protocols I and II to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, signed on behalf of the United States at Cairo, Egypt, on April 11, 1996, including a Third Protocol Related to the Treaty* (Washington, DC, United States Government Printing Office, 2011).

<sup>c</sup> The Protocol was submitted on 27 April 2015 to the United States Senate for its consent to ratification (United States, *Message from the President of the United States Transmitting the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, signed at New York on May 6, 2014* (Washington, DC, United States Government Printing Office, 2015).

#### Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco)

On 14 February, the 33 member States<sup>9</sup> of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) issued a communiqué<sup>10</sup> to commemorate the fifty-fourth anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, in which they highlighted the Treaty's contribution as a political, legal and institutional reference for the creation of other nuclear-weapon-free zones. They also stated that denuclearized

<sup>6</sup> Mongolia relinquished its duties as Coordinator on 13 April 2022.

<sup>7</sup> China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States.

<sup>8</sup> For the statement, see the First Committee verbatim record A/C.1/76/PV.5 (forthcoming). See also United Nations, "Use of Chemical, Biological Weapons Unacceptable in Any Context, Delegates Stress, as First Committee Continues General Debate" (press release GA/DIS/3666), 7 October 2021; and Reaching Critical Will, "Chair's statement—UNGA First Committee 2021, France as coordinator of the P5", 7 October 2021.

<sup>9</sup> Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

<sup>10</sup> OPANAL, document [Inf.01/2021Rev5](#).

zones did not constitute an end in themselves but rather were a highly relevant intermediate step towards nuclear disarmament, and that OPANAL member States would continue to promote dialogue and cooperation between nuclear-weapon-free zones.

From 28 June to 9 July, OPANAL joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, the Matías Romero Institute and the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies to hold the seventh [Summer School on Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation](#) online.

On 26 September, OPANAL member States issued a declaration<sup>11</sup> to commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. The States referenced, inter alia, the following: (a) concern over the erosion of the treaty-based disarmament architecture; (b) the responsibility of all States parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty for the full implementation of that agreement, particularly article VI;<sup>12</sup> and (c) their determination to work for the success of the Treaty's tenth Review Conference, the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones and the promotion of disarmament and non-proliferation education.

At the twenty-seventh session of the OPANAL [General Conference](#), held in Mexico City on 30 September, member States voted to award a second term to the Agency's Secretary-General, Flávio Roberto Bonzanini. In addition, the Conference adopted a resolution<sup>13</sup> by which it recognized, for the first time, the relationship between gender, disarmament and non-proliferation. Furthermore, the Conference adopted a resolution<sup>14</sup> to award the future interns of OPANAL with a symbolic remunerative stipend in recognition of their efforts.

In October, the OPANAL Secretary-General delivered a statement<sup>15</sup> to the First Committee of the General Assembly during its general debate. Additionally, he addressed participants during the thematic event entitled "Discussions and exchanges with independent experts and other high-level officials".<sup>16</sup>

Throughout 2021, OPANAL engaged in activities to strengthen cooperation with other nuclear-weapon-free zones.

On 22 January, the OPANAL Secretary-General and the Executive Secretary of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE), the main executive body of the Pelindaba Treaty, issued a joint [communiqué](#) on the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Similarly, on 1 December, the leaders jointly [announced](#) the signing of a memorandum of understanding between

their institutions. In addition, the OPANAL Secretary-General delivered statements<sup>17</sup> to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Pelindaba Treaty, the twelfth anniversary of that Treaty's entry into force and the agreement's fifth Conference of States Parties. For his part, the AFCONE Executive Secretary participated in marking the fifty-fourth anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and attended the twenty-seventh OPANAL General Conference.<sup>18</sup>

During the General Conference, Kazakhstan delivered [remarks](#) on behalf of the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. As at the end of 2021, arrangements to formalize cooperation between both nuclear-weapon-free zones were being negotiated.

The Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum, Henry Puna, also delivered a [statement](#) during the General Conference on 30 September. Three days earlier, he had met with the OPANAL Secretary-General to discuss how their organizations could strengthen cooperation under the terms of a 2003 agreement.

ASEAN also participated in the twenty-seventh OPANAL General Conference, as an observer. The ASEAN Secretary-General, Dato Paduka Lim Jock Hoi, met bilaterally with his OPANAL counterpart to explore opportunities for future cooperation.

### South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone (Rarotonga Treaty)

The Rarotonga Treaty entered into force in 1986, following its adoption the previous year by leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum.

The Forum convened the first meeting of the Rarotonga Treaty's [Consultative Committee](#) on 15 December, in response to a call<sup>19</sup> by States parties in 2020 to advance a recent decision by Forum leaders to operationalize the Treaty.<sup>20</sup> Chaired by Esala Nayasi (Fiji), the meeting was attended both by States parties<sup>21</sup> and non-party Forum members.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>17</sup> OPANAL, documents [Inf.13/2021](#), [Inf.27/2021](#) and [Inf.38/2021](#).

<sup>18</sup> For the statements, see OPANAL, "54th Anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco", 15 February 2021; and OPANAL, "Statement of African Commission on Nuclear Energy", 30 September 2021.

<sup>19</sup> At the first Meeting of States parties to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, held virtually on 15 December 2020, States parties called, inter alia, for the convening in 2021 of the Consultative Committee to consider practical means of operationalizing the Treaty (Pacific Islands Forum, "Ministerial Statement of the First Meeting of the States Parties to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty", 15 December 2020, para. 27).

<sup>20</sup> At their fiftieth Meeting, the leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum called, inter alia, for the operationalization of the provisions of the Rarotonga Treaty (1985). See Pacific Islands Forum, "Forum Communiqué, Fiftieth Pacific Islands Forum, 13–16 August 2019".

<sup>21</sup> Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

<sup>22</sup> Federated States of Micronesia and New Caledonia (France), and French Polynesia, Marshall Islands.

<sup>11</sup> OPANAL, document [Inf.29/2021.Rev6](#).

<sup>12</sup> Article VI states, "Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control."

<sup>13</sup> OPANAL, document [CG/Res.05/2021](#).

<sup>14</sup> OPANAL, document [CG/Res.03/2021](#).

<sup>15</sup> OPANAL, document [Inf.36/2021](#).

<sup>16</sup> For the statement, see OPANAL, document [Inf.37/2021](#).

The meeting opened with a commemoration of the thirty-fifth anniversary of the Rarotonga Treaty's entry into force; participants then discussed various practical means of operationalizing the Treaty. Areas of focus included the following topics: (a) developing rules of procedure for the Committee, as required under the Treaty; (b) modernizing outdated language and references in the Treaty; (c) promoting the entire Blue Pacific as a nuclear-free zone as permitted under the Treaty; (d) developing the control system for verifying compliance with the Treaty; (e) considering a potential contribution by States parties to the upcoming tenth Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference; and (f) discussing ways to deepen cooperation with other nuclear-weapon-free zones.

In parallel, the Pacific Islands Forum continued its engagement with respect to interzonal cooperation. On 12 April, Kausea Natano, the Forum's Chair, highlighted the value of such cooperation in a [statement](#) on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Pelindaba Treaty. On 28 September, in [remarks](#) to the General Assembly at its annual high-level meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, the Chair emphasized the Rarotonga Treaty's importance to global unity, peace, security and prosperity. Similarly, Henry Puna, the Forum's Secretary-General delivered a [statement](#) to the twenty-seventh OPANAL General Conference on 30 September, highlighting the 2003 Cooperation Agreement between OPANAL and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. In that regard, he noted that the two zones could continue to learn and share with each other while strengthening their interzonal cooperation. Furthermore, the Forum's Secretary-General delivered [remarks](#) to the fifth session of the Conference of States Parties to the Pelindaba Treaty, held on 21 and 22 October. The Pacific Islands Forum planned to continue supporting cooperation and collaboration with other nuclear-weapon-free zones in 2022.

### **Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty)**

The Bangkok Treaty, signed on 15 December 1995 in Bangkok, remained the key instrument of ASEAN on disarmament and non-proliferation in 2021.

At the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth ASEAN Summits, both held virtually on 26 October, ASEAN leaders reiterated their commitment to preserving South-East Asia as a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in the Bangkok Treaty and the ASEAN Charter. They also reaffirmed their commitment to continuously engage with the nuclear-weapon States and intensify ongoing efforts to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Bangkok Treaty.<sup>23</sup>

While the COVID-19 pandemic posed challenges for the overall realization of ASEAN community-building projects and initiatives, progress continued in 2021 in

the implementation of the five-year [Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone \(2018–2022\)](#). Under the Plan, ASEAN continued to actively promote nuclear safety, security and safeguards through the work of its relevant sectoral bodies, including the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy and the ASEAN Nuclear Energy Cooperation Sub-Sector Network.

In an important development for 2021, the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy finalized the ASEAN Protocol for Preparedness and Response to a Nuclear or Radiological Emergency. Once fully operationalized, the Protocol would help enhance the region's preparedness and capability to respond to future emergencies and disasters.

Nuclear safety, security and safeguards remained an important area of cooperation between ASEAN and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Under the Practical Arrangements between IAEA and ASEAN—signed in 2019 to promote cooperation in nuclear science, technology and applications, nuclear safety, security and safeguards—work was under way to ensure that ASEAN and its sectoral bodies could benefit further from IAEA regional projects, especially in the areas of capacity-building, education and training, information-sharing and best practices, and adherence to international legal instruments.

### **African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Pelindaba Treaty)**

In its capacity as the main implementing body of the Pelindaba Treaty, AFCONE held meetings on 25 and 26 February and 20 October to consider substantive and operational issues related to the Treaty's implementation and the AFCONE programme of work. During those meetings, AFCONE adopted various policies, procedures and documents for guiding, assessing and monitoring progress, as well as ensuring consistent steps towards set targets. On 12 April, AFCONE commemorated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Pelindaba Treaty's opening for signature. Twelve high-level officials, including Izumi Nakamitsu, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and Gustavo Zlauvinen, the President-designate of the tenth Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, delivered [statements](#) to support the Treaty's implementation and universalization.

On 15 July, AFCONE commemorated the twelfth anniversary of the Treaty's entry into force. Several high-level officials, including Thomas Markram, Director and Deputy to the High-Representative for Disarmament Affairs, delivered [statements](#).

The AFCONE Executive Secretary also participated in a task force, organized by the Vienna Centre for Disarmament and Non-proliferation and Wilton Park, for promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in particular in developing countries. The

<sup>23</sup> ASEAN, "Chairman's Statement of the 38th and 39th ASEAN Summits", 26 October 2021, para. 39.

discussions formed the basis of a report<sup>24</sup> issued in preparation for the tenth Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

AFCONE cooperated with IAEA to organize several regional meetings and workshops. Those events included a regional [webinar](#) on nuclear safeguards, held for French-speaking African countries from 9 to 11 November, and a virtual meeting on “[Nuclear Security in Africa](#)“, held on 24 June with the additional cooperation from the European Commission and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute.

In September, AFCONE partnered with the International Science and Technology Centre and the Forum of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies in Africa to hold a regional training course on uranium transport safety. The event drew 37 participants.

The [fifth Conference of States Parties](#) to the Pelindaba Treaty took place on 21 and 22 October with participation by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials. On the margins of the Conference, AFCONE held an [event](#) on the status of peaceful uses of nuclear energy in Africa.

Meanwhile, AFCONE continued its consultations<sup>25</sup> with African Union development partners,<sup>26</sup> regional and international organizations, and specialized nuclear institutions on the development of formalized cooperation agreements.

In December, the General Assembly adopted its annual resolution on the Pelindaba Treaty ([76/18](#)) without a vote.

### **Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia**

As Chair of the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone for 2021, Kyrgyzstan said that its priorities would include bringing the zone’s membership<sup>27</sup> into consultations with the nuclear-weapon States on completing their ratifications of the Treaty’s Protocol<sup>28</sup> and intensifying activities for the zone in the context of the pandemic.

On 12 April, Nuran Niyazaliev (Kyrgyzstan) delivered a [video message](#), in his capacity as Coordinator of the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, at a virtual event held to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the signing of the Pelindaba Treaty. He congratulated attendees on the milestone, noting the important role of the Treaty in strengthening regional and international peace and security, expanding the

global regime of nuclear-weapon-free zones, and promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

On 6 August, a consultative meeting of the Heads of State of the Central Asian countries was held in Turkmenbashi, Turkmenistan. In a joint statement,<sup>29</sup> the Heads of State highlighted that 2021 marked the fifteenth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, as well as the thirtieth anniversary of the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site in Kazakhstan. In that context, the Presidents expressed readiness to continue their active cooperation in implementing the Treaty. They also noted the need to intensify interaction with other nuclear-weapon-free zones to consolidate efforts towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

On 8 September, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the States parties to the Treaty adopted a joint statement<sup>30</sup> on the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty. In the preamble, the ministers reaffirmed the importance of the nuclear-weapon-free zone in strengthening the disarmament process, the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and regional and international peace and security, while also supporting cooperation in the peaceful use of atomic energy and the environmental rehabilitation of territories affected by radioactive contamination. They welcomed the thirtieth anniversary of the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, paying tribute to the many victims of nuclear explosions and their aftermath. The ministers also reaffirmed the universally recognized and coordinating role of the United Nations in the disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including in the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones. They further reaffirmed the important and decisive role of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as the cornerstone of international efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and, ultimately, achieve the goal of eliminating such weapons.

The ministers recognized the importance of deepening cooperation between nuclear-weapon-free zones. Referencing a [2019 meeting](#) of representatives of the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones, the authors expressed interest in further expanding partnerships between the zones, including by signing memorandums of understanding with AFCONE and OPANAL. Furthermore, they expressed support for the creation of new nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions, including the Middle East and the Korean Peninsula. In the statement, the ministers also expressed support for disarmament education initiatives by member States of the zone.

At the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly First Committee, States parties to the Treaty co-sponsored the triennial resolution entitled “Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World” ([76/48](#)). In the resolution’s preamble, the Assembly marked the fifteenth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia and the thirtieth anniversary of the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site in Kazakhstan.

<sup>24</sup> Vienna Centre for Disarmament and Non-proliferation, “[VCDNP Task Force on Peaceful Uses: Report and Recommendations](#)”, 15 December 2021.

<sup>25</sup> For the statement of China with a reference to the consultations, see Chen Xufeng, Chargé d’Affaires a.i., Mission of China to the African Union, [statement](#) at the fifth session of the Conference of States Parties to the Pelindaba Treaty, 21 October 2021.

<sup>26</sup> China, Japan and Republic of Korea.

<sup>27</sup> Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

<sup>28</sup> Nuclear-weapon States that choose to be bound by the Protocol to the Treaty commit to respecting the nuclear-weapon-free status of the zone in Central Asia and undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against States party to the agreement.

<sup>29</sup> [A/75/995](#).

<sup>30</sup> [A/76/397](#).

## Establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction

The second session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction took place from 29 November to 3 December in New York, following its postponement in 2020 owing to the pandemic. The session was attended by 19 States<sup>31</sup> from the Middle East region, while four nuclear-weapons States<sup>32</sup> and three international entities<sup>33</sup> took part as observers. Several other intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and United Nations entities were also invited to attend as observers.<sup>34</sup> In accordance with an earlier decision<sup>35</sup> by the Conference on the rotation of its presidency, Kuwait was endorsed by acclamation as President of the second session, with Mansour Al-Otaibi (Kuwait) presiding over the proceedings.

After the President of the Conference delivered an [opening statement](#), the participants heard [remarks](#) by the Secretary-General and the President of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly, Abdulla Shahid (Maldives).<sup>36</sup> During the ensuing general debate, 16 participating States, four observer States and three relevant international organizations delivered statements.<sup>37</sup> In the thematic debate that followed, participants discussed a range of issues, including the following: (a) principles and objectives of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction; (b) core obligations and verification mechanisms related to nuclear, chemical and biological weapons; (c) transparency and security through implementation of the treaty; (d) definitions, clarifications, consultations and cooperation; (e) peaceful uses and international cooperation; (f) institutional arrangements, entry into force and dispute settlement; and (g) protocols including security assurances.

The second session of the Conference concluded with the adoption of its final report<sup>38</sup> and decisions on the rules of procedure<sup>39</sup> and the establishment of a

<sup>31</sup> Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, State of Palestine, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

<sup>32</sup> China, France, Russian Federation and United Kingdom.

<sup>33</sup> IAEA, Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit (United Nations).

<sup>34</sup> For the list of invited organizations and entities, see [A/CONF.236/2021/DEC.1](#) and [A/CONF.236/2021/DEC.2](#).

<sup>35</sup> [A/CONF.236/DEC.4](#).

<sup>36</sup> For the video recording of the statements, see “[Opening of the Second Session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction](#)”, United Nations Web TV, 29 November 2021.

<sup>37</sup> See “[Second Session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction](#)” (Statements), Office for Disarmament Affairs Meeting Place.

<sup>38</sup> [A/CONF.236/2021/4](#).

<sup>39</sup> [A/CONF.236/2021/3](#).

working committee<sup>40</sup> to continue deliberations during the intersessional period. The final report contains a summary<sup>41</sup> of the deliberations held during the thematic debate. Participating States reaffirmed their commitments to working towards the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The participating States agreed that the third session of the Conference would be held from 14 to 18 November 2022 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The President of the second session of the Conference delivered [closing remarks](#).

During its second session, the Conference successfully built on the momentum and outcomes generated from its first session and reached a consensus to achieve further progress, including through substantive deliberations on various key aspects of the future Middle East zone. In that vein, the Conference decided to establish the above-mentioned working committee as a standing mechanism to continue substantive deliberations between the annual sessions of the Conference. The Secretary-General, through his spokesperson, welcomed the session’s positive outcome and expressed support for the Conference’s continuing efforts to realize a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in an open and inclusive manner.<sup>42</sup>

## United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs regional centres

### United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa

In 2021, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa continued its work to tackle peace and security challenges in the region, in particular through efforts to prevent and counter the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons. In the context of restrictions owing to the pandemic, the Centre maximized its use of virtual meetings to carry forward essential interactions and consultations with States, United Nations entities and other stakeholders while endeavouring to incrementally adopt hybrid or in-person methods when feasible.

Throughout the year, the Centre further strengthened its partnerships with numerous regional and subregional organizations to maximize their combined support for disarmament and non-proliferation in Africa. Those organizations included the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the West African Economic and Monetary Union, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. In one example of their joint activities, the Centre assisted the member States<sup>43</sup> of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in preparing a project

<sup>40</sup> [A/CONF.236/2021/DEC.3](#).

<sup>41</sup> [A/CONF.236/2021/4](#), paras. 13–51.

<sup>42</sup> [Statement](#) attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General on the second session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, New York, 4 December 2021.

<sup>43</sup> Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.

to advance their implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). In coordination with the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) (1540 Committee), the Centre contributed to a baseline assessment to help inform the development and implementation of tailored responses to regional needs.

As part of a project funded by Germany, the Centre hosted a pilot workshop from 24 to 26 November on developing training materials for managing weapons and ammunition in United Nations peace operations. The educational resources were expected to become available online in 2022 along with a related course for trainers.

Following a series of explosions on 7 March at a military barracks in Bata, Equatorial Guinea, the Centre developed a joint project proposal in coordination with the United Nations country team in Malabo to support the Government in weapons security and ammunition management.

In 2021, the Centre also continued to implement a project funded by the European Union to support gender mainstreaming policies, programmes and actions in the fight against trafficking in and misuse of small arms and light weapons, in line with the women, peace and security agenda (for more information, see chap. VI).

#### **United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa**

The United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa held its fifty-first ministerial meeting in Bujumbura, Burundi, from 24 to 28 May.<sup>44</sup> Experts and ministerial representatives addressed a range of pressing peace and security challenges, including threats from armed and terrorist groups. In contributions to the discussions, the Regional Centre highlighted risks to the region from improperly managed weapons and ammunition, including accidental explosions and diversion.

The fifty-second ministerial meeting of the Committee took place in Libreville from 22 to 26 November. Participants discussed, inter alia, ongoing and emerging peace and security issues and trends in the subregion, terrorism and violent extremism, maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, the impact of the pandemic, climate security, and activities by armed groups. Discussing a recent study<sup>45</sup> of the impact of climate change on peace, security and stability in Central Africa, speakers highlighted opportunities for the subregion to find sustainable solutions. Participants also referenced the need to counter hate speech in the media and on social networks, the importance of respecting human rights across the subregion, and leadership by women to promote peace and security during the global health crisis. Furthermore,

<sup>44</sup> The meetings of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa were organized by the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa with support from the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa.

<sup>45</sup> United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and ECCAS, “Sustaining Peace in Central Africa through Addressing the Adverse Impact of Climate Change on Peace and Security”, June 2022.

the Committee reviewed progress of its previous recommendations and considered geopolitical and security developments in the subregion, particularly those related to recent and upcoming elections. In wide-ranging discussions of matters such as ongoing initiatives against mercenaries, terrorism and the circulation of small arms in the subregion, participants reaffirmed the recommendation made by the Committee in 2020 to convene a regional forum on maritime security.

#### **United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean**

In the second year of the pandemic, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean continued to enhance and professionalize its e-learning platforms and tools to ensure uninterrupted support to Member States in the advancement of peace and security through disarmament. In 2021, the Centre undertook close to 100 technical, legal and policy-related activities to support States with the implementation of international instruments related to conventional arms and weapons of mass destruction. Those activities reached 4,500 participants, 47 per cent of whom were women.

At the request of States, the Centre focused its efforts on assisting Governments of the region in implementing international instruments on conventional arms, such as the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons,<sup>46</sup> the International Tracing Instrument,<sup>47</sup> and the Arms Trade Treaty.

The [Roadmap for Implementing the Caribbean Priority Actions on the Illicit Proliferation of Firearms and Ammunition across the Caribbean in a Sustainable Manner by 2030](#) (Caribbean Firearms Roadmap)<sup>48</sup> served as the primary subregional vehicle for bolstering national implementation of those three legal instruments, as well as for addressing the scourge of trafficking in small arms and ammunition. As a co-custodian,<sup>49</sup> the Centre supported States in developing and consolidating comprehensive national action plans for the Roadmap’s implementation. Of the Roadmap’s 16 participating States,<sup>50</sup> Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Grenada and Guyana had completed their processes to develop national action plans as at the end of 2021.

<sup>46</sup> Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

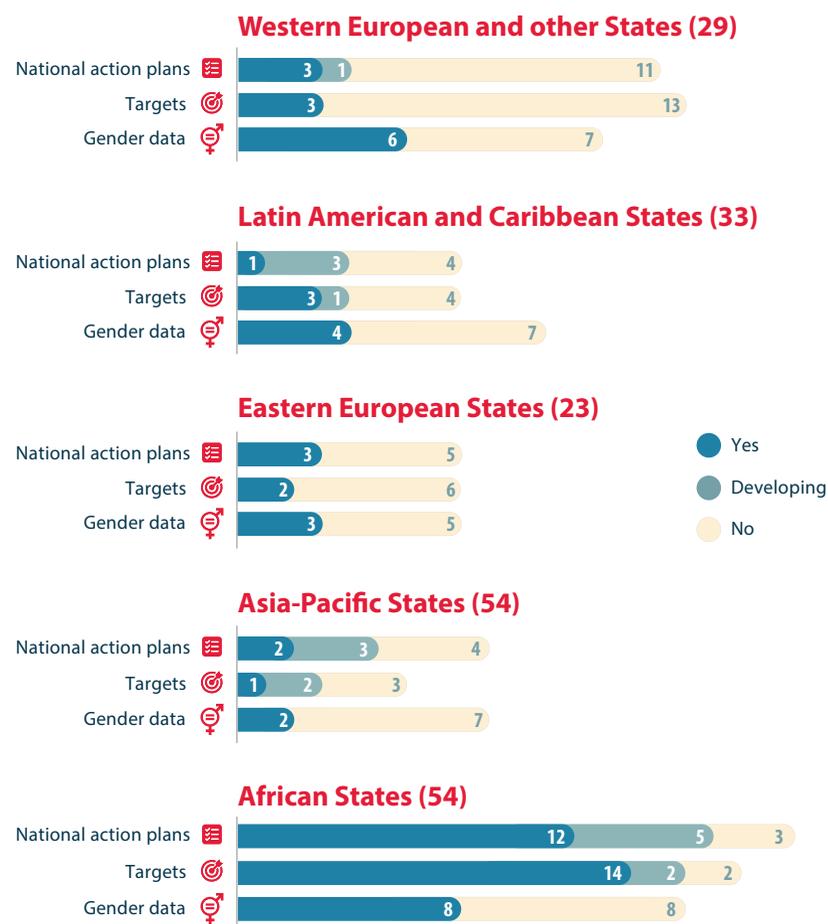
<sup>47</sup> International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

<sup>48</sup> The Caribbean Firearms Roadmap contains recommended objectives and goals for the entire life cycle of small arms and light weapons, including bolstering policy and legal frameworks, strengthening law enforcement capacity, curbing trafficking in and misuse of arms, and preventing the diversion of weapons from State and non-State arsenals.

<sup>49</sup> The Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security continued to serve as the second co-custodian of the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap.

<sup>50</sup> The following States adopted the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap in October 2020: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

### Programme of Action: Reported number of States with gender-disaggregated data, national targets and national action plans, by region



This graph shows the varying levels of reporting, by region, on collecting gender-disaggregated data, establishing national targets and adopting national action plans on implementing the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and its International Tracing Instrument, as included in the submitted reports. The number of Member States in each regional group is noted next to the name of the group.

Based on the graph, African States have the highest rates of reporting, reflecting the positive impact of the active support and interventions of the Office for Disarmament Affairs in the region. Western European and other States also have high rates of reporting. However, most of them report that they do not collect gender-disaggregated data, have not set national targets and have not adopted national action plans. All other regions have low rates of reporting, with the Asia-Pacific proportionally having the lowest.

Overall, roughly 70 per cent of States do not report on collecting gender-disaggregated data, establishing national targets or adopting national action plans, reflecting the limited reporting of Member States. None of the regions have exceeded a reporting rate of 56 per cent.

In late 2021, the participating States held their first annual meeting on the Roadmap since its adoption in 2020. During the virtual meeting, donors and technical partners pledged to support States in implementing the Roadmap.

The Centre continued to provide States in Latin America and the Caribbean with specialized legal and technical assistance, including reviews of frameworks developed in the Dominican Republic and Haiti for controlling small arms.

The Centre also worked with law enforcement agencies across the Central and South American subregions to combat arms trafficking and bolster interdiction capacities, including by holding specialized virtual courses for X-ray scanner operators, authorities at national points of entry and exit, and investigative units responsible for tracing and managing evidence of arms used in criminal activities. Meanwhile, authorities in Caribbean States benefited from additional training in restoring firearms serial numbers to facilitate tracing, workshops on the creation of multi-agency investigative and tracing units and ammunition tracing, and courses on ballistic intelligence.

The Regional Centre also continued to roll out and pilot modules for its new counter-trafficking course, addressing topics such as illicit manufacturing and brokering, control and documentation systems, border control and international cooperation,<sup>51</sup> and intelligence and investigation tools. The course content benefited from recent findings by the Centre on firearms trafficking modalities, routes, and concealment and detection methods. Additionally, the Centre explored how States of the region were implementing and tracking Indicator 16.4.2<sup>52</sup> of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Throughout the year, the Regional Centre worked with States to reduce the risk of small arms and ammunition being diverted for illicit use. In Argentina and El Salvador, for example, the Centre helped enhance the security of arms depots, including facilities used to store firearms evidence ahead of judicial processing.

The Regional Centre also continued its efforts to promote women’s participation in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control initiatives, in line with General Assembly resolution 65/69 of 8 December 2010.<sup>53</sup> In 2021, national authorities in Central and South America participated in the Centre’s specialized courses on integrating gender perspectives into firearms investigations and on preventing armed violence against women.

<sup>51</sup> The Centre collaborated with the World Customs Organization to develop new modules on border controls and international cooperation.

<sup>52</sup> Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 16.4.2: Proportion of seized, found or surrendered arms whose illicit origin or context has been traced or established by a competent authority in line with international instruments.

<sup>53</sup> Empowering women is key to bolstering effective responses in advancing disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control priorities in the region. Moreover, integrating gender perspectives into arms control measures, small arms investigations and relevant national legislation is pivotal to reducing violence against women and the impunity that is often associated with gender-based violence and crimes.

Furthermore, the Regional Centre continued to collaborate with Chile in implementing the Biological Weapons Convention. In 2021, the Centre worked with government authorities to develop complementary legal regulations required by recently enacted legislation against weapons of mass destruction.

### United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific

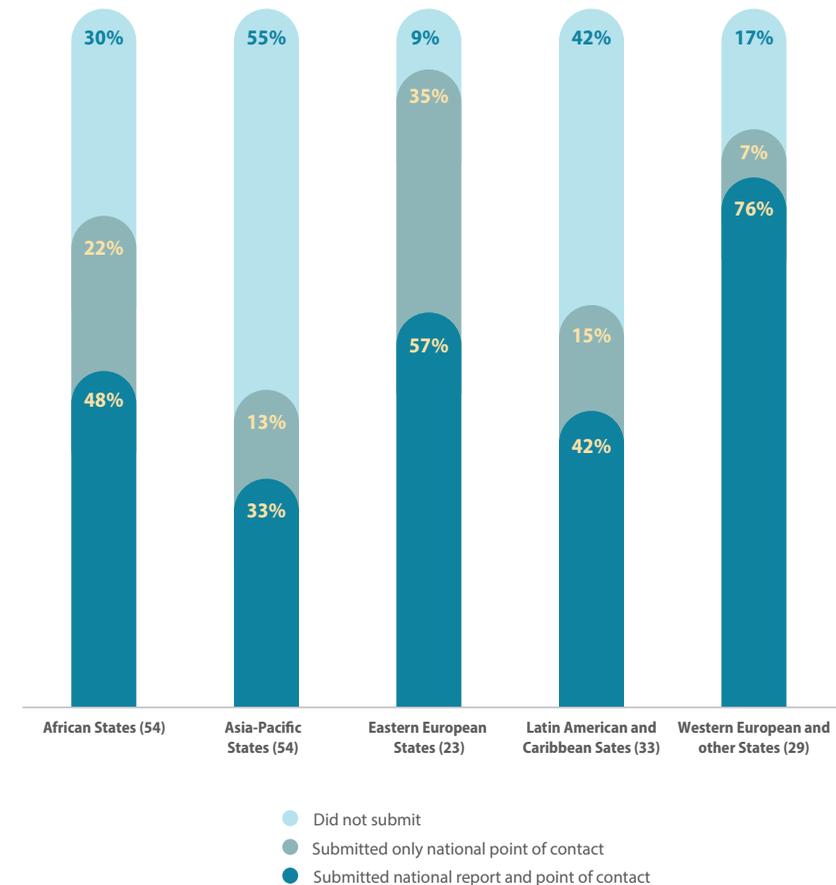
In 2021, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific assisted States in strengthening their national-level implementation of both the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Arms Trade Treaty, particularly through activities aligned with the women, peace and security agenda. The Centre also supported States within the framework of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) to address issues related to weapons of mass destruction, including the proliferation of their components and means of delivery to non-State actors. Furthermore, the Centre contributed to several disarmament education initiatives in the region.

Throughout the year, the Centre engaged with parliamentarians, members of civil society and national authorities in Asia-Pacific States to prevent and counter the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons from a gender perspective. In that regard, its efforts included a series of in-country training programmes conducted in partnership with the Governments of Cambodia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Nepal and Papua New Guinea as part of the flagship project on gender and small-arms control of the Office for Disarmament Affairs (for more information, see chap. VI). That project also led to various regional initiatives, including a virtual meeting on gun violence and small-arms trafficking from a gender perspective, held in March, for parliamentarians and civil society representatives from Asia-Pacific States, as well as online training, held in May, for enhancing national reporting under the Programme of Action.

The Regional Centre continued its collaboration with the Hiroshima office of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research in Japan to implement the Training Programme on Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation. They held the programme’s seventh iteration in March, inviting 35 mid-level diplomats from various Asian States to strengthen their understanding of the nuclear disarmament debate, and the structure and practice of international disarmament negotiations against the backdrop of the upcoming tenth Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

In May, the Centre held a virtual webinar series to strengthen national implementation in Mongolia of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors, in cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. During the three-day series, representatives of various government ministries and agencies met with United Nations and international experts and assistance providers to share experiences, take stock of progress towards the full and effective implementation

### Programme of Action: Percentage of States submitting national reports and national points of contact, by region



States submit national reports on implementing the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and its International Tracing Instrument every two years. The total reports submitted respectively in the 2018 and 2020/21 reporting cycles were 120 and 97. National points of contact are designated by Member States for the implementation of Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. This graph outlines the percentage of submissions of Programme of Action national reports and designations of national points of contact by region. The number of Member States in each group is noted next to the name of each regional group.

Proportionally, the Western European and other States and the Eastern European States have the highest rates of national points of contact designation and reporting to the Office for Disarmament Affairs. Only 9 per cent of Eastern European States and 17 per cent of Western European and other States have not submitted a national point of contact. The African States and Latin American and Caribbean States have decent rates of national point of contact designation, with over 50 per cent of States having reported. However, a significant room for improvement remains. The Asia-Pacific States have the lowest national point of contact designation rate, with 55 per cent of countries not designating a point of contact. Overall, 65 per cent of the 193 Member States designated a national point of contact, whereas only 48 per cent of States submitted a national report under the Programme of Action or the International Tracing Instrument.

of the resolution, and make recommendations for priority measures to be addressed through the development of a new national action plan that had been approved by Mongolia.

The twentieth United Nations-Republic of Korea Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-proliferation Issues took place in Seoul on 11 and 12 November, bringing together 40 representatives of Governments and intergovernmental organizations, research institutes and think tanks. Under the theme “Twenty Years of Achievements and Future Aspirations”, the Conference considered how the disarmament and non-proliferation landscape had changed over the previous two decades; took stock of successes, setbacks and lessons learned, as well as priority issues in the years ahead; and discussed the current state of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, including expectations ahead of the tenth Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

In cooperation with the Office for Disarmament Affairs and in partnership with the Ammunition Management Advisory Team,<sup>54</sup> the Centre held an in-person validation exercise for ammunition technical experts in Dubai from 13 to 16 December. Funded by Germany, the event helped expand the capacity of the [United Nations SaferGuard Programme](#)’s Quick-Response Mechanism by validating the expertise and skills of six ammunition technical experts based primarily in the Asia-Pacific region, in line with the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines.<sup>55</sup> Upon completing the validation exercise, the experts joined the SaferGuard Programme’s roster of experts, thereby enlarging its international pool of experts on stockpile safety.

Towards the end of the year, the Centre launched a project to support the establishment and maintenance of gun-free zones in Asia and the Pacific.<sup>56</sup> The project was expected to support beneficiary States in curbing armed violence by applying guidance and recommendations on establishing and maintaining gun-free zones. Under the project, an online course on gun-free zones was developed for the [Disarmament Education Dashboard](#) of the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

As part of the disarmament education initiative, representatives of the Centre were invited to several virtual events hosted by civil society organizations and academia to engage with students on disarmament-related topics. In February and September, the Centre collaborated with two India-based civil society organizations, the Prajnaya Trust and Sansristi, contributing to the second and third iterations of a webinar series on peace and gender for university students in India. The two webinars brought together young women and men pursuing studies on peace and disarmament

to speak with professors and practitioners about the gender implications of armed conflict and peacebuilding processes, as well as the linkages between disarmament and the women, peace and security agenda. In October, the Centre participated in an event entitled “Security and Disarmament in the Context of Asia-Pacific”, organized by the Foreign Trade University of Viet Nam. In that regard, a representative of the Centre delivered a guest lecture to nearly 600 students on the pillars of the Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament and their connection to the region.

In November, the Centre contributed to a hybrid webinar event on disarmament and non-proliferation, held in Seoul, in cooperation with the World Federation of United Nations Associations and Hanyang University School of International Studies. Drawing over 100 students and educators from around the world, representatives from the Centre and the Office for Disarmament Affairs briefed attendees on the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, responsible innovation in the field of science and technology, and the linkages between security and development.

## Disarmament and arms regulation at the regional level

### Africa

#### ***Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States***

The Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States (RECSA) is an intergovernmental organization composed of 15 African member States. It was established in June 2005 with the mandate of coordinating the implementation of the [Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa](#).<sup>57</sup>

As RECSA marked the sixteenth year of the Nairobi Protocol’s adoption and implementation, the pandemic continued to significantly disrupt many of its operations. In that context, the RECSA secretariat coordinated and implemented interventions on the following: legal instruments on conventional arms, especially the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Arms Trade Treaty and the Nairobi Protocol; and peace, security and disarmament in Africa.

#### *Activities related to conventional arms*

In 2021, the RECSA secretariat implemented the following interventions and activities in line with the United Nations Programme of Action, the Arms Trade Treaty, the Nairobi Protocol and the African Union’s Silencing the Guns initiative:

<sup>57</sup> The Nairobi Protocol complements regional and international instruments and mechanisms on peace, security and disarmament, including the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Arms Trade Treaty, Agenda 2063 on the Africa We Want, the Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union’s Silencing the Guns initiative.

<sup>54</sup> The Ammunition Management Advisory Team is co-managed by the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

<sup>55</sup> The exercise evaluated the expertise of six candidates from Canada, Nepal and Pakistan.

<sup>56</sup> The project builds on a publication by the Office for Disarmament Affairs entitled [Guidelines: How to establish and maintain gun-free zones](#), developed to assist national governments, local authorities, civil society entities and peacebuilding organizations in preventing and reducing armed violence.

- Collaborated with the African Union and the Office for Disarmament Affairs to support selected African countries in collecting, marking, managing and either destroying or safely storing firearms that were once illegally held by non-State actors, as well as managing related records (for more information on activities of the African Union and the Office for Disarmament Affairs as part of Africa Amnesty Month, see chap. III)
- Partnered with the secretariat of the Arms Trade Treaty to coordinate and provide technical support for increasing awareness among officials from Kenya and South Sudan about the Treaty's ratification process
- Helped train 156 officers (“armourers”) from law enforcement agencies<sup>58</sup> in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda in employing best practices for weapons and ammunition management (through a “train the trainer” programme, 10 of those participants subsequently served as regional instructors and 20 as national instructors)
- Supported the destruction of 5,144 obsolete firearms in Kenya, and 5,230 weapons in the United Republic of Tanzania
- Held strategic meetings with partners, including the African Development Bank, the African Union, the East African Community secretariat, the East African Legislative Assembly, the Eastern Africa Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and RECSA member States.

#### *Activities related to peace, security and disarmament*

The RECSA secretariat implemented the following interventions and activities related to peace, security and disarmament:

- Organized the Cross Border Leaders Conference on Resources Management, Conflict Management and Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation Control, held in Entebbe, Uganda, from 23 to 26 March, enabling leaders across the region to (a) discuss how they were tackling challenges related to cross-border resource management, including the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and (b) prioritize steps towards defining a durable solution
- Partnered with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research to organize and conduct a donors' round-table meeting for resource mobilization towards contributing to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals through building partnerships to fight illicit small arms and light weapons proliferation in the region
- Strengthened public awareness of activities carried out by the African Union and the Office for Disarmament Affairs for Africa Amnesty Month, including

through conducting country-wide public and media campaigns on the voluntary surrender of firearms and ammunition in selected countries,<sup>59</sup> holding information-sharing and awareness-raising workshops for security forces on community policing, and distributing informational materials with key messages and slogans on the voluntary surrender and collection of firearms and ammunition.

The secretariat also supported the development of a regional toolkit for enhancing the capacity of RECSA and relevant national institutions to communicate strategically and effectively with various stakeholders in executing mandates related to the management and control of small arms and light weapons.<sup>60</sup>

### **Americas**

#### ***Caribbean Community***

In 2021, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Implementation Agency for Crime and Security implemented or assisted in numerous project activities to support peace, security and disarmament, despite challenges from the pandemic.

Its work during the year included conducting a series of virtual training workshops on “international passenger interdiction”, enabling border security officers in the region to strengthen and enhance their techniques for targeting and interviewing, as well as their skills and knowledge in related areas.

Throughout 2021, the Implementation Agency for Crime and Security partnered with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to deliver and execute the following in-person activities: (a) capacity needs assessments in Guyana, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago; (b) training courses for authorities in Barbados, Guyana and Saint Lucia on detecting trafficked firearms in postal mail, fast parcels and at land and maritime borders; (c) a training course for Saint Lucia on investigating and prosecuting cases of firearms trafficking; and (d) a regional meeting, held in Panama, for law enforcement, judicial and firearms control authorities in the [Community of Practitioners Against Firearms Trafficking and Related Crimes](#) for Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, the Agency allowed staff of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to work from its headquarters in Port of Spain, helping to support collaboration by the organizations while facilitating the Office's activities in the Caribbean subregion.

The Agency partnered with the Organization of American States (OAS) to train OAS personnel on physical security and stockpile management measures in member States. Along similar lines, the Agency cooperated with the World Customs Organization to train customs authorities, law enforcement officers and other officials

<sup>58</sup> The participating law enforcement agencies were part of the police, military or wildlife services of the relevant States.

<sup>59</sup> Niger, Madagascar and Uganda.

<sup>60</sup> The toolkit is to be finalized in 2022 following validation by the Regional Centre's Technical Advisory Committee.

of the region in the use of targeting and non-intrusive inspection techniques to detect illicit weapons at ports of entry.

In collaboration with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Agency conducted seminars for States in the region to draft national action plans for implementing the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap. The Agency also co-organized courses on executive leadership, as well as meetings for regional donors and stakeholders.

Furthermore, the Agency signed a memorandum of understanding and launched a joint initiative with Small Arms Survey to study the problem of firearms in the Caribbean. The project would allow stakeholders to critically analyse various flows of illicit firearms, types of firearms trafficked, how such trafficking is conducted and how it is related to other types of crime. The research was expected to inform a more targeted and evidence-based approach to tackling firearms in the Caribbean.

The Agency partnered with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) to convene and host the second virtual awareness-raising workshop for investigators and operators of the proprietary Integrated Ballistics Identification System. Participants learned about situations in which they could effectively utilize the INTERPOL Ballistic Information Network and the Regional Integrated Ballistic Information Network. The Agency also supported INTERPOL national firearms training courses and operational planning exercises, including by educating personnel on the use of the INTERPOL Illicit Arms Records and Tracing Management System for tracing firearms.

The Agency finalized and circulated to CARICOM member States for signature a memorandum of understanding on formalizing support to States that choose not to purchase and maintain their own equipment to operate the Integrated Ballistic Identification System. Signing the required documentation would enable such States to join the INTERPOL Ballistic Information Network and the Regional Integrated Ballistic Information Network, sending double casts to designated hubs for ballistic imaging and correlation.

Additionally, the Agency worked with two United States government entities<sup>61</sup> on establishing a gun crime intelligence unit for CARICOM. Such an office would aim to generate and analyse credible and reliable gun crime intelligence for use in identifying and investigating firearm-related crimes, prosecuting shooters and disrupting the sources and life cycle of guns used in crime. Furthermore, to help trace illegal firearms, the Agency collaborated with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives to teach relevant national authorities in CARICOM about the use of the Bureau's electronic tracing system.

<sup>61</sup> Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (United States Department of Justice) and Homeland Security Investigations (United States Department of Homeland Security).

### **Organization of American States**

#### *Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials*

As at the end of 2021, 31 of the 35 OAS member States were party to the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials, according to the secretariat of the Convention.

The twenty-first regular meeting of the Convention's Consultative Committee and the fifth Conference of States Parties were held virtually on 4 and 5 October, respectively, with Mexico serving as Chair. The meetings took place with support from the Convention's secretariat, which continued to be jointly operated by the OAS Department of Public Security and Department against Transnational Organized Crime.

#### *Countering the illicit proliferation of and trafficking in small arms, light weapons and ammunition, and their impact in Latin America and the Caribbean*

Despite challenges from the pandemic, the Department of Public Security continued to effectively implement a comprehensive initiative financed by the European Union to assist OAS member States in strengthening their capacity to fulfil the Convention's obligations.

In 2021, the Department supported security upgrades to weapons storage facilities in five<sup>62</sup> of those countries and offered tailored training to 101 national personnel on good practices for physical security and stockpile management. It also developed a new application program for inventory control, which was installed in the Dominican Republic and Panama.

To help reinforce national disposal capacities, the Department of Public Security trained 182 personnel on international standards and good practices for destroying small arms, light weapons and ammunition that are either seized, obsolete or held in excess. Moreover, it assisted in and certified the destruction of 9,653 small arms and light weapons and 419,598 pieces of ammunition across four countries<sup>63</sup> during the year.

Regarding mine clearance, the Department supported the certification of 15 military officers from 10 Latin American countries<sup>64</sup> in Level 3 explosive ordnance disposal, as defined in the International Mine Action Standards.<sup>65</sup> It also partnered with Spain to hold a 20-hour course on "Basic Notions and Good Practices of

<sup>62</sup> Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras and Panama.

<sup>63</sup> Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras and Panama.

<sup>64</sup> Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Uruguay.

<sup>65</sup> [International Mine Action Standards 09.30](#).

Explosives”, reaching 106 police officers in 26 countries across the southern hemisphere.

Meanwhile, the Department of Public Security facilitated instruction and certification in firearms marking for 136 personnel from 11 countries.<sup>66</sup> It also provided nine countries with dot peen marking machines, strengthening their capacity to properly mark firearms. In addition to those operational activities, the Department assisted El Salvador and Panama in reviewing their normative frameworks on firearms to comply with the Convention and other international standards.

The Department also developed a framework for the Regional Communication Mechanism on Licit Transfers of Firearms and Ammunition to improve the transparency, organization and security of the international firearms trade. As at the end of 2021, States parties to the Convention were preparing to review and validate the framework for future adoption.

Regarding prevention, the Department continued an initiative to support at-risk youth in Tela, Honduras. As a result of that work, 80 students participated in daily orchestra classes to improve their life skills. Likewise, it trained 120 stakeholders from communities in Tela and in Apopa, El Salvador, in violence prevention and victim assistance.

#### *Humanitarian demining*

Through its Comprehensive Action against Antipersonnel Mines programme, the OAS Department of Public Security provided Colombia with accreditation support, external monitoring and quality control for all its humanitarian demining activities in 2021.

The programme’s accreditation staff evaluated the operational readiness of demining personnel in Colombia on 1,312 occasions, approving 88 per cent of the individuals reviewed. Separately, the OAS External Monitoring Component performed 3,988 on-site visits to monitor the technical surveys and clearance operations of various humanitarian demining organizations in the country. The External Monitoring Component also oversaw 2,276 non-technical land surveys, boosting confidence that areas cleared or declared uncontaminated were indeed safe for use.

During the year, humanitarian demining organizations accredited by the Colombian Government cleared approximately 1.5 million square meters of land and completed operations in 250 formerly mined areas. Meanwhile, through its mine risk education campaigns, OAS delivered messages on prevention to men, women, girls and boys in 30 landmine-affected municipalities. It also helped provide 39 landmine survivors with physical rehabilitation services, 57 survivors with psychosocial

services and 105 survivors with support for socioeconomic reintegration. Additionally, it offered logistical and administrative support for national demining in the Colombian departments of Sucre and Bolivar.

#### *Supporting the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004)*

In 2021, the OAS Inter-American Committee against Terrorism continued to help implement resolution 1540 (2004) in the Americas by providing legislative and technical assistance and outreach through its programme on chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats.

With support from the Export Control and Related Border Security programme of the United States Department of State, the Committee conducted a year-long project to strengthen strategic trade controls in the Dominican Republic and Panama by providing tailored legislative and technical assistance, capacity-building and outreach. Owing to the ongoing pandemic, the Committee carried out its activities for the project virtually.

Additionally, the Committee continued implementing a project funded by the European Union to strengthen biosafety and biosecurity in eight beneficiary States,<sup>67</sup> in line with resolution 1540 (2004). Activities for the project covered three workstreams: legislative and technical assistance to strengthen legislative frameworks; capacity-building and regional cooperation through in-country training sessions and peer review activities; and outreach and education supported through the development of two open online courses for scientists and policymakers.

## **Asia**

### ***Association of Southeast Asian Nations***

The Bangkok Treaty, which was signed on 15 December 1995 by the 10 ASEAN member States, continued to be the most important ASEAN instrument on disarmament and non-proliferation in 2021. At the fifty-fourth ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting, held by videoconference in August, the Ministers stressed the importance of the Treaty’s full and effective implementation, including under the [Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone \(2018–2022\)](#).<sup>68</sup> At the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth ASEAN Summits, which were held in October by videoconference, the ASEAN Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to preserving South-East Asia as a region free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in the Bangkok Treaty and the ASEAN Charter.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Grenada, Panama, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

<sup>67</sup> Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay and Uruguay.

<sup>68</sup> ASEAN, “[Joint communiqué of the 54th ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting](#)”, 2 August 2021.

<sup>69</sup> ASEAN, “[Chairman’s Statement of the 38th and 39th ASEAN Summits](#)”, 26 October 2021.

In the context of the pandemic, the ASEAN Regional Forum held its twelfth Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament virtually in June.<sup>70</sup> Participants exchanged views on regional disarmament efforts, recent challenges in non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Meanwhile, ASEAN continued to address trafficking in small arms in the region under the aegis of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC), which convened the annual ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime Working Group on Arms Smuggling (SOMTC WG on AS).<sup>71</sup> The SOMTC WG on AS resumed meeting in 2021, after postponing its work the prior year owing to the pandemic. At the third meeting of the SOMTC WG on AS, held virtually in June, participants shared updates on the realization of the arms smuggling component of the work programme to implement the [ASEAN Plan of Action in Combating Transnational Crime](#).

### **Pacific Islands Forum**

#### *Nuclear legacy issues in the Pacific*

In 2021, the member States of the Pacific Islands Forum devoted significant attention to a decision by Japan to discharge water from its Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant into the Pacific Ocean following treatment by its Advanced Liquid Processing System.

When Japan formally announced the decision on 13 April,<sup>72</sup> Meg Taylor, Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum, immediately expressed the deep concern of the Forum's members.<sup>73</sup> In that regard, she highlighted the aim of the Rarotonga Treaty of keeping the region free of environmental pollution from radioactive waste and other radioactive matter.

On 3 June, Henry Puna, the new Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum, delivered [opening remarks](#) on the matter before the Forum was briefed by

<sup>70</sup> The Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament takes place under the aegis of the ASEAN Regional Forum, a mechanism led by ASEAN to foster constructive dialogue and cooperation on political and security issues of common interest and concern among its 27 participants: Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Canada, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, European Union, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, United States and Viet Nam.

<sup>71</sup> The AMMTC addresses trafficking in small arms through the SOMTC WG on AS, whose annual meetings provide ASEAN member States with a platform to seek a coordinated approach for curbing arms smuggling through capacity-building and information-sharing on trends, policies and best practices, as well as by exploring collaborations with ASEAN Dialogue Partners and external parties.

<sup>72</sup> Japan, Inter-Ministerial Council for Contaminated Water, Treated Water and Decommissioning Issues, "[Basic Policy on handling of \[Advanced Liquid Processing System\] treated water at the Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings' Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station](#)", 13 April 2021.

<sup>73</sup> Meg Taylor, Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum, [statement](#) regarding Japan's decision to release Advanced Liquid Processing System-treated water into the Pacific Ocean, 13 April 2021.

the Director General of IAEA. Following that briefing, Japan addressed the issue in three online presentations to Forum members in 2021.

Japan's decision was a key agenda item of the ninth Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting, held virtually on 2 July. The Leaders committed to international consultation, international law, and independent and verifiable scientific assessments regarding Japan's announcement and Forum members committed to pursuing independent guidance for interpreting emerging scientific evidence.<sup>74</sup> Those commitments were reinforced by decisions of the 2021 Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting, held virtually on 2 July.<sup>75</sup>

On 27 August, the Pacific Islands Forum hosted a webinar entitled "[Pacific history, global futures: Securing a nuclear-free Blue Pacific](#)" to mark the International Day Against Nuclear Tests. Josaia V. Bainimarama (Fiji), Chair of the Forum, delivered a [keynote address](#), in which he attributed the permanent cessation of nuclear testing in the region to the Rarotonga Treaty. In that context, he concluded that "a nuclear-free Blue Pacific must remain our legacy".

In December, the Pacific Islands Forum engaged with a panel of independent experts to support Forum members in verifying and interpreting new scientific information from Japan related to the Advanced Liquid Processing System.

Meanwhile, the Forum's Taskforce on Nuclear Legacy Issues in the Pacific continued its work to address the ongoing impacts of nuclear testing in the region. Established in 2020, the Taskforce comprised representatives of key member States of the Forum and regional agencies working together to help address environmental, health and human rights impacts from such testing. As at the end of 2021, each relevant regional partner of the Forum was taking stock and updating its respective activities in line with the body's workplan.<sup>76</sup>

### **Europe**

#### **European Union**

The Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, unveiled in June 2016, continued to guide the bloc's actions in 2021.<sup>77</sup> The activities of the Union were also guided by its strategy, "Securing arms, protecting citizens",<sup>78</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Pacific Islands Forum, "[The Ninth Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting \(FFFM\) Leaders Declaration](#)", 2 July 2021.

<sup>75</sup> Pacific Islands Forum, "[2021 Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting Outcomes](#)", 27 July 2021.

<sup>76</sup> Pacific Islands Forum, "[Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific \(CROP\) Strategic Work Agenda 2021](#)", 28 February 2021.

<sup>77</sup> In the document, the European Union acknowledged the growing threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems while reaffirming its strong commitment to the universality, full implementation and enforcement of multilateral disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control treaties and regimes.

<sup>78</sup> European Union, document [13581/18](#), pp. 5–32.

against illicit firearms, small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, and by the European Union Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction.<sup>79</sup>

*Activities related to weapons of mass destruction, including the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004)*

As part of its ongoing efforts to promote the universalization and strengthen the implementation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and in anticipation of the agreement's tenth Review Conference, the European Union financially supported the regional seminar for States parties from the Middle East, held in Amman on 13 and 14 November. The seminar was funded through a 2019 decision<sup>80</sup> of the European Council. Owing to the postponement of activities foreseen under that decision because of the pandemic, the Council had decided, on 8 April 2021, to extend the implementation period for 15 additional months on a no-cost basis.<sup>81</sup> Also as part of its ongoing support for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the European Union engaged in activities (démarches) with over 100 of the Treaty's States parties in 2020 and 2021.

Meanwhile, throughout 2021, the European Union continued to support IAEA in carrying out its responsibilities in the areas of nuclear non-proliferation, energy,<sup>82</sup> safety,<sup>83</sup> security and technical cooperation. The Union continued to call for universal adherence to comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols, which together remained the standard for verifying that declared nuclear material or technology was used only for peaceful purposes.<sup>84</sup>

The European Union and its member States continued to rank among the biggest contributors to the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme, an important tool for enabling the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technology and for meeting the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Union and its member States made substantial contributions to the Technical Cooperation Fund

and the Peaceful Uses Initiative. Together with its member States, the European Union also remained the second largest donor to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund.

The entry into force and universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remained important objectives for the European Union in 2021. In addition to participating at a high level in the twelfth biannual Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (Article XIV Conference), held in September, the Union continued its financial support to the Treaty's Preparatory Commission to strengthen its monitoring and verification capabilities over the period 2020–2023.<sup>85</sup> In addition, by providing technical support and advice to the Preparatory Commission's Working Group B<sup>86</sup> and its other workshops and seminars, the European Union and its member States reinforced its commitment to maintaining and strengthening the Treaty's verification regime. Furthermore, the Union carried out démarches with the remaining eight Annex 2 States,<sup>87</sup> whose ratifications are necessary for the Treaty to enter into force.

Under a 2018 Council decision,<sup>88</sup> the European Union continued to promote the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material as fundamental elements of the global nuclear security and anti-terrorism architecture. In that regard, the Union maintained its financial support for activities by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Office of Counter-Terrorism to implement the Council decision.<sup>89</sup>

The European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs continued to serve as Coordinator of the Joint Commission overseeing the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action,<sup>90</sup> which is aimed at providing the international community with the necessary assurances concerning the exclusively peaceful nature of the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Union undertook

<sup>79</sup> European Union, document 15708/03.

<sup>80</sup> European Union, Council decision (CFSP) 2019/615 of 15 April 2019, *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 105 (16 April 2019), pp. 25–30. The overriding objective of the decision was to help facilitate a successful outcome of the tenth Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference and the development of a realistic and feasible set of actions and recommendations that could enjoy consensus.

<sup>81</sup> European Union, Council decision (CFSP) 2021/579 of 8 April 2021, *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 123 (9 April 2021), p. 21.

<sup>82</sup> To further support the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in 2020, the European Union allocated €11.6 million for the period 2020–2023 in support of achieving effective nuclear security, assisting in the universalization of relevant legal instruments and advancing relevant international cooperation.

<sup>83</sup> The European Union and its member States attached the utmost importance to the worldwide implementation and continuous improvement of nuclear safety. In that regard, the European Union had given legal force to the objectives of the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety through its amended directives 2009/71/EURATOM and 2014/87/EURATOM.

<sup>84</sup> In 2021, the European Union supported the adoption of comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols through, inter alia, activities (démarches) with States not parties to such an agreement and protocol.

<sup>85</sup> European Union, Council decision (CFSP) 2020/901 of 29 June 2020, *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 207 (30 June 2020), pp. 15–29.

<sup>86</sup> The European Union actively participated in both Working Groups of the Preparatory Commission in 2021. Working Group A deals with budgetary and administrative matters, such as the annual budget, financial and staff regulations, and rules and legal issues, while Working Group B deals with the examination of verification issues.

<sup>87</sup> China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Pakistan and United States.

<sup>88</sup> European Union, Council decision (CFSP) 2018/1939 of 10 December 2018, *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 314 (11 December 2018), pp. 41–46.

<sup>89</sup> The European Union also continued to support the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and its mission to strengthen global capacity to prevent, detect and respond to nuclear terrorism. The European Union and its member States were actively involved in the work of the Global Initiative in all areas: nuclear detection, nuclear forensics and response, as well as mitigation.

<sup>90</sup> The European Union has repeatedly expressed its resolute commitment to and continued support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and its determination to continue working with the international community to preserve that important multilateral achievement, unanimously endorsed by the Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). The Union also fully supported IAEA, which is tasked under the Plan with monitoring and verifying nuclear commitments of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

intensive diplomatic efforts within the Commission in 2021, including numerous contacts between its Coordinator and all relevant partners.

The European Union maintained its support for Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) under the terms of a 2017 European Council decision<sup>91</sup> on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Through its support, the Union aimed to help enhance national and regional efforts and capabilities to implement that resolution, primarily through training, capacity-building and facilitation of assistance coordinated closely with other Union programmes and other relevant actors.<sup>92</sup>

The European Union continued its strong support for The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, to which all its member States had subscribed. With the help of the Fondation pour la recherche stratégique, the Union continued to ensure financial and political assistance for targeted outreach and other activities to promote the Code's universalization and full implementation, in accordance with a 2017 European Council decision.<sup>93</sup>

The European Union also took forward its ongoing pursuit of the universalization and full and effective implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention. In adopting a new Council decision<sup>94</sup> aimed at building resilience through the Convention, the Union extended its support for core activities under the agreement. Furthermore, in the field of biosafety and biosecurity, the European Union provided an additional €6 million to strengthen biosafety and biosecurity in Ukraine and several Latin American States, and support the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons.

In 2021, the Union contributed to the activities of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) by continuing to implement earlier Council decisions on supporting key OPCW activities from 2019 to 2022, including the establishment of the new Centre for Chemistry and Technology;<sup>95</sup> and providing satellite imagery to assist in the continued implementation of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and OPCW Executive Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 on the destruction of chemical weapons of the Syrian Arab Republic.<sup>96</sup> The European Union also completed a project supporting chemical safety and security in Ukraine,

in line with a 2017 Council decision.<sup>97</sup> In addition, the Council of the European Union adopted two new relevant decisions: Council decision (CFSP) 2021/1026, on supporting the OPCW Cyber Security and Resilience and Information Assistance Programme in the framework of the implementation of the European Union Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (€2.1 million); and Council decision (CFSP) 2021/2073, on supporting the operational effectiveness of OPCW through satellite imagery (€1.6 million).

#### *Activities related to conventional weapons*

In line with its strategy entitled "Securing arms, protecting citizens", the European Union continued to provide political and financial support for countering the illicit trade and excessive accumulation of small arms, light weapons and their ammunition. To that end, the Council of the European Union adopted two decisions in 2021: Council decision (CFSP) 2021/38 of 15 January to establish a common approach on the elements of end-user certificates in the context of the export of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition; and Council decision (CFSP) 2021/2133 of 2 December to support the comprehensive programme on supporting efforts to prevent and combat trafficking in small arms and light weapons and conventional ammunition in South-Eastern Europe.

In addition, the European Union continued to implement the following:

- Council decision (CFSP) 2019/1298 to support dialogue and cooperation between Africa, China and Europe on preventing the diversion of arms and ammunition in Africa
- Council decision (CFSP) 2019/2009 to support Ukraine's efforts to combat trafficking in weapons, ammunition and explosives in cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
- Council decision (CFSP) 2019/2111 to support activities by the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) to reduce the threat of illicit small arms and light weapons and their ammunition
- Council decision (CFSP) 2019/2191 to support a global reporting mechanism on illicit small arms and light weapons and other illicit conventional weapons and ammunition to reduce the risk of their illicit trade ("iTrace IV")
- Council decision (CFSP) 2018/1788 to support SEESAC in implementing the regional road map<sup>98</sup> on combating arms trafficking in the Western Balkans

<sup>91</sup> European Union, Council decision (CFSP) 2017/809 of 11 May 2017, *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 39 (12 May 2017), pp. 39–44.

<sup>92</sup> The European Union provides such assistance to help ensure synergies and complementarity, as well as contribute to action on specific recommendations from the 2009 (S/2010/52) and 2016 (S/2016/1038) reviews of the resolution's implementation.

<sup>93</sup> European Union, Council decision (CFSP) 2017/2370 of 18 December 2017, *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 28 (19 December 2017), pp. 28–33.

<sup>94</sup> European Union, Council decision (CFSP) 2021/2072 of 25 November 2021, *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 421 (26 November 2021), pp. 56–64.

<sup>95</sup> European Union, Council decision (CFSP) 2019/538 of 1 April 2019, *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 93 (2 April 2019), pp. 3–14.

<sup>96</sup> European Union, Council decision (CFSP) 2017/2303 of 12 December 2017, *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 329 (13 December 2017), pp. 55–60.

<sup>97</sup> European Union, Council decision (CFSP) 2017/1252 of 11 July 2017, *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 179 (12 July 2017), pp. 8–14.

<sup>98</sup> South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, *Roadmap for a Sustainable Solution to the Illegal Possession, Misuse and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and Their Ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024*, 2 September 2020.

- Council decision (CFSP) [2018/2010](#) on countering illicit proliferation of and trafficking in small arms, light weapons and ammunition and their impact in Latin America and the Caribbean in the framework of the European Union strategy entitled “Securing arms, protecting citizens”
- Council decision (CFSP) [2018/2011](#) to support gender mainstreamed policies, programmes and actions in the fight against small-arms trafficking and misuse, in line with the women, peace and security agenda
- Council decision (CFSP) [2018/1789](#) to support combating the illicit trade in and proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the Member States of the League of Arab States.

Under a Council decision<sup>99</sup> adopted in 2021, the European Union launched a new project supporting the secretariat of the Arms Trade Treaty. The Union also continued, through various political dialogues, to promote the Treaty’s universalization and effective implementation. The European Union maintained its financial support for the Arms Trade Treaty’s implementation support programme, providing countries in Africa, Latin America, Central and South-East Asia, Eastern Europe and the Caucasus with technical assistance in strengthening their national systems in line with the Treaty’s requirements.

In addition, the Council of the European Union adopted a new decision<sup>100</sup> supporting the Oslo Action Plan 2020–2024<sup>101</sup> for implementing the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention).

#### *Other relevant activities or institutional developments*

The European Union Non-Proliferation Consortium of think tanks continued to receive support within the framework of Council decision [2018/299](#) of 26 February 2018, covering the period 2018–2021. The tenth European Union Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Conference was held online on 6 and 7 December.

#### **North Atlantic Treaty Organization**

At the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Summit in Brussels on 14 June, allied Heads of State and Government reiterated that disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control continued to make an essential contribution towards achieving the alliance’s security objectives and for ensuring strategic stability and collective defence in the Euro-Atlantic area.<sup>102</sup>

In 2021, NATO Allies worked to uphold and facilitate the implementation of key conventional arms control agreements, including the Treaty on Open Skies, the Vienna Document and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which had established standards for verification, transparency and risk reduction to increase predictability and security.

In addition, NATO continued to work with Allies, partners and other international organizations to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to defend against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats. It continued efforts to support the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, including by coordinating contributions of Allies to its forthcoming Review Conference and by advancing work on various related initiatives. Furthermore, NATO reviewed its [Comprehensive, Strategic-Level Policy for Preventing the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and Defending against Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Threats](#). The alliance also remained engaged in building capacity for Allies and partners to defend against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats.

In September, NATO held its seventeenth annual Conference on Weapons of Mass Destruction Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, drawing over 120 representatives from more than 50 allied, partner and non-NATO countries. Participants underlined the importance of preserving the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, underscored the need to strengthen and modernize existing arms control instruments, and highlighted the need for Allies to continue responding in a united manner to treaty violations.

NATO and its Allies continued to support the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Specifically, NATO assisted States in developing their capacity to combat the illicit trade of conventional ammunition and to destroy surplus supplies.

In 2021, NATO and its partners continued to destroy remaining national stocks of surplus conventional ammunition, including 356 tons in Bulgaria, 240 tons in Jordan, 462 tons in Serbia and 1,124 tons in Ukraine. Moreover, they resumed talks with the partner countries<sup>103</sup> of the Mediterranean Dialogue on supporting the destruction of ammunition and stepping up cooperation in addressing threats posed by landmines and other explosive devices, as well as the trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

In the context of the women, peace and security agenda, NATO developed the [Guidelines for Gender Mainstreaming in Small Arms and Light Weapons Projects](#), designed for use in member and partner countries. Associated online training was scheduled to become available to Allies and partners in 2022.

<sup>99</sup> European Union, Council decision (CFSP) [2021/38](#) of 15 January 2021, *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 14 (18 January 2021), pp. 4–9.

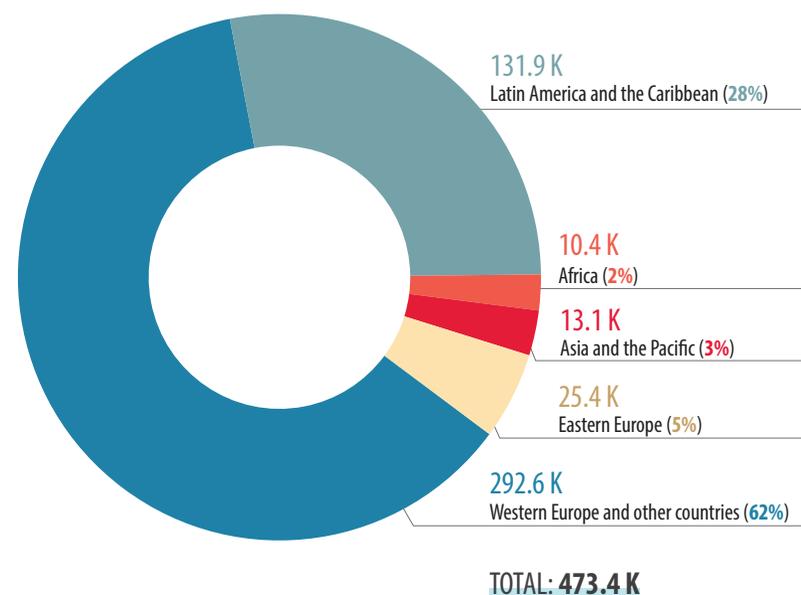
<sup>100</sup> European Union, Council decision (CFSP) [2021/257](#) of 18 February 2021, *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 58, 19 February 2021, pp. 41–50.

<sup>101</sup> See [APLC/CONF/2019/5/Add.1](#).

<sup>102</sup> NATO, “[Brussels Summit Communiqué issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels 14 June 2021](#)”, para. 45.

<sup>103</sup> Egypt, Israel, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.

### Weapons destroyed in 2018 and 2019, by region



Destroying weapons is an effective method of reducing the number of illicit small arms in circulation and preventing the potential diversion of weapons into illicit markets. Therefore, destruction is critical to cutting arms flows in accordance with Target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. According to national reporting under the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, national authorities destroyed an average of 48 per cent of the weapons seized, found or surrendered during the period 2018–2019.<sup>a</sup> More than 473,000 weapons were destroyed during that period, including arms collected in previous years and obsolete arms removed from national stockpiles.<sup>b</sup> Western European and other countries accounted for more than 65 per cent of the reported global destruction, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (28 per cent).

<sup>a</sup> Simple average based on data from 29 Member States reported through the 2020 national reports on the implementation of the Programme of Action.

<sup>b</sup> Based on data from 96 countries, 2020 national reports on the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons.

### Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

#### Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

In 2021, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) maintained its ongoing support to participating States in implementing Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). With funding from the European Union, OSCE continued to implement biological safety and security projects in Ukraine. In cooperation with the Office for Disarmament Affairs, OSCE continued activities in its region to provide technical assistance and raise awareness around resolution 1540 (2004). Furthermore, OSCE contributed towards the 2021 comprehensive review of that resolution in close cooperation with the 1540 Committee and its Group of Experts.

#### Small arms, light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition

Participating States continued working in 2021 to streamline and update norms, best practices and mechanisms to effectively combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, while also seeking to strengthen the safety and security of stockpiles of conventional ammunition. In that regard, OSCE held a meeting to review the implementation of its assistance projects in the field of small arms, light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition, allowing more than 200 participants to share experiences, assess progress and discuss challenges and opportunities. OSCE also updated its best practice guides on the following: national procedures for the destruction of small arms and light weapons;<sup>104</sup> national procedures for stockpile management, security and destruction of portable air defence systems;<sup>105</sup> procedures for the management of stockpiles of conventional ammunition;<sup>106</sup> and national procedures for stockpile management and security of small arms and light weapons.<sup>107</sup> The revised editions received the endorsement of 57 participating States.

The participating States continued to exchange information on small arms and light weapons and on implementing related commitments, including those related to the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Together with the Office for Disarmament Affairs, OSCE continued joint efforts to update an online reporting tool for small arms and light weapons to send information to both organizations at once.

Throughout the year, OSCE developed, implemented and mobilized financial resources for 20 projects to assist participating States in fulfilling their commitments

<sup>104</sup> OSCE, “Best Practice Guide on National Procedures for the Destruction of Small Arms and Light Weapons” (document FSC.DEL/264/20/Rev.1\*).

<sup>105</sup> OSCE, *Best Practice Guide on National Procedures for Stockpile Management, Security and Destruction of Man-portable Air Defense Systems* (FSC.DEL/262/20/Rev.1).

<sup>106</sup> OSCE, *Best Practice Guide on Procedures for Management of Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition* (FSC.DEL/263/20/Rev.1).

<sup>107</sup> OSCE, *Best Practice Guide on National Procedures for Stockpile Management and Security of Small Arms and Light Weapons* (FSC.DEL/363/21/Corr.1).

to address security and safety risks from small arms, light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition. Such targeted assistance involved destroying surplus conventional ammunition, explosive material and detonating devices; disposing of rocket fuel components, including hazardous waste; improving physical infrastructure, stockpile management and security practices; building capacity related to mine action, as well as clearing and disposing of explosive hazards; and combating trafficking in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

#### *Activities related to general security and disarmament*

Through its Forum for Security Co-operation and the Structured Dialogue<sup>108</sup> processes, OSCE continued to discuss arms control, confidence- and security-building measures, military transparency, risk reduction and incident prevention. In 2021, both of those processes were held virtually owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. Within the Forum for Security Co-operation, participants increased efforts to share experiences and lessons learned in tackling the pandemic's implications for the implementation of arms control agreements.

Meanwhile, as at the end of the year, more than half of all OSCE participating States had resumed verification activities that had been paused in response to the pandemic.

In promoting increased women's participation in relevant policymaking, planning and implementation processes, OSCE and the Office for Disarmament Affairs jointly conducted their fourth nine-week Scholarship for Peace and Security training programme on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation in the OSCE area. The initiative was aimed at addressing gaps in representation in the area of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control by providing equal opportunities for young professionals to learn and establish informal professional networks. The 2021 training programme was attended by 150 participants—131 of whom were women—from 51 OSCE participating States and nine Partners for Co-operation. The programme also provided numerous networking and post-training opportunities, facilitating women's career development and engagement.

Despite limitations and restrictions owing to the pandemic, OSCE participating States remained consistent in their exchanges of military information, conducting some only in an electronic format. OSCE continued to support the implementation of the agreement on subregional arms control through assistance to its four States parties.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>108</sup> Recognizing the need to reverse negative developments concerning conventional arms control and Europe's architecture of confidence- and security-building measures, OSCE established the Structured Dialogue process in 2016 to help foster understanding on security issues that could serve as a common basis for a way forward. Its launch followed the adoption that year of the OSCE declaration on the twentieth anniversary of the framework for arms control.

<sup>109</sup> Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia.

#### *Other relevant activities or institutional developments*

OSCE continued to develop its Arms Control Information Management and Reporting System application, providing participating States with more comprehensive access to shared military information, including through analytical tools. In 2021, OSCE further expanded the application's resources related to small arms and light weapons, conventional arms, and confidence- and security-building measures. Arms control experts from participating States provided testing and regular feedback.

#### ***South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons***

##### *Activities related to conventional arms*

Despite challenges and limitations from the pandemic, the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC)<sup>110</sup> continued its efforts to facilitate cooperation in support of a safer region. In that regard, SEESAC aimed to counter the illegal possession and misuse of small arms and light weapons in South-East and Eastern Europe, including by strengthening the capacities of national stakeholders to reduce and control their proliferation. Support from the European Union, Germany and the United States made that work possible.

In 2021, SEESAC achieved the following:

- Increased cooperation on operations, information-sharing and knowledge transfer in the subregion by facilitating regional meetings of national commissions on controlling small arms and light weapons, as well as discussions within the South East Europe Firearms Experts Network
- Enhanced knowledge transfer, communication and coordination within the region and with European Union institutions by, inter alia, hosting regional workshops for border and criminal police services and for officials responsible for harmonizing relevant legislation
- Strengthened institutional capacities for countering the trafficking, illicit possession and misuse of firearms by supporting the establishment and operationalization of firearms focal points in South-East Europe, including by organizing capacity-building training sessions and workshops, meetings for information exchange, and assistance on technical and personnel matters; providing border police services with comprehensive support to develop necessary standard operating procedures and acquiring specialized equipment, in line with findings from needs assessments conducted in 2019; and conducting needs assessments in the field for criminal police services in six jurisdictions for countering arms trafficking and illicit possession

<sup>110</sup> SEESAC is a joint initiative of the United Nations Development Programme and the Regional Cooperation Council.

- Provided small arms and light weapons commissions in Albania, Kosovo,<sup>111</sup> North Macedonia and Serbia with expert advice as they developed new strategies or action plans on small arms and light weapons
- Delivered tailored workshops, meetings and technical advice in the Western Balkans on aligning legal frameworks for the control of small arms, light weapons, explosives and explosive precursors with European Union law
- Conducted a [large-scale analysis of legislation and policies for controlling small arms and light weapons in the subregion](#) to identify avenues for improvement
- Implemented a [regional campaign](#) and supported two national campaigns to raise public awareness about the dangers of celebratory shooting and misuse of pyrotechnics
- Contributed to the development of evidence-based, data-driven policies on arms control by maintaining the [Armed Violence Monitoring Platform](#), a web-based system for collecting daily reports on firearms-related incidents from the region<sup>112</sup>
- Contributed to greater transparency in arms exports by preparing and publishing its thirteenth regional report<sup>113</sup> on the matter, covering 2019 activities and with input from five States<sup>114</sup>
- Drew upon regional experience incorporating gender considerations into policies for controlling small arms in order to advise international stakeholders at events organized by the Office for Disarmament Affairs and its Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific
- Developed the “Handbook on Firearms for Border Guards and Customs: the Western Balkan version” in collaboration with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency
- Helped authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the Republic of Moldova to dispose of 3,200 small arms and light weapons, 1,033 parts and components of those weapons, and 50,000 stockpiled cartridges
- Upgraded the security features of six evidence rooms (three in Montenegro and three in Kosovo).

<sup>111</sup> References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution [1244 \(1999\)](#).

<sup>112</sup> Using aggregated data from the Armed Violence Monitoring Platform, SEESAC [reported](#) on key trends in armed violence in four quarterly issues of *South East Europe Armed Violence Monitor* and in seven issues of *In-Focus*.

<sup>113</sup> SEESAC, *Regional Report on Arms Exports in 2019* (Belgrade, 2021).

<sup>114</sup> Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.

SEESAC continued to assist authorities in the Western Balkans in implementing the seven goals of their 2018 [Roadmap](#)<sup>115</sup> for controlling small arms and light weapons in the subregion. In that context, it coordinated and monitored the implementation of the plan, acting on behalf of the European Union and in close cooperation with France and Germany. In addition, SEESAC organized regular [regional](#) and supported [local](#) meetings of Western Balkans officials on coordinating and exchanging information with international and regional organizations, as well as key donors. It also [regularly reported on progress](#) by authorities of the region and international organizations in implementing the Roadmap.

Furthermore, in its capacity as the Fund’s secretariat, SEESAC managed programmatic coordination and monitoring of the Roadmap’s \$21 million [Multi-Partner Trust Fund](#)—the largest disarmament trust fund globally. Established by the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Fund was designed to strengthen coordination, planning and communication among donors, national authorities and organizations implementing the Roadmap.

#### *Activities related to peace, security and disarmament in general*

In 2021, SEESAC continued supporting cooperation to incorporate gender perspectives into security sector reform processes in the Western Balkans. Funded by Norway and Slovakia for the period 2019–2022, that work represented the second phase of the SEESAC “Gender Equality in the Military” project, aimed at contributing towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular its Goal 5 on gender equality and its Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions.

Using two unique platforms, the [regional platform of gender equality mechanisms](#) and the Regional Network of Gender Military Trainers, SEESAC continued to support the ministries of defence and armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia in their efforts to advance gender equality and implement the women, peace and security agenda.

In 2021, those partners achieved the following:

- Facilitated an innovative, regional data-collection exercise by the ministries of defence, contributing to a better understanding of the [position of women in the armed forces](#) and helping military services to develop better strategies for recruitment and retention, as well as for maintaining non-discriminatory work environments
- Developed the *Regional Handbook on Preventing and Responding to Gender-Based Discrimination, Harassment and Abuse*, underscoring how addressing such problems was key for the subregion’s armed forces to attract and retain women, contributing to modern institutions

<sup>115</sup> Roadmap for a Sustainable Solution to the Illegal Possession, Misuse and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons and Their Ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024.

- Conducted the “Regional Youth Perception Survey on Values and Attitudes while Considering Future Professions”, placing special emphasis on the gender dimensions of military careers to help develop recommendations for gender-responsive human-resource policies
- Initiated a regional study on [integrating gender perspectives into military education and training](#), helping to ensure the sustainability of progress
- Signed the [Ministerial Declaration on Support for Gender Equality in Security Sector Reform in the Western Balkans](#). On 7 December, the ministries of defence of the countries concerned agreed to continue cooperating on security sector reform in the Western Balkans by mainstreaming gender into defence policies and institutions, thus contributing to gender-responsive human security.

### **Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre-Centre for Security Cooperation**

In 2021, the Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre-Centre for Security Cooperation (RACVIAC) organized eight activities, including lectures and presentations, discussions, exchanges of experience and table-top exercises. More than 370 experts and participants took part.<sup>116</sup>

#### *Activities related to weapons of mass destruction*

The RACVIAC Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Network<sup>117</sup> comprised nine States during the year: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kosovo,<sup>118</sup> Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Romania and Serbia. Croatia played a mentoring role in the Network’s first phase, which was focused on the design, review and adoption of strategies for countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. As at the end of 2021, seven countries and one participant in the Network had adopted comprehensive national strategies in that regard. Two of the countries were also completing relevant staffing processes, bringing new visibility to the subregion’s efforts to combat threats from weapons of

mass destruction. Meanwhile, participants in the Network’s second phase continued relevant cooperation in the following four areas: development of a regional countering risk atlas, led by North Macedonia; creation of a common approach to bio-security and the malicious use of life sciences, led by Romania; establishing a regional dual-use and emerging technologies hub, led by Croatia, Montenegro and Kosovo; and the annual trends assessment conference, led by Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In 2021, RACVIAC organized three activities for the Network. The first one was held in a hybrid format, the second one was held online, and the third was an in-person event.

The first activity, a workshop entitled “[Raising awareness of the integrity of academic research in connection with dual-use items with focus on intangible technology](#)”, took place in Zagreb on 25 February. Held at the University of Zagreb’s Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing, the workshop brought together 40 academic researchers and other stakeholders from 11 countries in the region, as well as representatives of the European Commission. Participants who could not attend in person owing to pandemic-related restrictions followed the event online.

The Network’s second activity was an [online symposium](#), held from 30 March to 1 April, to discuss and consider case studies from three<sup>119</sup> of the Network’s four “Phase II” projects. The activity gathered more than 50 virtual participants from 14 countries, and its outcomes included several bilateral meetings on the Network’s strategies and action plans.

From 27 to 29 September, RACVIAC led a [multinational table-top exercise](#) in Zagreb as the Network’s first fully in-person activity in 18 months. Organized in partnership with the Ruđer Bošković Institute, the activity was intended to familiarize scientists with ways in which their research could unintentionally facilitate the spread of weapons of mass destruction. The activity drew more than 40 participants from 11 countries, resulting in progress on all four “Phase II” projects of the Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Network.

Additionally, RACVIAC and OPCW held their annual [workshop on the Chemical Weapons Convention](#). Building on their cooperation since 2004 to convene such events, the organizers aimed to provide a broad overview of the Convention and its implementation while also discussing related issues. Their workshop on 26 February attracted 31 participants from 12 countries and organizations.

RACVIAC also held an online workshop to provide a wide-ranging introduction to the Biological Weapons Convention, including key issues and recent developments. That first recent endeavour by RACVIAC related to the Convention was attended by 58 participants and presenters from 12 different countries and organizations in and beyond the region.

<sup>116</sup> The Centre was established in 2000 as a regionally owned entity with diplomatic status under the Vienna Convention of 1961. Since then, it has been promoting peace and stability in South-East Europe. Its programme is structured around four main areas: cooperative security environment; countering weapons of mass destruction; countering transnational security threats; and security sector governance. As at the end of 2021, it had nine members (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Turkey), as well as 14 associate members and 6 observers.

<sup>117</sup> The Centre formed its Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Network in 2015 at the request of its members. Its permanent partners included the United States European Command, the United States Defense Threat Reduction Agency, the International Counterproliferation Program and the Proliferation Security Initiative. The Network also operated in cooperation with national and international entities, including the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United States Department of Energy and the European Space Agency.

<sup>118</sup> Since October 2014, Kosovo has been invited to participate in all activities and meetings of the Centre, on a permanent basis, at all levels and on equal terms.

<sup>119</sup> Development of a regional countering risk atlas; creation of a common approach to bio-security and the malicious use of life sciences; and establishing a regional dual-use and emerging technologies hub.

*Activities related to conventional arms control*

RACVIAC held an [orientation course](#) on the Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control (Dayton Agreement, article IV) from 3 to 6 November, providing instruction for inspectors and escorts further to the Agreement while helping to foster mutual trust, confidence and transparency in inspections. As the only organization to offer such orientation, RACVIAC had conducted 25 such courses since 2000, reaching more than 500 military officers. The 2021 iteration of the course was attended by 35 participants, lecturers, speakers and RACVIAC staff from 12 States and one additional entity.<sup>120</sup>

RACVIAC also held a [course on compliance and verification activities](#) under the Vienna Document 2011 on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures, having co-organized such training sessions with Hungary on a roughly biennial basis. Its 2021 iteration, held in Budapest and Kecskemét, Hungary, in November, was aimed at providing a comprehensive analysis of the theoretical and practical aspects of the Vienna Document's implementation. The course was attended by 27 participants from the South-East Europe region, including senior and junior military officials, civilians dealing with related issues, and seven students from the National University of Public Service.

*Activities related to peace, security and disarmament*

RACVIAC held the “Arms Control Symposium and Dayton Agreement Twenty-Fifth Celebration Event” in an online format on 14 and 15 July, briefing participants on both new developments related to arms control and fresh perspectives on confidence-building measures in and beyond Europe. The event was also organized to highlight emerging trends; the latest developments concerning new weapon types; key challenges in implementing arms control treaties; and the importance of the Dayton Agreement, including its contributions to the security and stability of South-East Europe. In 2021, the Symposium brought together 52 national representatives, as well as experts and scholars possessing a wide range of expertise, coming from the countries and international organizations in the region and beyond.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>120</sup> Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republic of Korea, Serbia, Slovenia, United States and OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

<sup>121</sup> Participants came from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Turkey, the United States and SEESAC. The lecturers were from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia. The presenters included representatives of the following entities: Benelux Arms Control Agency; Bundeswehr Verification Centre; Center for Strategic and Defence Studies of Hungary's University of Public Service; Observatory on Security and Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defence of Italy; OSCE; United States Defense Threat Reduction Agency; and SEESAC.

**Middle East****League of Arab States**

In 2021, the League of Arab States continued activities to coordinate and develop a unified regional and international position among its 22 member States on issues related to disarmament and arms control. Owing to restrictions from the pandemic, the League and its partners limited or postponed several activities previously scheduled for 2021.

*Activities related to weapons of mass destruction*

Based on recommendations by the Arab Senior Officials Committee in Charge of Nuclear Weapons and other issues related to weapons of mass destruction, the League's Ministerial Council adopted resolution 8620 of 3 March and resolution 8686 of 9 September, both entitled “Establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East”. By those resolutions, the Council addressed preparations for the tenth Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, Arab League coordination during the sixty-fifth IAEA General Conference, preparations for the second session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, and dangers posed by the nuclear reactor of the Islamic Republic of Iran at Bushehr.

In addition to participating in the sixty-fifth IAEA General Conference and the second Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, the League organized a hybrid conference entitled “Disarmament and Nuclear Non-proliferation in the Middle East: Developments and Challenges in Light of Preparations for the Tenth Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference”. Held at the League's headquarters in Cairo on 25 June, the event was attended by 57 representatives of 17 Arab States, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, IAEA, the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and various non-governmental organizations. The United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs addressed the meeting in a pre-recorded [video message](#).

*Activities related to conventional arms*

In the framework of cooperation between the League of Arab States and the United Nations, a senior official of the League undertook a study visit to New York from 29 November and 3 December with a view to developing methods of effective cooperation between their secretariats on disarmament and arms control issues.

In 2021, the League of Arab States and the European Union launched Phase 2 of the joint project “Combating the Illicit Trade in and Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Member States of the League of Arab States” for the period 2021–2024. INTERPOL, Small Arms Survey and the World Customs Organization supported the initiative as implementing partners.

### United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

In 2021, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime observed the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Firearms Protocol to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime. Acting through its Global Firearms Programme, whose tenth anniversary was marked during the year, the Office organized several awareness-raising activities through which it reaffirmed calls for the Protocol's universal ratification and effective implementation. In addition, the Office continued to provide technical assistance to countries in Eastern and South-East Europe, Central Asia, Latin America, and West and Central Africa, contributing towards Target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals on reducing illicit arms flows.

The Office's work during the year included launching a project to support the implementation of the criminal justice component of the [Caribbean Firearms Roadmap](#). In that regard, it conducted assessment missions in Barbados, Guyana, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago to assess the institutional, legislative and regulatory frameworks of those countries and to identify areas in need of assistance.

The Office continued to work with the Office of Counter-Terrorism to implement a joint project on the connections between terrorism, organized crime and trafficking in small arms and light weapons in Central Asia. The partners engaged with more than 320 national experts from beneficiary States at 17 events in the project's first phase, which concluded on 31 December. They planned to initiate the next phase of the project on 1 January 2022, with 15 activities planned over several months.

As part of its legal and policy activities in 2021, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime conducted tailored legislative assessments, gap analyses and legislative and drafting workshops, helping to strengthen legal frameworks in 13 States.<sup>122</sup> Burkina Faso and Mali adopted legislation on firearms and other weapons that was developed with support from the Office.

In the context of growing concern over the role of illicit firearms in transnational organized crime and armed conflict, the Office continued to assist Member States in implementing preventive and security measures envisaged in the Firearms Protocol and other relevant instruments. It also continued to develop a software-based Integrated Firearms Registry System to help States track firearms throughout their life cycle, in line with commitments made under the Firearms Protocol, the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the International Tracing Instrument, as well as other international and regional arrangements. In addition, the Office provided firearms-marking machines and training to the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the Central African Republic and Chad, building the capacity of those countries to mark and maintain records of firearms in a manner consistent with the above-mentioned instruments.

<sup>122</sup> Albania, Barbados, Cameroon, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Guyana, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tajikistan and Ukraine.

To strengthen national capacities for implementing the Firearms Protocol, the Office continued to train national authorities in detecting, investigating, prosecuting and adjudicating cases of firearms trafficking, reaching practitioners in 26 States<sup>123</sup> during the year. In Central Asia, the Office focused its support on developing the operational and technical capacities of national authorities to address the arms-crime-terrorism nexus. Meanwhile, it provided equipment to the investigative unit for terrorism and organized crime of the Niger to improve the Government's investigation and prosecution of firearms-related cases.

The Office also continued to support operations against firearms trafficking to improve relevant international cooperation, as well as the prosecution and adjudication of cases involving such weapons. In Africa, it cooperated with the [Group of Five for the Sahel](#) to organize "Operation KAFO III", aimed both at intercepting illicit firearms, ammunition and explosives, and disrupting the trafficking networks used to supply terrorists across West and Central Africa and the Sahel. In the operation, more than 850 officers from Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Chad, Guinea, Mali, the Niger and Senegal checked more than 20,000 individuals, 5,000 vehicles, 800 containers, 9,000 documents and goods against international criminal databases; arrested several suspected terrorists and traffickers; and seized 594 firearms, 135 kg of explosives and 1,709 sticks of dynamite intended for use by terrorist groups. In South America, the Office partnered with INTERPOL to target firearms smugglers in "Operation Trigger VI", leading to the arrest of almost 4,000 suspects across the 13 South American countries,<sup>124</sup> and the recovery of 200,000 illicit firearms, parts, components, ammunition and explosives. Both exercises yielded new insights into trends, dynamics and methods of operation in firearms trafficking, as well as linkages to other forms of crime. Furthermore, the Office initiated work with national authorities in Africa and South America to support the investigation and prosecution of cases of firearms trafficking, in some instances through direct mentoring support.

Meanwhile, the Office continued to promote regular exchanges between practitioners of firearms control and criminal justice. In 2021, it organized two regional meetings in Panama for criminal justice experts from Latin America and the Caribbean. By giving participants a platform to share, discuss and analyse cases of firearms trafficking and related offences, the meetings helped to foster cooperation, facilitate the exchange of best practices and lessons learned, support peer-to-peer learning, and build trust among relevant regional authorities. Furthermore, the shared cases were expected to be included in a global digest on illicit firearms cases under development by the Office.

<sup>123</sup> Barbados, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Niger, Paraguay, Saint Lucia, Senegal, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

<sup>124</sup> Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, France, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

In the context of its initiative to monitor illicit arms flows, the Office launched its fourth campaign to collect data on seized and trafficked firearms and associated items. To link such data collection with concrete investigative efforts, the Office trained practitioners in Paraguay and Ukraine in the use of its [guiding templates](#) for firearms-related investigations. Furthermore, the Office contributed data collected through its [illicit arms flows questionnaire](#) towards monitoring global progress under Indicator 16.4.2<sup>125</sup> of the Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, the Office had organized multiple national-level workshops to support Member States in completing the questionnaire.

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<sup>125</sup> Indicator 16.4.2: Proportion of seized, found or surrendered arms whose illicit origin or context has been traced or established by a competent authority in line with international instruments.



CHAPTER V

**EMERGING,  
CROSS-CUTTING  
AND OTHER ISSUES**



*Building a better understanding of the impact of emerging technologies on international peace and security has become a key requisite for ensuring this Organization is fit to meet the challenges of the future.*

IZUMI NAKAMITSU, HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS<sup>1</sup>

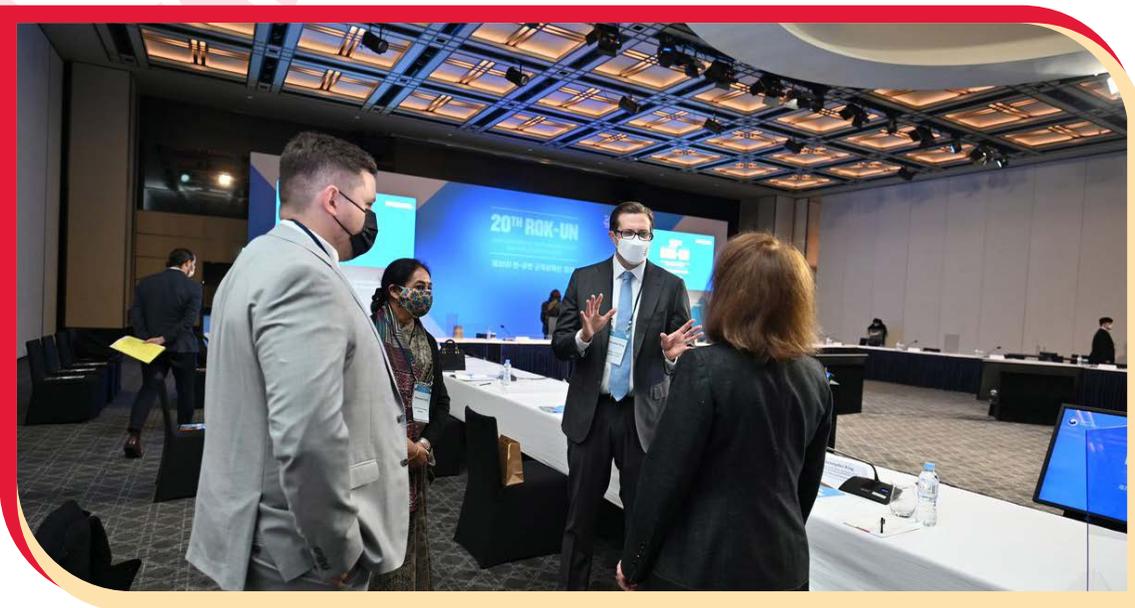
## CHAPTER V

### Emerging, cross-cutting and other issues

#### Developments and trends, 2021

DESPITE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC'S CONTINUED IMPACT on multilateral disarmament and arms control processes throughout 2021, the international community achieved important progress during the year on several emerging challenges related to developments in science and technology and their implications for international peace and security.

Regarding outer space, the General Assembly decided in December to establish a new open-ended working group in 2022 to develop recommendations on, inter alia, norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours (76/77). That mandate followed the issuance in July of a substantive report of the Secretary-General, developed pursuant to resolution 75/36. The United Nations Disarmament Commission, which had adopted an agenda item on outer space for consideration during its 2018–2020 cycle,<sup>2</sup> was again unable to convene its substantive session owing to unresolved procedural issues relating to the issuance of visas for certain delegations. (For more information on the Disarmament Commission, see chap. VII.)



United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs personnel conversing with representatives of non-governmental organizations and think tanks on the margins of the twentieth United Nations–Republic of Korea Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-proliferation Issues, held in Seoul in November 2021.

<sup>1</sup> [Remarks](#) (delivered virtually) to the Security Council at its Arria-formula meeting on “The Impact of Emerging Technologies on International Peace and Security”, 17 May 2021.

<sup>2</sup> In 2018, the United Nations Disarmament Commission adopted the following item for consideration during its 2018–2020 cycle: preparation of recommendations to promote the practical implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities to prevent an arms race in outer space (in accordance with the recommendations contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities (A/68/189)). For more information on the Commission's 2018 session, see the [website](#) of the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

On information and communications in the context of international security, the two previously established intergovernmental processes in that field successfully concluded their respective work with the adoption of consensus reports.<sup>3</sup> A new open-ended working group commenced its work in 2021 under a five-year mandate, holding its organizational session in June and its first substantive session in December. In the General Assembly, the Russian Federation and the United States tabled a joint resolution on the relevant agenda item (76/19), returning to a single consensus text on the subject.

On autonomous weapons systems, the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems agreed only on annexing to its report the draft conclusions and recommendations<sup>4</sup> submitted by the Chair and discussed by the Group, on which no consensus was reached. The sixth Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons included language in its declaration and adopted a new mandate for the group to resume work in 2022.<sup>5</sup> (For more information, see chap. III.)

## Emerging issues

### Current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts

In 2021, the Office for Disarmament Affairs prepared the fourth report<sup>6</sup> of the Secretary-General on current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts. As with the third edition, the Office published the report in both parliamentary and [graphically enhanced](#) versions to facilitate outreach. In the report, the Secretary-General addressed scientific and technological developments in artificial intelligence and autonomous systems, digital technologies, biology and chemistry, aerospace technologies, electromagnetic technologies, and materials technologies. The new report also included an analysis of the implications of emerging technologies for nuclear risks and human rights.

In the conclusions of the report, the Secretary-General notably recognized the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement in addressing emerging challenges and reaffirmed his commitment to facilitating such engagement in various contexts.<sup>7</sup> As in previous years, he also encouraged States to integrate reviews of developments in

science and technology into processes for reviewing the operation of disarmament treaties and within all relevant United Nations disarmament bodies.

### Outer space

Pursuant to resolution [75/36](#) on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours, the Office for Disarmament Affairs led the drafting of a substantive report<sup>8</sup> of the Secretary-General in close collaboration with the Office for Outer Space Affairs. To prepare for the report, the partners convened three webinars, on 17, 19 and 21 May, to support engagement between Member States on views they had expressed on the issues identified in resolution [75/36](#),<sup>9</sup> provide an opportunity for Member States that had not submitted views to the Secretary-General to engage on those issues and to make their views known, and facilitate engagement by multiple stakeholders from the broader outer space policy community, including academia, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

Each webinar drew about 200 participants and was organized in five sessions. In the first session, non-governmental organizations provided an overview of trends in the nature of threats to space systems. In the second session, representatives of States with new and emerging space programmes delivered presentations on their aspirations and threat perceptions. In the third session, representatives from commercial satellite operators and industry associations shared their perceptions of threats emanating from States. In the fourth session, private companies and others involved in space situational awareness presented current capabilities for remotely detecting, characterizing and analysing outer space activities. The fifth session provided an opportunity for Member States to highlight their national submissions for the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General.

In his report, the Secretary-General summarized elements from the submissions of Member States without prejudice to their positions. The replies received from Member States<sup>10</sup> by 3 May 2021 were published as an annex to the report. All other replies from States,<sup>11</sup> as well as those received from other entities and non-governmental organizations,<sup>12</sup> were published on the [website](#) of the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

<sup>8</sup> [A/76/77](#).

<sup>9</sup> General Assembly resolution [75/36](#) of 7 December 2020, operative paras. 5–6.

<sup>10</sup> Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States and the European Union. See [A/76/77](#), annex.

<sup>11</sup> Chile, Indonesia, New Zealand, Romania and Ukraine. For more information, see the [website](#) of the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

<sup>12</sup> United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), International Committee of the Red Cross, Aerospace Corporation (Center for Space Policy and Strategy), Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Observer Research Foundation, Project Ploughshares, Peaceful Use of Lasers in Outer Space Initiative, RAND Corporation and Secure World Foundation.

<sup>3</sup> Reports of the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security ([A/76/135](#)) and the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security ([A/75/816](#)).

<sup>4</sup> See [CCW/GGE.1/2021/3](#), annex III.

<sup>5</sup> Final Document of the sixth Review Conference ([CCW/CONF.VI/11](#)).

<sup>6</sup> [A/76/182](#).

<sup>7</sup> The Secretary-General previously made that commitment in his Agenda for Disarmament, *Securing Our Common Future*, launched in 2018.

Pursuant to the mandate contained in resolution 75/36, the substantive report contained views on the following: (a) existing and potential threats and security risks to space systems, including those arising from actions, activities or systems in outer space or on Earth; (b) a characterization of actions and activities that could be considered responsible, irresponsible or threatening and their potential impact on international security; and (c) ideas on the further development and implementation of norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours and on the reduction of the risks of misunderstanding and miscalculations regarding outer space.

In the final section of the report,<sup>13</sup> the Secretary-General observed that “outer space is increasingly devolving into an arena for strategic competition. Terrestrial geopolitical rivalries are being reproduced in Earth orbit and beyond. This increases the risk that armed conflict could one day be extended into or even be initiated in outer space. These trends are accompanied by the growing capacity of several States to attack space systems with a variety of means, both from space and from the Earth. When it comes to many such counter-space concepts, we still lack a common understanding of the impact and consequences of their use.”

The Secretary-General further observed that “the normative and legal framework governing outer space is not sufficiently developed to prevent these trends, including any arms race, or to protect against their undesirable consequences. Possible solutions to outer space security can involve a combination of binding and voluntary norms, rules and principles.” He recommended that “Member States study the ideas contained in the present report and decide on an inclusive process to take these issues forward at the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly”.

At the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly First Committee, the United Kingdom introduced a follow-on draft resolution<sup>14</sup> aimed, inter alia, at welcoming the substantive report of the Secretary-General and establishing an open-ended working group beginning in 2022 with the following mandates: (a) to take stock of the existing international legal and other normative frameworks concerning threats arising from State behaviours regarding outer space; (b) to consider current and future threats by States to space systems, and actions, activities and omissions that could be considered irresponsible; (c) to make recommendations on possible norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours relating to threats by States to space systems, including, as appropriate, how they would contribute to the negotiation of legally binding instruments, including on the prevention of an arms race in outer space; and (d) to submit a report to the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session. The First Committee adopted the draft resolution by a vote of 163 to 8, with 8 abstentions.<sup>15</sup> On 24 December, the General Assembly adopted the draft as resolution 76/231 by a vote of 150 to 8, with 7 abstentions.

The Assembly also acted on several recurring resolutions on outer space. In that regard, it adopted its resolution entitled “Prevention of an arms race in outer

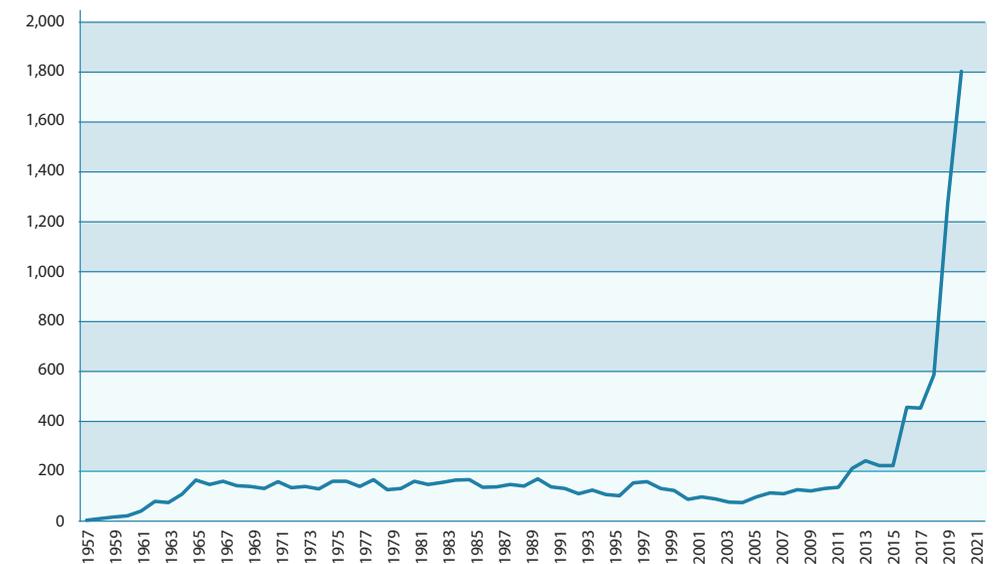
space” (76/22) without a vote for the first time.<sup>16</sup> Along similar lines, it adopted the resolution entitled “Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities” (76/55) without a vote for the first time since its seventy-second session. The resolution entitled “No first placement of weapons in outer space” (76/23) was adopted by a vote of 130 to 35, with 20 abstentions.

The General Assembly also adopted a substantive resolution on the sub-item “Further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space” (76/230), the first since a Group of Governmental Experts concluded its work in 2019.<sup>17</sup> In the resolution, the Assembly, inter alia, declared that “the exclusion of outer space from the sphere of the arms race and the preservation of outer space for peaceful purposes should become a mandatory norm of State policy and a generally recognized international obligation”. The Assembly also called upon all States,

<sup>16</sup> The General Assembly adopted the first such measure as resolution 36/97 C of 9 December 1981.

<sup>17</sup> The previous Group of Governmental Experts on Further Practical Measures for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space was convened pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/250 of 24 December 2017. It prepared a procedural report that was issued as document A/74/77.

### Number of space objects registered with the United Nations



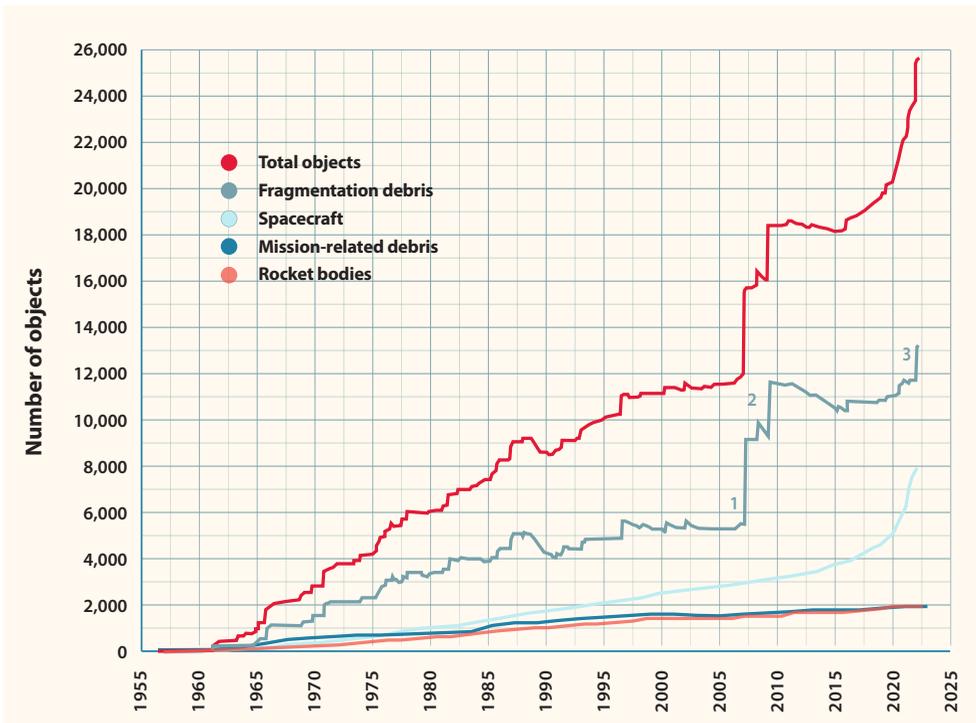
Total number of orbiting items by year as reflected in the “[Online Index of Objects Launched into Outer Space](#)”, maintained by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs.

<sup>13</sup> A/76/77.

<sup>14</sup> A/C.1/76/L.52.

<sup>15</sup> Separate votes were taken on operative paragraphs 3, 5 (a), 5 (b) and 5 (c).

## Number of objects in low Earth orbit



Since the launch of the first satellite in 1957, the number of objects in low Earth orbit has grown to nearly 26,000 by the end of 2021. Destructive tests of anti-satellite weapons and collisions between space objects can cause significant increases in the amount of fragmentation debris. The deployment of mega-constellations is contributing to the accelerating increase in the total number of functional satellites.

and, above all, those with major space capabilities, to (a) “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”, and (b) “seek through negotiations the early elaboration of appropriate reliably verifiable legally binding multilateral agreements”. The Assembly adopted the resolution by a vote of 130 to 35, with 20 abstentions.

### Information technology and international security

In 2021, the successful conclusion of two intergovernmental processes and the commencement of a new one marked a high point in multilateral efforts to ensure a safe, secure and peaceful environment with respect to information and communications technologies. Acting in parallel, both the Open-ended Working

Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security and the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security reached consensus on substantive final reports.<sup>18</sup>

In October, States maintained positive momentum within the General Assembly First Committee by returning to a single, consensus draft resolution<sup>19</sup> in the field of information technology and international security. Entitled “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”, the draft was tabled jointly by the Russian Federation and the United States, which had introduced competing resolutions in 2018 that resulted in the establishment of parallel intergovernmental processes. States universally welcomed a return to a single resolution and the launch of a new open-ended working group.

The General Assembly adopted the consensus text on 8 December as resolution 76/19. In the resolution, the Assembly welcomed the work of both the Open-ended Working Group and the Group of Governmental Experts, and it called upon States to be guided in their use of information and communications technologies by the final reports of both processes. In that regard, countries agreed to be guided in their use of information and communications technologies by a range of voluntary, non-binding norms of responsible State behaviour,<sup>20</sup> as well as by concrete sets of confidence- and capacity-building measures.<sup>21</sup> Governments also affirmed that international law, in particular the Charter of the United Nations, was applicable and essential to maintaining peace, security and stability with respect to information and communications technologies.

Multilateral exchanges on the peace and security challenges arising from information and communications technologies continued in the framework of a second Open-ended Working Group, which began its work in December and was mandated to meet regularly through 2025. Established by General Assembly resolution 75/240, the Open-ended Working Group on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies held the first of 11 planned substantive sessions from 13 to 17 December in an in-person format at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

<sup>18</sup> A/76/135 and A/75/816.

<sup>19</sup> A/C.1/76/L.13.

<sup>20</sup> Through three consensus reports (issued in 2010 (A/65/201), 2013 (A/68/98) and 2015 (A/70/174)), earlier Groups of Governmental Experts had cumulatively recommended 11 voluntary, non-binding norms of responsible State behaviour and recognized that additional norms could be developed over time. The norms are intended to, inter alia, ensure cooperation and information exchange, prevent escalation including because of misattribution of responsibility for an incident involving information and communications technologies, uphold human rights and prevent attacks on critical infrastructure.

<sup>21</sup> A/75/816, annex I, paras. 41–67.

### **Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security**

The Open-Ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, established by General Assembly resolution 73/27, continued its work in 2021 with Jürg Lauber (Switzerland) as Chair. Its third and final substantive session was held from 8 to 12 March at United Nations Headquarters in New York in a hybrid format owing to ongoing limitations on meetings resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In early 2021, the Chair circulated a zero draft<sup>22</sup> of the Group's report, providing the basis for a round of virtual informal discussions in February.<sup>23</sup> Based on the feedback received from those consultations, a first draft<sup>24</sup> of the report was prepared in advance of the third and final substantive session in March. At the third session, delegations successfully reached an agreement on a substantive report<sup>25</sup> that was submitted to the General Assembly on 12 March. The General Assembly subsequently endorsed the final report on 28 April through its decision 75/564.<sup>26</sup>

The final report of the Working Group consisted of two parts: a set of agreed conclusions and recommendations and a Chair's summary reflecting the broader discussions among Member States. In the former, the Group tackled six priority issues: existing and potential threats; rules, norms and principles for responsible State behaviour; international law; confidence-building measures; capacity-building; and regular institutional dialogue.

States concluded that they were increasingly concerned about the implications of the malicious use of information and communications technologies for the maintenance of international peace and security, and subsequently for human rights and development. In particular, States expressed concern regarding the development of information and communications technology capabilities for purposes that undermined international peace and security.

<sup>22</sup> A/AC.290/2021/L.2.

<sup>23</sup> The following States provided statements or written comments in response to the zero draft: Armenia, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Czechia, Egypt, Estonia, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Netherlands, New Zealand, Philippines, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Zimbabwe. In addition, an informal multi-stakeholder consultative meeting was held on 25 February, resulting in the adoption of an [outcome report](#). For the written contributions from States, as well as from regional, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, see United Nations, Office for Disarmament Affairs, "[Open-ended Working Group](#)" (Statements / contributions by Member States on the Zero and First (1st) draft).

<sup>24</sup> United Nations, Office for Disarmament Affairs, "[Substantive report \[first draft\]](#)", 1 March 2021.

<sup>25</sup> A/75/816.

<sup>26</sup> A/75/49 (vol. III), p. 313.

In its agreed conclusions and recommendations, the Working Group identified various threats to the information and communications technology environment, such as attacks on health-care facilities. It also recognized the potentially devastating humanitarian consequences of cyberattacks, the importance of the general availability and integrity of the Internet, and the impact of cyberattacks in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. States strongly reaffirmed the applicability of international law, in particular the Charter of the United Nations, and called for practical measures, such as designating national points of contact, as first steps for building confidence. Additionally, the Working Group recognized the need for regular institutional dialogue on information and communications technologies in the context of international security to take place under the auspices of the United Nations.

### **Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security**

The Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security, established in 2018 by General Assembly resolution 73/266,<sup>27</sup> completed its work in 2021. Composed of experts appointed from 25 States and chaired by Guilherme de Aguiar Patriota (Brazil), the Group held its third and fourth sessions online in April and May,<sup>28</sup> concluding with the adoption of a substantive final report.<sup>29</sup>

Between its sessions, the Group of Governmental Experts continued to accomplish substantive work in a series of virtual informal consultations. The second round of informal consultations was held online in May and was open to all Member States, building on an earlier round that the Chair had convened in December 2019.

As the sixth expert group to meet on the topic of information and communications technologies in the context of international security, the Group of Governmental Experts built on the cumulative work of its predecessors by reaffirming consensus assessments and recommendations contained in the final reports from 2010, 2013 and 2015.<sup>30</sup> Its exchanges were centred around a normative framework for addressing existing and emerging cyber threats and the application

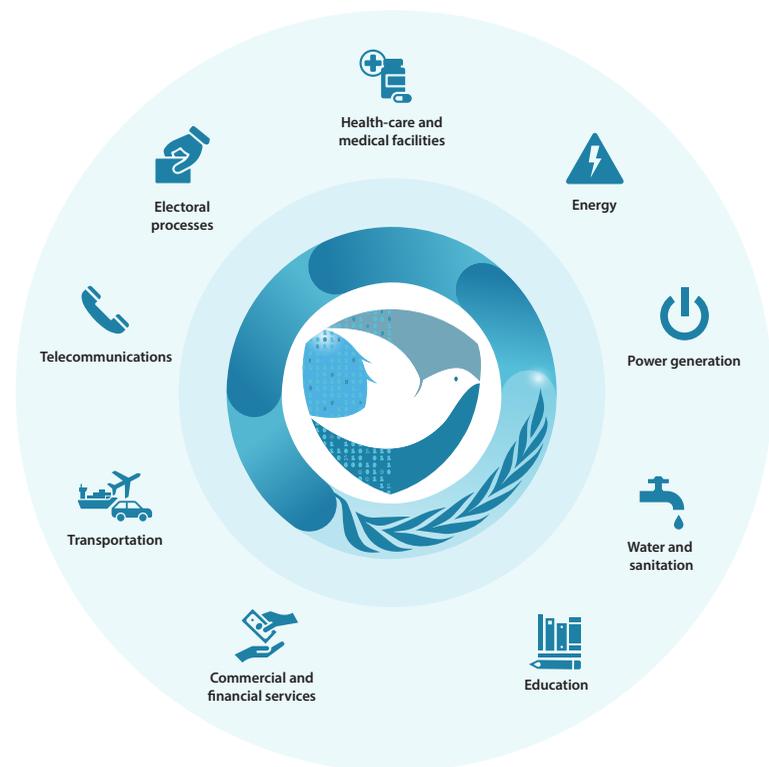
<sup>27</sup> By the resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, with the assistance of a Group of Governmental Experts, to continue to study, with a view to promoting common understandings and effective implementation, possible cooperative measures to address existing and potential threats in the sphere of information security, including norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviour of States, confidence-building measures and capacity-building, as well as how international law applied to the use of information and communications technologies by States.

<sup>28</sup> The third session of the Group had originally been scheduled to take place from 17 to 21 August 2020. The session could not take place as scheduled, however, owing to ongoing interruptions to air travel and in-person meetings resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, by its decision 75/551, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to convene the Group's third and fourth sessions before the end of May 2021.

<sup>29</sup> A/76/135.

<sup>30</sup> A/65/201, A/68/98 and A/70/174.

### Critical infrastructure sectors that provide essential services to the public



Using information and communications technologies to intentionally damage or impair the use and operation of critical infrastructure providing services to the public can have cascading domestic, regional and global effects. Such activities pose an elevated risk of harm to the population and can be escalatory.

The COVID-19 pandemic has heightened awareness of the critical importance of protecting health-care and medical infrastructure and facilities from malicious activity using information and communications technologies.

Against this backdrop, States have endorsed concrete norms of responsible State behaviour that support the protection of critical infrastructure, including the following:

A State should not conduct or knowingly support ICT activity contrary to its obligations under international law that intentionally damages critical infrastructure or otherwise impairs the use and operation of critical infrastructure to provide services to the public.

Examples of critical infrastructure sectors that provide essential services to the public are shown in this graphic (see also [A/76/135](#), para. 45).

of international law in the use of information and communications technologies by States. In that regard, the Group continued to study voluntary, non-binding norms of responsible State behaviour, confidence-building measures and capacity-building. As per its mandate, the Group also sought to provide an additional layer of understanding and to expand a commonality of views regarding the assessments and recommendations contained in previous expert group reports.

In its final report,<sup>31</sup> the Group provided additional information on 11 norms of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace first developed in 2015. The new information, which was intended to facilitate greater understanding of the value of the norms and a more consistent interpretation of them, included agreed guidance on implementing the norms and suggestions for strengthening related institutional arrangements, particularly at the national and regional levels. In providing the additional details, the Group underlined linkages between different substantive elements of its mandate and highlighted the importance of engaging other actors in States' efforts to implement that framework, namely the private sector, civil society, academia and the technical community.

The report also contained agreements on, inter alia, the following aspects: an updated assessment of threats from information and communications technologies to international peace and security; references to the COVID-19 pandemic and health; the challenging issue of attribution of malicious acts involving such technologies; critical infrastructure of special concern; international humanitarian law and the application of international law to the use of such technologies by States; the protection of supply chain integrity by balanced means; confidence-building and transparency measures; cooperation at the political, legal and technical levels; capacity-building; and international development cooperation.

Additionally, in accordance with the Group's mandate, participating governmental experts provided input to an official compendium<sup>32</sup> of voluntary national contributions about how international law applies to the use of information and communications technologies by States.

#### **Open-ended Working Group on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies, 2021–2025**

The first substantive session of the Open-ended Working Group on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies, 2021–2025, took place in New York from 13 to 17 December in a fully in-person format. Before the first session, Burhan Gafoor (Singapore) was elected Chair by acclamation at an organizational session held on 1 and 2 June.

During the first substantive session, the Working Group held 10 meetings on the substantive issues identified in its mandate.<sup>33</sup> By General Assembly resolution

<sup>31</sup> [A/70/174](#).

<sup>32</sup> [A/76/136](#).

<sup>33</sup> Three of the 10 meetings were dedicated to a general exchange of views.

75/240, that mandate had three primary substantive components: (a) to further develop the rules, norms, and principles of responsible behaviour of States; (b) to consider initiatives of States to ensure security in the use of information and communications technologies; and (c) to study and seek a common understanding of existing and potential threats in the sphere of information security, including data security, and possible cooperative measures to prevent and counter such threats. The Working Group was also tasked to study and seek common understanding on how international law applies to the use of information and communications technologies by States and to consider confidence-building and capacity-building measures.

Participants delivered 218 statements<sup>34</sup> on behalf of 83 delegations.<sup>35</sup> The session fell short of achieving gender parity among its speakers, with women delivering only one third of the statements.

The Working Group opened the session by hearing [remarks](#) from the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, as well as pre-recorded messages from the Chairs of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security and the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security.<sup>36</sup> The Chair of the 2021–2025 Working Group then delivered [remarks](#) in which he reflected on the forthcoming proceedings, emphasizing the Group’s long-term mandate and its open, transparent and democratic nature. The Chair further underscored the need to build upon the successes of the previous Open-ended Working Group and the six Groups of Governmental Experts.

<sup>34</sup> See “Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies, First substantive session (13–17 Dec 2021)” ([statements](#)), United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs Meetings Place.

<sup>35</sup> Statements were delivered by or on behalf of the following: Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Cuba, Czechia, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Caribbean Community, European Union, International Committee of the Red Cross, Non-Aligned Movement, Nordic Countries and Organization of American States. For written statements, see “[Open-Ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021–2025](#)”, Journal of the United Nations (eStatements), 14–17 December 2021. For the video recording of all statements, see “[Open-ended working group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021–2025 – First substantive session](#)”, streamed live on United Nations Web TV from 14 to 17 December 2021.

<sup>36</sup> For the video recording of the statements of the Chairs of earlier processes, see “[1st plenary meeting, Open-ended working group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021–2025 – First substantive session](#)” (28:50 and 40:38), United Nations Web TV, 13 December 2021.

The Working Group completed its substantive discussions in accordance with its provisional programme of work,<sup>37</sup> but it was unable to reach an agreement on the matter of participation by non-governmental stakeholders. In that regard, many States called for an extension of modalities from the previous Open-ended Working Group, whereby non-governmental organizations not in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council could participate on a non-objection basis. Other States called for greater transparency around any objections made to the participation of organizations. Following intensive informal consultations on the matter throughout the week, the Chair announced that informal consultations would continue after the session in order to find a solution by the end of January 2022. The aim was to allow sufficient time for the accreditation of non-governmental stakeholders to participate in the Working Group’s second substantive session, scheduled for March 2022.

### Missile-related issues

The International Institute for Strategic Studies held the third meeting of its [Missile Dialogue Initiative](#) from 4 to 5 September in Manama. Established in 2019 in partnership with Germany, the Initiative had the aim of strengthening international discussion and promoting a high-level exchange of views on missile technologies and related international security dynamics.

Building on a keynote address<sup>38</sup> that the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs had delivered at the Initiative’s previous meeting, staff of the Office for Disarmament Affairs gave a presentation on how confidence-building measures developed within the United Nations could be adapted to address regional missile concerns. The meeting participants discussed the value of seeking engagement on missile controls at a technical level, such as through an expert group mandated by the General Assembly, given the possibility that such engagement could inform discussions at the political level.

### Cross-cutting issues

#### Relationship between disarmament and development

Throughout 2021, calls for States to shift resources away from military activities and towards socioeconomic development programmes gained further urgency in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The focus on policy and operational aspects of the relationship between disarmament and development also grew in intensity, including within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

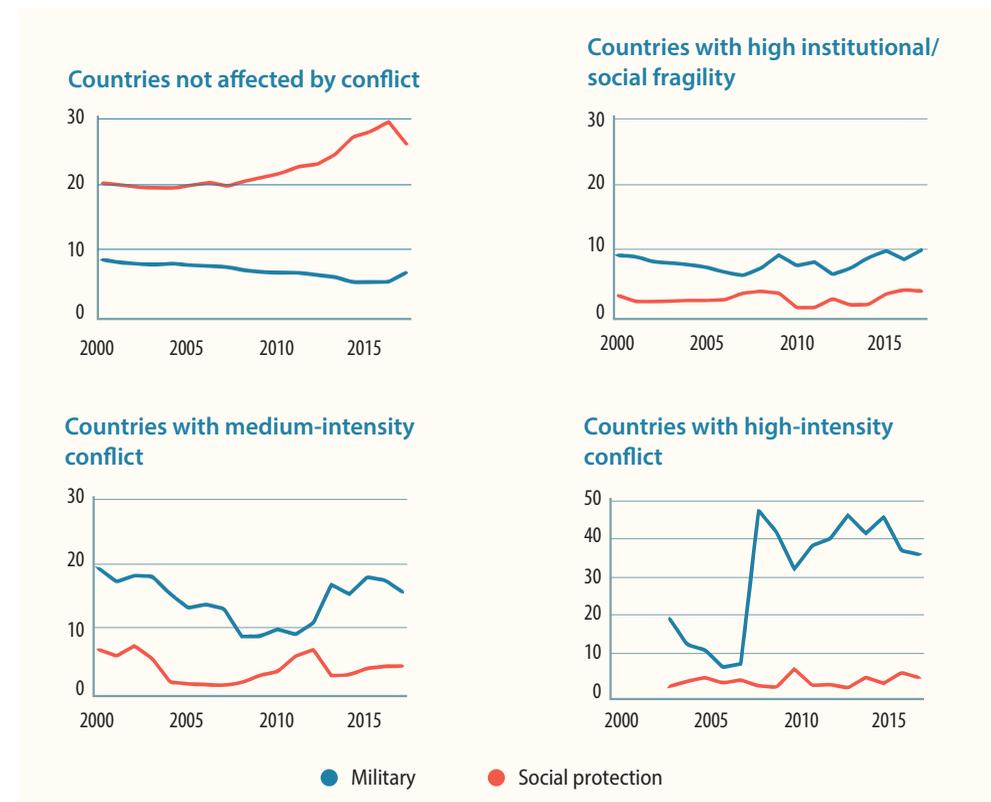
By its annual resolution on the relationship between disarmament and development (76/37), tabled by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement,

<sup>37</sup> [A/AC.292/2021/2](#).

<sup>38</sup> [Keynote address](#) (delivered virtually) at the second meeting of the Missile Dialogue Initiative, 7 September 2020.

## Comparing military and human security spending

### Percentage of government spending on the military versus social protection



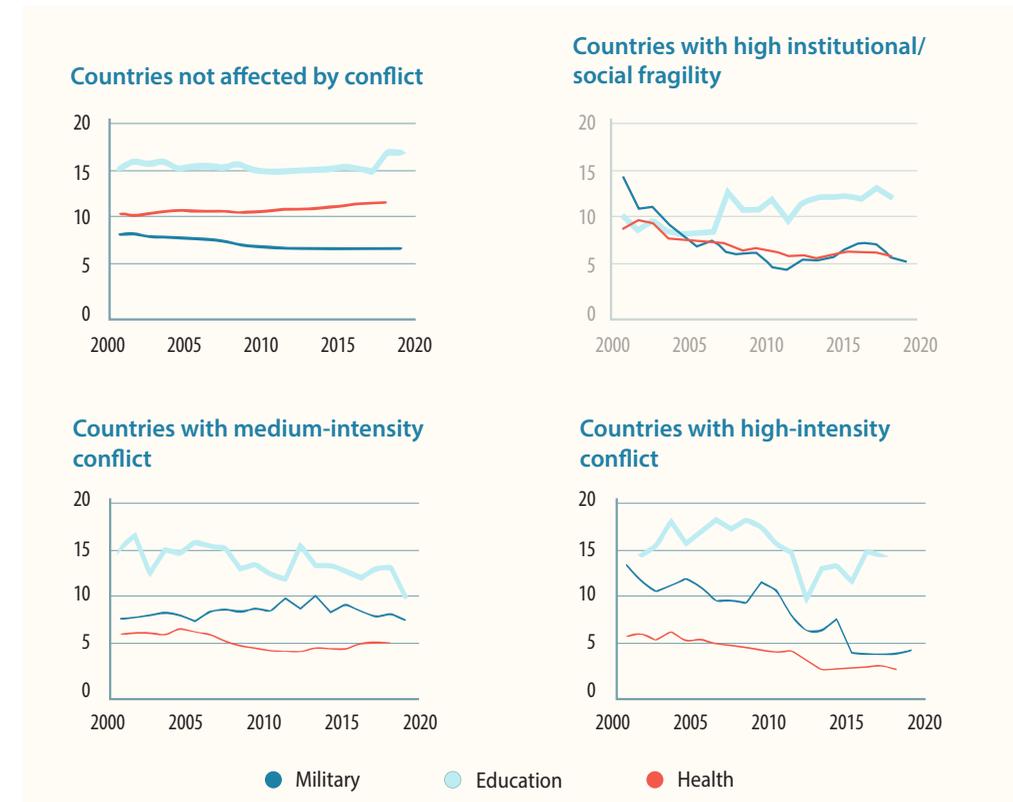
Fragile and conflict-affected countries have tended to spend relatively more on defence than on social protection, whereas countries that are not classified as such depict the opposite trend. In Afghanistan (the only high-intensity conflict country included in this data set), military spending has exceeded one third of total government spending since 2010, whereas less than 4 per cent of government spending has gone towards social protection. In contrast, in countries that are not classified as fragile or conflict-affected, the proportion of State spending going to social protection has been over 25 per cent on average since 2010, with less than 6 per cent of spending going to the military in any given year.

Source (graphs): International Food Policy Research Institute, Statistics on Public Expenditures for Economic Development (SPEED).

Source (caption): Ruth Carlitz, "Comparing Military and Human Security Spending: Key Findings and Methodological Notes" (2021).

Note: The y-axis scale has been adjusted for the graph for countries with high-intensity conflict.

### Percentage of government spending on the military versus education and health



In countries not considered fragile or conflict-affected, Governments have tended to spend nearly twice or three times as much on health and education versus their militaries. While education spending still outpaces expenditure on defence in conflict-affected countries, military spending is typically more than twice the proportion spent on health.

Source (graph data): World Bank World Development Indicators.

Source (caption): Ruth Carlitz, "Comparing military and human security spending: key findings and methodological notes" (UN-Women, 2022).

as in previous years, the General Assembly again recalled the importance of the “symbiotic relationship” between disarmament and development. Noting with concern the continued rise of global military expenditure, the Assembly urged the international community to use resources made available through disarmament and arms limitation agreements in the service of economic and social development.

In his annual report<sup>39</sup> on the relationship between disarmament and development, the Secretary-General highlighted recent efforts to achieve relevant goals set within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, notably Sustainable Development Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions. In 2021, the report included a strong emphasis on work by the Coordinating Action on Small Arms mechanism, chaired by the Office for Disarmament Affairs and bringing together 24 United Nations entities. Throughout the year, members of that mechanism continued to exchange views and coordinate field actions supporting Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 16.4.2,<sup>40</sup> for which the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Office for Disarmament Affairs were co-custodians. (For more information on the Coordinating Action on Small Arms mechanism, see chap. III.)

The mechanism also continued to strengthen its strategic role and country-level programmatic cohesion during the year. Under the guidance of the Secretariat’s Development Coordination Office, participating entities explored the potential for actors across the United Nations system to further integrate efforts for controlling small arms into national sustainable development frameworks, in line with decision 2020/28<sup>41</sup> of the Secretary-General’s Executive Committee. They also adopted revised terms of reference for the mechanism in 2021, seeking to further highlight how implementing decision 2020/28 would support country-level approaches to integrating national measures for arms control into national development frameworks.

On quantitative measurements of the relationship between disarmament and development, the Office for Disarmament Affairs continued to analyse data on illicit weapons reported by States both within the framework of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and in responses to the

illicit arms flow questionnaire.<sup>42</sup> In national reports submitted during the 2020–2021 biennium on activities supporting the Programme of Action, 48 countries reported bringing a total of 350,000 illicit weapons under government control in 2018 and 2019. Furthermore, the Office found that 83 per cent of the arms control activities funded in 2021 through the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR) could qualify as official development assistance,<sup>43</sup> up from 72 per cent in 2020. (For more information on UNSCAR, see chap. III.)

In 2021, the first country-level programming for the Saving Lives Entity (SALIENT)<sup>44</sup> funding facility was launched. The activities supported by the fund in Cameroon, Jamaica and South Sudan were developed to enable those countries to tackle small-arms problems with their respective United Nations country teams and Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.

### Terrorism and disarmament

The United Nations supported counter-terrorism efforts in 2021, focusing on weapons of mass destruction, conventional arms and improvised explosive devices.

As part of its work to address potential threats of terrorism involving weapons of mass destruction, the Office for Disarmament Affairs continued to maintain a roster of experts and laboratories provided by Member States to support the Secretary-General’s Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons. Under the Mechanism, the Secretary-General can call on rostered experts and laboratories to investigate reports of alleged use of chemical and biological weapons, including by non-State actors (for more information on the Mechanism, see chap. II).

On 8 December, the General Assembly adopted without a vote a new iteration of its resolution on measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction (76/28). As in prior versions, the Assembly urged all Member States to take and strengthen national measures, as appropriate, to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery, and materials and technologies related to their manufacture. The Assembly also appealed to all Member States to accede to and ratify the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

Throughout the year, the Security Council continued working to address threats from terrorist acts. By resolution 2572 (2021), it instructed the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) (1540 Committee) to continue its efforts to conclude the five-year comprehensive review process,

<sup>39</sup> The report of the Secretary-General (A/76/88), issued on 18 June 2021, contained replies by five Member States and the European Union to a note verbale, sent in February 2021 to all Member States, in which the Office for Disarmament Affairs called for the submission of information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 75/43.

<sup>40</sup> Sustainable Development Goal indicator 16.4.2: “Proportion of seized, found or surrendered arms whose illicit origin or context has been traced or established by a competent authority in line with international instruments.”

<sup>41</sup> By its decision 2020/28, the Executive Committee highlighted the need for strengthened headquarters-level coordination regarding the strategic role of activities to control small arms or reduce armed violence. In the decision, the Committee highlighted (a) the need for strengthened strategic and policy coordination and country-level operational cohesion in the implementation of small-arms programmes, and (b) the criticality of national ownership as the guiding principle for the approach of the United Nations to such programmes.

<sup>42</sup> United Nations, Office for Disarmament Affairs, “Illicit arms flows questionnaire”.

<sup>43</sup> Official development assistance eligibility is determined in accordance with the [Development Cooperation Directorate](#), which is part of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and with the Committee’s [list of official development assistance recipients](#).

<sup>44</sup> SALIENT is a new United Nations funding facility to help integrate small-arms control into the broader security and development efforts of participating States.

despite delays resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council also extended the Committee's mandate to 28 February 2022. In its resolution 2610 (2021), the Council reaffirmed the need to combat, by all means, threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts. It also stressed the important role of the United Nations in leading and coordinating that effort. Through resolution 2617 (2021), the Council extended the mandate of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate until 31 December 2025.

### **Work of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact**

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, led by the Office of Counter-Terrorism, continued working to strengthen the coordination and coherence of efforts across the United Nations system to help Member States implement the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, as well as other related General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. In 2021, the Compact benefited from the expertise of 43 member and observer entities,<sup>45</sup> as well as from recognition by Member States and international partners.

The Coordination Committee, which steers the work of the Compact, met twice at the principal level in 2021 to discuss key priorities emerging from the seventh biennial review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy as called for by the General Assembly (75/291). The Committee also considered the impact of developments in Afghanistan on the international counter-terrorism landscape. Compact entities actively participated in the second Counter-Terrorism Week at the United Nations, contributing to a deeper understanding of the transformative impact of new technologies on counter-terrorism efforts. Furthermore, by using the online [United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Platform](#) maintained by

the Office of Counter-Terrorism, entities of the Compact continued to engage and collaborate with one another and with United Nations Member States, the European Union and the multilateral Global Counterterrorism Forum.<sup>46</sup>

The eight working groups<sup>47</sup> of the Compact held 44 regular and special meetings during the year to exchange information, facilitate the joint implementation of projects and contribute to joint research.

The Working Group on Emerging Threats and Critical Infrastructure Protection continued to provide a forum to gather knowledge and coordinate support for Member States seeking to prevent and respond to emerging terrorist threats, including those related to the misuse of chemical, biological, nuclear and radiological materials. It focused on enhancing protections against terrorist attacks on critical infrastructure, including facilities used to house such materials, while maintaining respect for human rights and the rule of law.

In addition to its regular meetings, the Working Group invited the entire Compact community to two thematic briefings. In the first briefing, the Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant shared updates on the group's development and deployment of chemical and biological weapons. The second briefing, organized in partnership with the non-governmental organization Conflict Armament Research, was focused on new techniques in the procurement and financing of improvised explosive devices, uncrewed aerial systems and improvised weapons. In both sessions, field-level investigative bodies provided valuable insights that helped inform the activities of the Compact's member entities.

The Working Group also completed its joint project known as "Technology and security: enhancing knowledge about advances in science and technology to combat weapons of mass destruction terrorism", funded and co-implemented by the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre of the Office of Counter-Terrorism, in partnership with the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute. A report<sup>48</sup> developed in the framework of the project was peer-reviewed by the Working Group and presented during the second Counter-Terrorism Week at United Nations Headquarters in June.

<sup>45</sup> 1267 Committee Monitoring Team, 1540 Committee Expert Group, Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, Department of Global Communications, Department of Peace Operations, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Department of Safety and Security, Executive Office of the Secretary-General Rule of Law Unit, International Civil Aviation Organization, International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), International Labour Organization, International Maritime Organization, Office of Disarmament Affairs, Office of Information and Communications Technology, Office of Legal Affairs, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children, UNIDIR, United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, United Nations Institute for Training and Research, United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, United Nations System Staff College, World Customs Organization, and World Health Organization.

<sup>46</sup> Algeria, Australia, Canada, China, Colombia, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States.

<sup>47</sup> The eight working groups are on the following: (a) preventing and countering violent extremism conducive to terrorism; (b) border management and law enforcement relating to counter-terrorism; (c) emerging threats and critical infrastructure protection; (d) criminal justice, legal responses and countering the financing of terrorism; (e) resource mobilization and monitoring and evaluation; (f) national and regional counter-terrorism strategies; (g) promoting and protecting human rights and the rule of law while countering terrorism and supporting victims of terrorism; and (h) adopting a gender-sensitive approach to preventing and countering terrorism.

<sup>48</sup> United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism, and United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, "Science, technology and innovation: understanding advancements from the perspective of countering weapons of mass destruction terrorism", June 2021.

In December, the Working Group on Emerging Threats and Critical Infrastructure Protection launched phase III of the project on interoperability in response to chemical and biological attacks, designed to promote enhanced inter-agency coordination for the preparedness and support of Member States, at their request, to respond to chemical and biological attacks. The project was moving forward under the leadership of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), with seed funding from the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre. The initiative also had technical support from the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Counter-Terrorism Centre and the World Health Organization.

Furthermore, acting through the framework of that Working Group, the Compact sought inputs on a series of thematic guidance modules about mitigating threats to religious sites and places of worship, urban centres and touristic venues, including from uncrewed aerial systems identified through the Global Programme on the Protection of Vulnerable Targets. The modules will inform a forthcoming review of the 2018 Compendium<sup>49</sup> of good practices on the protection of critical infrastructure against terrorist attacks.

Meanwhile, the Working Group on Border Management and Law Enforcement relating to Counter-Terrorism continued to implement a project on developing guidelines for Member States to facilitate the implementation of Security Council resolution 2370 (2017) on preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons. Funded by the Counter-Terrorism Centre of the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the initiative was being carried out in partnership with the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). As of the end of 2021, the implementing partners were preparing draft technical guidelines on the acquisition by terrorists of small arms and light weapons, components of improvised explosive devices and unmanned aircraft systems.<sup>50</sup> Scheduled to be finalized and released to Member States in 2022, the technical guidelines will provide the first compilation of all relevant international instruments and tools for facilitating Member States' implementation of Security Council resolution 2370 (2017).

### **Work of the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre**

Acting through the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre and its multi-year programme on [preventing and responding to weapons of mass destruction or](#)

[chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear terrorism](#), the Office of Counter-Terrorism conducted global, regional and national outreach and capacity-building activities that benefited 2,900 officials from 100 Member States in 2021.

The Centre's activities during the year included a briefing to Member States on the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism; a virtual dialogue on preventing and countering bioterrorism in the wake of COVID-19; a high-level workshop on fostering judicial and law enforcement cooperation in addressing the nexus between terrorism, arms and crime in Central Asia; a workshop on countering nuclear terrorism in the Horn of Africa; and a series of workshops for Iraq and Jordan to develop strategic plans for responding to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents. The Counter-Terrorism Centre implemented those activities in partnership with the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, as well as the Governments of Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and the United States.

In addition, the Centre launched a global portfolio of 20 courses on countering terrorism involving weapons of mass destruction, which could include chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear arms. The new resources were used to train 2,000 officials during the year. Authorities in Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Nigeria and the Philippines received instruction on preventing and responding to biological terrorism, and personnel in Iraq and Jordan benefited from additional guidance on countering chemical terrorism. Officials in Malaysia received training on radiological and nuclear threats and countermeasures, while authorities in Australia, Kenya and New Zealand took part in courses on chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear countermeasures. The Counter-Terrorism Centre partnered with the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit of the Office for Disarmament Affairs to provide training for Nigeria on biological preparedness and response.

The Centre cooperated with two working groups<sup>51</sup> of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact to implement projects to ensure inter-agency interoperability in response to chemical and biological attacks, and prepare guidelines for Member States on preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons.

Furthermore, together with INTERPOL, the Centre completed the first and second phase of its global threat study on non-State actors and their potential use of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or high explosive materials, focusing on the Middle East, North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. Future phases of the study were expected to explore such threats related to South-East, Western, Central and Southern Asia, and the Americas.

Throughout 2021, the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre continued their close cooperation with numerous United

<sup>49</sup> United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism and Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, *The Protection of Critical Infrastructures Against Terrorist Attacks: Compendium of Good Practices* (2018).

<sup>50</sup> The implementing partners held an [event](#) to promote the upcoming guidelines during the second Counter-Terrorism Week at United Nations Headquarters in June.

<sup>51</sup> Working Group on Emerging Threats and Critical Infrastructure Protection and Working Group on Border Management and Law Enforcement relating to Counter-Terrorism.

Nations entities, international organizations and initiatives. Its partners during the year included the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), NATO, OPCW, the Office of Legal Affairs, the World Customs Organization and WHO, as well as the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, and the Nuclear Threat Initiative.

**Work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on the prevention and suppression of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear terrorism**

In 2021, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime continued promoting adherence to and implementation of international legal instruments against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear terrorism, in accordance with its relevant mandate.<sup>52</sup> The Office carried out that work primarily within the framework of two projects: one on promoting the universalization and effective implementation of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism;<sup>53</sup> and the other on supporting the universalization of international legal frameworks related to nuclear security,<sup>54</sup> including the aforementioned Convention, the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its 2005 Amendment.

The Office carried out several technical assistance activities during the year in implementing those projects. It conducted a hybrid workshop in April for criminal justice officials from Sri Lanka and Maldives, followed by an online national workshop in September for officials in Grenada. Then, in November, the Office partnered with IAEA to hold their first joint event to promote the universalization of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its 2005 Amendment.

The Office continued to develop and promote tools and resources related to the international legal framework against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear terrorism. In March, the Office concluded a series of 13 webinars, launched the previous year, on “[Countering chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear terrorism: international legal approaches and criminal justice responses](#)”. Conducted in English, French and Spanish on the Office’s [Counter-Terrorism Learning Platform](#), the webinars drew more than 350 practitioners from over 60 Member States as participants. Additionally, in September, the Office launched a dedicated [website](#) on the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

<sup>52</sup> The General Assembly most recently reiterated the mandate in [74/175](#) of 18 December 2019, operative para. 20, by which it requested the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to continue, within its mandate, to develop its specialized knowledge of the international legal framework for combating chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear terrorism as enshrined in the conventions and protocols on terrorism in order to continue to provide assistance to requesting Member States in preventing and countering those forms of terrorism.

<sup>53</sup> Funded by the European Union and jointly implemented with the Office of Counter-Terrorism.

<sup>54</sup> Funded by Canada.

Available in all six official languages of the United Nations, the website provided a repository of relevant information and resources on the Convention’s procedural history and status of adherence, as well as analytical articles, capacity-building tools and a collection of national legislation for implementation.

The Office also contributed to several events organized by IAEA during the year. They included a virtual international seminar, held in May for Russian-speaking States and States in Western Asia and the Middle East, on the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its 2005 Amendment; a virtual regional workshop, held in December for States in Africa, to promote the universalization of the Convention and Amendment; the [International Conference on the Safe and Secure Transport of Nuclear and Radioactive Material](#), held in December; and other technical meetings and seminars related to nuclear and radiological security.

Throughout 2021, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime cooperated regularly with, among others, the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the 1540 Committee and its Group of Experts, OPCW, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, the Nuclear Threat Initiative, and Parliamentarians for Global Action. The Office’s support included contributing to the events of its partners as appropriate.

**Contribution of the International Atomic Energy Agency to global counter-terrorism efforts**

IAEA continued to play a central role in strengthening the global nuclear security framework and in coordinating international activities on nuclear security.<sup>55</sup>

In 2021, IAEA published the new Nuclear Security Plan<sup>56</sup> for the period 2022–2025, highlighting the Agency’s nuclear security activities for the upcoming years.

IAEA also continued to assist States, upon request, in their national efforts to establish and maintain at all times effective and comprehensive nuclear security of all nuclear and other radioactive material. In undertaking those activities, the Agency aimed to assist States in establishing effective and sustainable national nuclear security regimes. Where appropriate, IAEA also sought to help States fulfil relevant obligations, including under the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its 2005 Amendment, as well as under relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#).

<sup>55</sup> Nuclear security focuses on the prevention and detection of, and response to, criminal or intentional unauthorized acts involving or directed at nuclear material, other radioactive material, associated facilities or associated activities. Responsibility for nuclear security within a State rests entirely with that State, in accordance with its respective national and international obligations.

<sup>56</sup> IAEA, document [GC\(65\)/24](#).

### **Contribution of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to global counter-terrorism efforts**

In 2021, the OPCW Executive Council's Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism remained the primary platform for States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention to discuss how OPCW could further contribute to global counter-terrorism efforts. The Working Group convened three online meetings during the year.

The first meeting, held on 8 March, was focused on international cooperation in countering chemical terrorism. The event featured a presentation by INTERPOL about a region-by-region study on access to and use of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials by non-State actors. Participants also considered the current and future scope of collaboration between INTERPOL and OPCW in their efforts to counter chemical terrorism.

The second meeting, on 5 July, featured a speaker from the International Chemical Trade Association, who described the Association's role in the chemical industry supply chain, as well as security challenges facing the global chemical distribution sector. In that context, attendees considered OPCW capacity-building activities to assist States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention in strengthening their legislative and regulatory frameworks.

The third meeting, held on 4 October, included a presentation on the OPCW [Chemical Safety and Security Management Programme](#) from a member of a multidisciplinary group of experts involved in developing the organization's indicative guidelines<sup>57</sup> for chemical safety and security in small and medium-sized enterprises. The presentation was focused on how those guidelines were developed and how they would be implemented.

Meanwhile, to help international organizations cooperate further on counter-terrorism matters, the OPCW Technical Secretariat continued leading a project on ensuring effective inter-agency interoperability and coordinated communication in case of chemical and/or biological attacks. The initiative was jointly developed with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, WHO, INTERPOL, the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit, and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute.

OPCW also served as one of three vice-Chairs of the Working Group on Emerging Threats and Critical Infrastructure Protection, alongside the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute. INTERPOL remained the Group's Chair.

<sup>57</sup> OPCW, *Indicative Guidelines for Chemical Safety and Security in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises to Foster the Peaceful Uses of Chemistry* (The Hague, 2021).

### **Implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004)**

On 22 April, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution [2572 \(2021\)](#), extending the mandate of the Committee established pursuant to resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) (1540 Committee) until 28 February 2022. Through the resolution, the Council noted the postponement of the next comprehensive review on the status of the resolution's implementation because of the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>58</sup> It also instructed the 1540 Committee to continue to conduct and complete the review and to submit a report to the Security Council.

On 31 December, the 1540 Committee submitted to the Security Council its review<sup>59</sup> of the implementation of the resolution for 2021. The Committee, chaired by Juan Ramón de la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico), said that it had continued to facilitate and monitor the national-level implementation of resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) with administrative and substantive support from the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

The Committee used the review to address all aspects of its work, which had been facilitated by its four working groups, on monitoring and national implementation, assistance, cooperation with international organizations, and transparency and media outreach. In the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee continued to take precautionary measures, such as holding meetings in a virtual format. In 2021, the Committee held three formal meetings and two informal meetings, enabling members to discuss the comprehensive review then under way.

#### **National implementation**

Throughout the year, the 1540 Committee continued encouraging States to submit national reports on their implementation of resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#), as required by resolutions [1540 \(2004\)](#) and [2325 \(2016\)](#). In 2021, Mozambique submitted its first national report to the Committee. As at 31 December, 185 of 193 Member States had submitted at least one national report to the 1540 Committee, while eight States<sup>60</sup> had yet to do so.

In 2021, four States<sup>61</sup> submitted separate reports pursuant to Security Council resolution [2325 \(2016\)](#). By that resolution, the Security Council encouraged States to provide additional information on their implementation of resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#), including through their laws, regulations and effective practices.

<sup>58</sup> By its resolution [1977 \(2011\)](#), the Council decided that the 1540 Committee would conduct a comprehensive review on the status of implementation of resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#), both after five years and before the renewal of its mandate, including, if necessary, recommendations on adjustments to the mandate, and would submit to the Security Council a report on the conclusions of those reviews.

<sup>59</sup> [S/2021/1121](#).

<sup>60</sup> Chad, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eswatini, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania and Somalia.

<sup>61</sup> Ecuador, Kyrgyzstan, Norway and Panama.

By resolution 1540 (2004), the Council encouraged States to develop, on a voluntary basis, national implementation action plans for implementing the resolution's key provisions. As no additional States submitted national implementation action plans to the Committee during the year, the number of States that had provided such plans since 2007 remained at 35.<sup>62</sup>

Through resolution 2325 (2016), the Security Council recognized the importance of the Committee continuing to engage actively in dialogue with States on their implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), including through visits to States at their invitation. In 2021, owing to continuing restrictions on travel imposed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee did not undertake in-person visits to States. It continued to hold virtual workshops throughout the year on implementing resolution 1540 (2004), including two that Botswana and Mongolia, respectively, organized in partnership with the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

In resolution 2325 (2016), the Security Council also encouraged States to inform the 1540 Committee of their points of contact for resolution 1540 (2004). In 2021, 32 States named or provided updates regarding their points of contact. As at 31 December, 136 Member States had designated points of contact, up from 128 in 2020. Owing to restrictions resulting from the pandemic, no training courses were conducted in 2021 for regional points of contact.

### Assistance

In 2021, States submitted four new requests for assistance<sup>63</sup> to the Committee. In carrying forward its clearing-house function, the Committee continued to post on its website summaries of requests for assistance from Member States, as well as offers of assistance from Member States, international, regional and subregional organizations, or other entities. The Committee relayed those responses to the States concerned.

The Office for Disarmament Affairs facilitated assistance to two States (Botswana and Mongolia) in response to requests received in 2020. In May, the Office partnered with the United Nations Regional Centre for Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to hold a national round-table webinar on strengthening the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) in Mongolia. In August, the Office for Disarmament Affairs joined the Henry L. Stimson Center to hold a national workshop to strengthen the resolution's implementation in Botswana. Furthermore, through its Regional Centre for Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Office for Disarmament Affairs assisted Chile in developing regulations for implementing

<sup>62</sup> Argentina, Armenia, Belarus, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Dominican Republic, France, Ghana, Grenada, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mexico, Montenegro, Niger, North Macedonia, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Senegal, Serbia, Spain, Suriname, Tajikistan, Togo, Turkmenistan, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay and Uzbekistan.

<sup>63</sup> Botswana, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention within the context of resolution 1540 (2004).

### Cooperation with international, regional and subregional organizations

In 2021, the 1540 Committee continued to enhance its collaboration with relevant international, regional and subregional organizations, including other relevant United Nations bodies. It also continued to explore opportunities to enhance ongoing cooperation with the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities. In particular, the two Committees jointly briefed the Security Council in December 2021.<sup>64</sup>

During the year, the Office for Disarmament Affairs strengthened its efforts to provide regional support for States implementing resolution 1540 (2004) in partnership with relevant regional organizations. In that regard, the Office placed regional coordinators for Africa (Addis Ababa) and Asia (Bangkok), tasking them to establish a regional network of national points of contact on matters related to resolution 1540 (2004); connect with regional organizations; provide customized support for States in their respective regions; and strengthen coordination with both donors and other international, regional and subregional organizations assisting with issues relevant to resolution 1540 (2004). As of 2021, there were dedicated regional coordinators for the regions of Africa (Office for Disarmament Affairs), the Americas (Organization of American States), Asia (Office for Disarmament Affairs) and Europe and Central Asia (OSCE).

### Transparency and outreach

In 2021, the 1540 Committee participated in 23 outreach events to support transparency and help foster greater cooperation and awareness among States, parliamentarians, relevant international, regional and subregional organizations, and civil society (including academia and industry) regarding the obligations set out in resolution 1540 (2004) and their implementation.

Regarding industry, the Committee participated in the national workshop in April 2021 on engaging industry and the private sector of the Dominican Republic on strategic trade and internal compliance programmes in the framework of the resolution. The workshop was organized by the Organization of American States and the Government of the Dominican Republic. The Committee also participated in the tenth anniversary celebration and conference of the Strategic Trade Act 2010 of Malaysia, which established the country's strategic trade control mechanism. Those events, among others, provided opportunities to work with and inform industry stakeholders regarding their obligations under national laws.

<sup>64</sup> For the meeting records of the meeting, see [S/PV.8915](#).

With support from the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the 1540 Committee continued to maintain its [website](#) both as a tool to raise public awareness and as a key source of information related to resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) for use by Member States, Committee members, civil society and industry. In 2021, the website received 103,244 views, 4 per cent more than the views from the previous year.



CHAPTER VI

# **GENDER AND DISARMAMENT**



“ This year we have seen important gains for gender and disarmament in international forums. ... At the same time, there is backlash against gender equality globally. We must work together cross-regionally and internationally to make sure that advancements are distributed across regions and that progress for equality applies to all women in all nations.

IZUMI NAKAMITSU, HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS<sup>1</sup>



The working group on gender and disarmament at the Youth Forum on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, held on 29 and 30 June 2021.

## CHAPTER VI

### Gender and disarmament

#### Developments and trends, 2021

THE SECOND YEAR OF THE COVID-19 pandemic saw the backlash against women’s empowerment gain further visibility, marked by widening disparities in progress on gender equality across countries.<sup>2</sup> Hard-won rights for women and girls were rolled back, especially in conflict and crisis contexts, bringing new urgency to efforts to eliminate gender-based violence and achieve gender-responsive peace and security. At the same time, social impacts from the pandemic, including new ways of working, presented opportunities to invite new voices and diverse perspectives into discussions on disarmament and security.

Gender equality was at the core of Secretary-General António Guterres’ vision for his second term, which began on 18 June. In his report entitled *Our Common Agenda*,<sup>3</sup> he committed to placing women and girls at the centre of the work of the

<sup>1</sup> [Remarks](#) delivered virtually at the session on gender and disarmament of the European Parliament’s Committee on Security and Defence, 27 October 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security and Peace Research Institute Oslo, *Summary: Women, Peace, And Security Index 2021/22—Tracking Sustainable Peace Through Inclusion, Justice, and Security for Women* (Washington, D.C., 2021). The report includes data from 170 countries, including indicators on women’s rights, intimate partner violence and laws on firearms relinquishment for domestic violence abusers.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations publication, 2021.



United Nations. That pledge proposed actions to eliminate violence against women and girls and to achieve gender parity within the United Nations system through quotas, including under its peace and security pillar. Moreover, following the General Assembly's commitment in 2020 to pursue a reinvigorated multilateralism that would "leave no one behind",<sup>4</sup> the Secretary-General prioritized enhancing inclusion and human rights.

In a separate expression of international support for gender equality, the Commission on the Status of Women held its sixty-fifth session from 15 to 26 March, in a hybrid format, on the theme "Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls". In its agreed conclusions, the Commission acknowledged that the elimination of violence was essential for, among others, promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies.<sup>5</sup> It further acknowledged the need to address the effects of armed conflict and post-conflict situations on women and girls, including victims and survivors of sexual violence.<sup>6</sup>

Additionally, the United Nations came together with Governments, civil society, academia and youth to hold the Generation Equality Forum, convened to fulfil the promise in the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#), adopted in 1995, and build a multi-stakeholder movement for advocating gender equality and propelling related global commitments. The Forum consisted of two global meetings convened by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the first held in Mexico City from 29 to 31 March and the second held in Paris from 30 June to 2 July. By the conclusion of the second meeting, which drew nearly 50,000 participants, Governments and others had pledged almost \$40 billion in new investments to implement, by 2026, the newly adopted Global Acceleration Plan for Gender Equality<sup>7</sup> with six workstreams: prioritizing gender-based violence; economic justice and rights; sexual and reproductive health and rights; feminist action for climate justice; technology and innovation; and feminist movements and leadership.

As the international community continued to make slow progress in closing gender gaps in participation in multilateral forums on disarmament, stakeholders maintained their efforts to explore gender and feminist perspectives in all categories of weapons and strengthen the role of disarmament in multilateral agendas for gender equality and sustainable development, including the women, peace and security agenda.

<sup>4</sup> General Assembly resolution [75/1](#) of 21 September 2020, para. 7.

<sup>5</sup> [E/CN.6/2021/L.3](#), para. 9.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 28.

<sup>7</sup> Generation Equality Forum, [Action Coalitions: Global Acceleration Plan](#), 2 July 2021.

### Enhancing women's participation through quotas and an enabling environment

Amid various setbacks for gender equality in 2021, several instances of important progress for women's political participation at the national and international levels took place. Eight countries<sup>8</sup> elected their first woman Head of State or Government, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reported that the composition of defence and foreign affairs ministries had advanced closer to gender parity. The averages for women's representation in those ministries reached 36 and 40 per cent, respectively, at the end of 2020.<sup>9</sup>

Gender gaps persisted within delegations to multilateral disarmament forums, however; progress remained slow and uneven among meetings and processes, despite the wide acknowledgement by States of the importance of achieving equal participation by women and men. The Secretary-General repeatedly called for gender quotas for participation in all areas of peace and security, including disarmament, and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs continued to engage with various actors on setting targets and promoting other strategies to close disparities in representation.<sup>10</sup> In the United Nations, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and other entities continued to implement the [System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity](#), developed to achieve equal gender representation at all staff levels by 2028.

In and beyond the field of disarmament, the year saw greater emphasis on promoting an enabling, inclusive and respectful work environment in intergovernmental discussions and decision-making. The six-year-old International Gender Champions network<sup>11</sup> adopted a new pledge to "stand for zero tolerance of gender-based violence, sexist attitudes and behaviour". Within the framework of the Commission on the Status of Women, Member States joined United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations to underline the need to create an enabling environment in decision-making.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, in the outcome document<sup>13</sup> of its

<sup>8</sup> Barbados, Estonia, Kosovo, Republic of Moldova, Samoa, Sweden, Tunisia and United Republic of Tanzania. (Reference to Kosovo shall be understood in full compliance with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).)

<sup>9</sup> UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, [Gender Equality in Public Administration](#) (New York, 2021).

<sup>10</sup> Public video messages, and keynote speeches and statements at meetings of the Diet of Japan, the European Union, the Security Council, the General Assembly, students, parliamentarians and others. See Izumi Nakamitsu, [video message](#) on International Women's Day, 8 March 2021; and [statement](#) delivered virtually at the Women in Foreign Policy and International Affairs Seminar (Diet of Japan), 8 March 2021.

<sup>11</sup> The International Gender Champions network comprises more than 250 leaders of international organizations, permanent missions and civil society organizations, including the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. As of 2021, the network had a dedicated Impact Group on disarmament in Geneva, an Impact Group on nuclear regulatory agencies in Vienna, as well as "Champions" active on disarmament issues in New York and other cities. For more information, see the 2021 [annual report](#) of the International Gender Champions.

<sup>12</sup> "Ministerial round table on 'Creating an enabling environment for women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life': Chair's summary" ([E/CN.6/2021/7](#)).

<sup>13</sup> [E/CN.6/2021/L.3](#).

sixty-fifth session, the Commission agreed to significantly accelerate the pace of progress towards ensuring women's full and effective participation and leadership, including through the use of temporary special measures and by creating an enabling environment.

### Preventing gender-based violence

In its efforts to eliminate gender-based violence, the international community continued to sharpen its focus on the role of weapons as a contributor to insecurity. In that regard, a range of actors acknowledged how arms could facilitate domestic and other violence, including when they were used to kill, threaten or intimidate women and girls in their homes and communities.

In 2021, tackling gender-based violence was a key priority of both the Generation Equality Forum and the Commission on the Status of Women, in addition to remaining the chief aim of the global [16-day campaign](#) launched each year on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. The Office for Disarmament Affairs, for its part, engaged with partners to raise further awareness about the importance of disarmament and arms control in preventing gender-based violence. Throughout the campaign period, the Office published multiple daily [social media posts](#) in which it highlighted how disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control contributed to eliminating gender-based violence and achieving a more secure, peaceful and sustainable world for everyone.<sup>14</sup> In a [video message](#) to mark the start of the campaign, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs said that disarmament and arms control must be a part of the solution to eliminating gender-based violence, accelerating progress towards gender equality and realizing the women, peace and security agenda.

Meanwhile, the Office for Disarmament Affairs continued to promote inter-institutional dialogue on countering gender-based violence, including with respect to practical measures taken at the regional and national levels. The Office's Regional Centre in Lima, for example, conducted relevant online courses for more than 800 government officials from Colombia, Haiti, Honduras and Panama. In addition, the regional centres in Lima, Lomé and Kathmandu helped build national capacities for gender analysis in several other countries through the Office's [flagship project](#) funded by the European Union on gender and small-arms control (for more information on the flagship project, see pages [244–245](#)).

### Feminist perspectives on security

In 2021, several States—as well as the United Nations,<sup>15</sup> civil society organizations and youth representatives—identified feminist responses and policies to tackling current global challenges.

<sup>14</sup> The Office posted messages on Twitter and Instagram in English, French and Spanish. It published several additional messages in all six official United Nations languages.

<sup>15</sup> UN-Women published a feminist plan (*Beyond COVID-19: A Feminist Plan for Sustainability and Social Justice* (United Nations publication, 2021)) for putting gender equality, social justice and sustainability in building back from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In one notable milestone, Mexico became the first country in Latin America to adopt a “feminist foreign policy”.<sup>16</sup> Sweden, which had first announced its own feminist foreign policy in 2014, issued a new implementation action plan,<sup>17</sup> containing elements on gender analysis in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Separately, at the Generation Equality Forum, seven countries<sup>18</sup> joined together to announce the new Global Partner Network for Feminist Foreign Policy. A coalition of youth-led and civil society organizations similarly launched “[A Pathway Towards a Feminist Agenda for the Generation Equality Forum: Priorities and Recommendations](#)”, providing a five-year vision for addressing each of the [12 critical areas of concern](#) identified in the Beijing Platform for Action. The authors called on States to, among others, implement provisions within the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons<sup>19</sup> and within the Arms Trade Treaty; demilitarize daily life and abolish obligatory military service; and develop and operationalize national action plans for implementing Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) at the intersection of the agendas for women, peace and security and for youth, peace and security.

During the year, concepts of power, patriarchy, masculinity and other cornerstones of feminist analysis featured more prominently in discussions on gender and disarmament than in prior years.<sup>20</sup> In their annual [joint statement](#)<sup>21</sup> on gender and disarmament to the General Assembly First Committee, civil society organizations focused on the topic of patriarchal militarism. The subject of militarism also played a key role in international discussions on women, peace and security, including a 2020 recommendation by the Secretary-General to reverse the upwards trajectory of military spending.<sup>22</sup> Throughout the year, consideration of the topic by various stakeholders yielded new research, discussion and advocacy on the relationship between gender equality and militarism.

### Intersectionality, diversity and inclusion

In 2021, States, civil society, academia and youth increasingly contextualized their advocacy for gender equality in disarmament within broader, intersectional

<sup>16</sup> According to the independent organization [Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy](#), a feminist foreign policy is centred on marginalized people and intersectional rethinking of security from the viewpoint of the most vulnerable and aims to elevate women's agency.

<sup>17</sup> Sweden, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, *The Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2019–2022, including direction and measures for 2021* (Stockholm, 2021).

<sup>18</sup> Canada, France, Libya, Luxembourg, Mexico, Spain and Sweden.

<sup>19</sup> Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

<sup>20</sup> For example, Ray Acheson published *Banning the Bomb, Smashing the Patriarchy* on the anti-nuclear movement. Scrap Weapons launched a feminist disarmament project and hosted a series of webinars, including sessions on “Patriarchal structures in disarmament” and “Grassroot activism and its role in providing feminist perspectives to disarmament”.

<sup>21</sup> The 2021 statement was delivered on 8 October 2021.

<sup>22</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security ([S/2020/946](#)), para. 113 (c).

frameworks for diversity and inclusion. In that regard, social characteristics such as age, disability and race assumed greater prominence in discussions on security policy, where people-centred approaches continued to receive heightened attention amid the pandemic.

In October, the General Assembly First Committee heard a joint statement<sup>23</sup> on humanitarian disarmament that was focused on intersectionality and race. In the remarks, which were endorsed by 96 civil society organizations, the absence of “a deliberate, intentional anti-racist approach” to disarmament was called a “monumental oversight”. Costa Rica, meanwhile, called for recognition of the differentiated impacts of cyber operations not just on women and girls, but also across a broader spectrum of marginalized identities, including people of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions.<sup>24</sup>

Separately, the United States appointed Bonnie Jenkins as Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, making her the first woman of colour to hold that position. Founder and former Executive Director of the non-governmental organization Women of Color Advancing Peace, Security and Conflict Transformation, she said that she would use her position to help advance diversity, equity and inclusion by mentoring the next generation of women and people of colour seeking careers in national security.

Young people also assumed a more prominent leadership role in highlighting new perspectives for gender-responsive disarmament. In June, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Republic of Korea held the Youth Forum on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, bringing together 25 participants from 22 countries<sup>25</sup> to adopt on 30 June the [Seoul Youth Declaration on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation](#). The authors called for, among others, avoiding gender stereotypes, broadening the disarmament discourse beyond a binary understanding of gender, promoting the full and effective participation of all genders, and ensuring gender-responsive disarmament education and analysis of weapons.

Disability inclusion in disarmament was another emerging—and sometimes overlooked—theme throughout the year, following the Security Council’s recognition of the issue in 2019.<sup>26</sup> During the Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, a group of States submitted a paper on gender and diversity, in which they focused on enhancing impact through synergies between the Convention

and other international instruments and policies.<sup>27</sup> They recommended, among others, seeking synergies between the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. They also called on States to take all appropriate measures to ensure the full development and empowerment of women with disabilities, who face multiple forms of discrimination. At the seventh Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, States adopted an outcome document<sup>28</sup> including, for the first time, language about disability-disaggregated data collection, and disability perspectives were raised in several activities related to small arms. Meanwhile, the United Nations continued to implement its [Disability Inclusion Strategy](#), with the Office for Disarmament Affairs adopting the new guidance on accessibility and mainstreaming disability perspectives in disarmament and arms control.

## Gender aspects in multilateral disarmament discussions

### General Assembly First Committee

#### Statements

Although States did not issue a joint statement on gender during the General Assembly First Committee’s seventy-sixth session, numerous delegations called for achieving women’s equal participation or enhancing diversity and inclusion in the work of disarmament and the Committee. Along similar lines, several States spoke about the need to integrate a gender perspective in disarmament, and some highlighted the relevance of the women, peace and security agenda to disarmament.

The General Assembly’s biennial resolution on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, first adopted in 2010, was not due for consideration in 2021.<sup>29</sup> Its original sponsor, Trinidad and Tobago, nevertheless reminded the Committee about the role of women in disarmament, urging participants to move beyond talking about women only as victims of weapons and violence.<sup>30</sup>

On several occasions, countries—about half of them in the Global South—expressed support for advancing gender equality in the field of disarmament. Speaking also on behalf of 27 other States,<sup>31</sup> Italy recognized the importance of diversity, especially through women’s equal, full and effective participation.<sup>32</sup> The

<sup>23</sup> Farah Bogani, Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, [joint statement](#) to the First Committee, New York, 8 October 2021.

<sup>24</sup> Maritza Chan, Deputy Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations, [statement](#) to the First Committee, New York, 18 October 2021.

<sup>25</sup> Brazil, Canada, China, Finland, France, India, Morocco, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Viet Nam.

<sup>26</sup> By resolution [2475 \(2019\)](#), the Security Council recognized that persons with disabilities were disproportionately impacted by armed conflict, necessitating specific protection considerations in humanitarian response.

<sup>27</sup> [CCM/CONF/2021/5](#), para. 10 (b).

<sup>28</sup> [A/CONF.192/BMS/2021/1](#), para. 74.

<sup>29</sup> The General Assembly adopted the resolution’s most recent iteration ([75/48](#)), its seventh, on 7 December 2020.

<sup>30</sup> Dennis Francis (Trinidad and Tobago), [statement](#) to the First Committee, New York, 7 October 2021.

<sup>31</sup> Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Turkey.

<sup>32</sup> Tancredi Francese (Italy), [statement](#) to the First Committee on behalf of a group of States, New York, 14 October 2021.

European Union<sup>33</sup> reconfirmed that gender equality and the empowerment of women remained among its important priorities, and Nordic countries<sup>34</sup> said that women's full inclusion should be "the order of the day". The Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations made a "gender pledge",<sup>35</sup> which included commitments to advocate for balanced gender representation in all its delegations to United Nations conferences and committees, as well as encourage practices to enhance work-life flexibility in United Nations meetings. Addressing the Committee during its general debate, Canada also emphasized that the body must conduct its work in an inclusive, respectful manner in both formal and informal meetings.<sup>36</sup> The United States underlined the need for an environment free from threat or violence to achieve women's full, equal and meaningful participation at all levels of decision-making.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, as in previous years, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs urged States to commit themselves to achieving gender parity in their delegations.<sup>38</sup>

In addition to stressing the need for equal gender representation, States highlighted other ways that gender considerations were important to the Committee's work. South Africa said that a gender perspective in disarmament and international security discussions expanded the understanding of disarmament challenges.<sup>39</sup> Canada called separately for a better understanding of the gendered impact of weapons, including through the collection and sharing of age- and gender-disaggregated data.<sup>40</sup> The Caribbean Community emphasized the need to advance measures to eliminate violence against women and girls, as lockdowns and stay-at-home orders during the COVID-19 pandemic had led to an increase in armed domestic violence in Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>41</sup> Costa Rica called for a feminist approach to nuclear disarmament, challenging the archaic assumption that power competition was the right way to conduct foreign relations and ensure national security.<sup>42</sup> Some States also called for people-centred and gender-responsive

approaches to security in events and outreach conducted on the margins of the First Committee session.<sup>43</sup>

Additionally, as in previous sessions, a group of civil society organizations delivered a joint statement<sup>44</sup> dedicated to gender and disarmament. Ninety-six organizations endorsed the statement, which was focused on patriarchal militarism and the need for a more robust reflection on the gendered norms associated with weapons, war and violence.

### Resolutions

Of the 61 disarmament-related resolutions and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, 19 contained references to gender or women, the highest number, following three years of steady increases.<sup>45</sup> The 2021 resolution on compliance with non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament agreements and commitments (76/33), sponsored by the United States, had language on including and empowering women through capacity-building efforts as full, equal and meaningful participants. In the resolution on the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (76/57), a new paragraph on assisting Member States from a human security perspective, including on women, peace and security, was included. The resolution on illicit small arms and light weapons (76/232) contained strengthened references to gender: (a) an operative paragraph on the need for the equal, full and effective participation of women in all decision-making and implementation processes related to the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument;<sup>46</sup> and (b) a preambular paragraph in which the General Assembly reaffirmed the need for States to mainstream gender dimensions into their implementation efforts for those instruments.<sup>47</sup>

As of 2021, it had become good practice for resolutions with language on gender to address both women's participation and substantive perspectives concerning gender or diversity in other areas, such as the differentiated impacts of weapons, gender mainstreaming policies or gender-based violence.<sup>48</sup> In addition

<sup>33</sup> Marjolijn van Deelen (European Union), [statement](#) to the First Committee, New York, 4 October 2021.

<sup>34</sup> Marie-Louise Koch Wegter (Denmark), [statement](#) to the First Committee on behalf of the Nordic countries, New York, 4 October 2021.

<sup>35</sup> Canada, "[Permanent Mission of Canada to the UN Gender Pledge](#)", September 2021.

<sup>36</sup> Leslie Norton (Canada), [statement](#) to the First Committee, New York, 5 October 2021.

<sup>37</sup> Jeffrey Eberhardt (United States), [statement](#) to the First Committee, New York, 13 October 2021.

<sup>38</sup> Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, [statement](#) to the First Committee, New York, 4 October 2021.

<sup>39</sup> Yaseen Lagardien (South Africa), [statement](#) to the First Committee, New York, 18 October 2021.

<sup>40</sup> Tania Roth (Canada), [statement](#) to the First Committee, New York, 14 October 2021.

<sup>41</sup> Dennis Francis (Trinidad and Tobago), [statement](#) to the First Committee on behalf of the Caribbean Community, New York, 14 October 2021.

<sup>42</sup> Maritza Chan (Costa Rica), [statement](#) to the First Committee, New York, 13 October 2021. Australia, the Dominican Republic, Iceland, Ireland, Finland, Namibia, Nepal, Norway, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Sweden and the United States, as well as the European Union, also spoke on gender-responsive disarmament and arms control or women, peace and security.

<sup>43</sup> For more information on events held on the margins of the First Committee session in 2021, see chap. VIII, annex III.

<sup>44</sup> Laura Varella (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom), [joint statement](#) to the First Committee on behalf of a group of civil society organizations, New York, 8 October 2021.

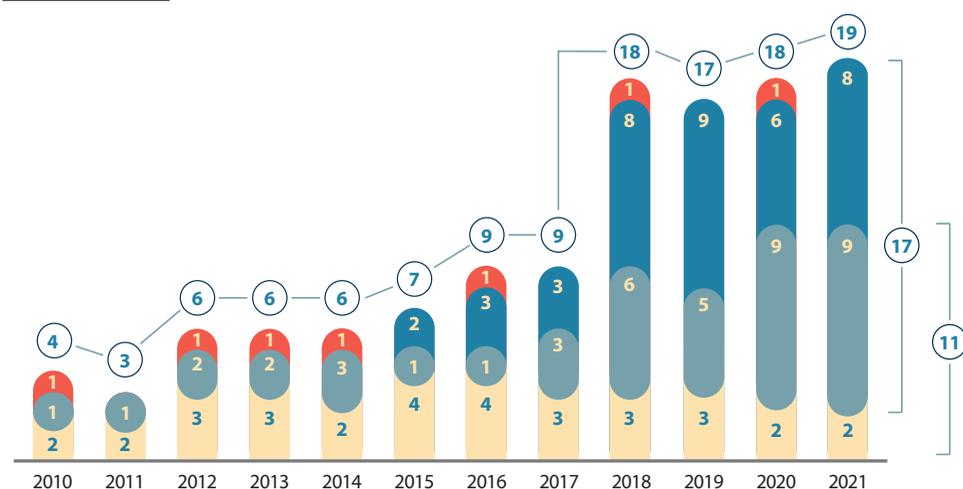
<sup>45</sup> The General Assembly adopted two more such resolutions in 2021 than in 2020. The increase was partly because of the cyclical adoption of non-annual resolutions containing previously agreed language on gender. Of the 19 resolutions that included references to gender, the relevant language of 16 resolutions was unchanged from previous years.

<sup>46</sup> International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

<sup>47</sup> In its 2021 resolution on fissile material (76/51), the General Assembly did not include language from the previous version (73/65) on the need for concerted actions for women's participation.

<sup>48</sup> Nine resolutions adopted in 2021 mention both equal participation and substantive gender aspects: "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" (76/64); "Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world" (76/25); "Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions" (76/47); "Reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of

### Gender perspectives in General Assembly First Committee resolutions, 2010–2021



○—○ Total resolutions

- **Resolution on women:** The first resolution on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control (65/69) is adopted in 2010, followed by successors in 2012 (67/48), 2013 (68/33), 2014 (69/61), 2016 (71/56), 2018 (73/46) and 2020 (75/48)
- **Equal participation:** Gender parity, women's participation, role or representation
- **Gender perspectives:** Substantive gender aspects and mainstreaming, including the gendered impact of weapons and gender-based violence
- **Both:** References to both participation and other gender perspectives

The graph above does not include resolutions with secondary references to gender (e.g., Sustainable Development Goals or the Arms Trade Treaty).

Of the 61 resolutions and decisions adopted at the seventy-sixth session, 19 resolutions mentioned gender or women. In 17 of those resolutions, the General Assembly recognized or called for women's equal participation. In 11 resolutions, various forms of gender perspectives (such as the differentiated impact of weapons, gender mainstreaming policies, gender-based violence, implementation of women, peace and security and other aspects) were addressed. The increase in 2021 was owing partly to the cycles of non-annual resolutions with already agreed gender language being tabled that year, and partly to the resolution on "Compliance with non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament agreements and commitments", sponsored by the United States, that included, for the first time, a call for the inclusion and empowerment of women as full, equal and meaningful participants.

to the 19 above-mentioned resolutions containing language on gender, the General Assembly recognized the contribution of "diverse and inclusive participation" in its resolution on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (76/66). Moreover, its resolution on the Convention on Cluster Munitions (76/47) contained a reference to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The General Assembly also addressed youth perspectives in five resolutions<sup>49</sup> in addition to its biennial resolution on youth, disarmament and non-proliferation (76/45), which was tabled for the second time in 2021.

### Conference on Disarmament

The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva addressed gender issues in various contexts during its 2021 sessions.

During its presidency, Canada convened three plenary meetings<sup>50</sup> on a draft decision<sup>51</sup> to insert language recognizing the equality between men and women in the Conference's rules of procedure,<sup>52</sup> which continued to use only male pronouns and possessive adjectives. However, the Conference did not reach an agreement on the proposal, which the presidency of Australia had initiated in 2020. The Secretary-General of the Conference remarked during the proceedings that the change "should be automatic, like correcting a spelling mistake". Later, at the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly First Committee, and on other occasions, six States<sup>53</sup> and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs expressed regret that no agreement could be reached on the proposed technical update.

In August, the Conference held a discussion on "Women's Participation and Role in International Security", which was attended by the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and several States.<sup>54</sup> In her opening remarks at the event, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs called for accountability in reaching parity in disarmament meetings. Furthermore, she recalled that women's equal participation was a fundamental human right, not a privilege.<sup>55</sup>

responsible behaviours" (76/231); "Regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa" (76/60); "The Arms Trade Treaty" (76/50); "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects" (76/232); "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa" (76/57); and "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific" (76/59).

<sup>49</sup> Resolutions on the regional centres of the Office for Disarmament Affairs (76/57, 76/58 and 76/59), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (76/66) and joint courses of action and future-oriented dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons (76/54).

<sup>50</sup> CD/PV.1584, CD/PV.1586 and CD/PV.1587.

<sup>51</sup> CD/WP.635.

<sup>52</sup> CD/8/Rev.9.

<sup>53</sup> Australia, France, Mexico, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States.

<sup>54</sup> Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, India, Indonesia, México, Peru, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, South Africa, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom and United States.

<sup>55</sup> Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, [remarks](#) at the Conference on Disarmament Plenary Meeting "Women's Participation and Role in International Security", 26 August 2021.

### Small arms and light weapons

During the seventh Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, held in New York from 26 to 30 July, many States expressed support for gender equality and the inclusion of progressive gender-related language in the outcome document. However, other participants raised objections to incorporating such language. In a statement delivered on behalf of 59 supporting States,<sup>56</sup> Costa Rica called for the retention and strengthening of specific gender-related text, helping to sustain momentum towards its adoption.<sup>57</sup>

The participants ultimately produced an outcome document<sup>58</sup> containing new and progressive language on gender, as well as linkages between small arms and light weapons and the women, peace and security agenda. For the first time, the preambular section—which usually contains the political declaration of States—included references to women’s equal, full and effective participation and to the need to integrate gender perspectives into implementation efforts for the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. In addition, through the outcome document, the Meeting recognized that eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons was a key part of combating gender-based violence and sexual violence in conflict. That was the first time that the latter had been mentioned in the context of the Programme of Action.

Furthermore, the Meeting encouraged States to (a) harmonize their policies and action plans for women, peace and security—including all four of the agenda’s pillars<sup>59</sup>—with national efforts on small arms and light weapons; (b) track the differing impacts of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons on women, men, girls and boys through the collection of data disaggregated by sex and—appearing for the first time in an outcome document of the Programme of Action—by age and disability; (c) exchange national experiences on incorporating gender considerations into their efforts against the illicit trade in small arms; (d) increase funding for relevant policies and programmes, advocacy, education, training and research on the issue; and (e) report gender-relevant information in reports for the Programme of Action.

<sup>56</sup> Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, Namibia, Netherlands, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States and Uruguay.

<sup>57</sup> Costa Rica, [joint statement](#) to the Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons on behalf of a group of States, New York, 28 July 2021.

<sup>58</sup> [A/CONF.192/BMS/2021/1](#).

<sup>59</sup> Participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery.

Notably, one third of the [events](#) held on the margins of the Meeting were on gender-related issues. Civil society representatives also spoke about gender inclusion during their designated time slot.<sup>60</sup>

### Security Council

The gendered nature of small arms and light weapons featured prominently in the Secretary-General’s 2021 report<sup>61</sup> on small arms and light weapons to the Security Council. In the report, the Secretary-General emphasized how small arms and light weapons were significantly linked with gender, including through the differing impacts of their availability on men and women, and the role of such weapons in facilitating violence against civilians, such as conflict-related sexual violence.

Recognizing the relevance of small arms and light weapons to all four pillars of the women, peace and security agenda—participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery—the Secretary-General called on the Security Council to further strengthen that convergence. In particular, he encouraged States to streamline their efforts to control small arms and light weapons with their work on women, peace and security. To that end, the Secretary-General highlighted the importance of national focal points for those matters, who conducted frequent exchanges and harmonized the corresponding national action plans. He also encouraged the Council to promote women’s participation in all processes and forums on disarmament and arms control, and he specifically noted the continued under-representation of women in the field of small arms and light weapons control.

To address the lack of disaggregated data for developing effective gender-responsive initiatives, the Secretary-General recommended integrating the collection and analysis of age- and sex-disaggregated data on small arms and light weapons into related mandates of the Security Council. In addition, he encouraged Member States to support civil society organizations, especially women’s organizations, and international organizations with funding to help collect such data.

Many Council members highlighted the importance of incorporating gender and youth considerations when addressing issues related to small arms and light weapons. In that regard, many also expressed support for integrating small arms issues into the Council’s consideration of other thematic issues, such as children and armed conflict; women, peace and security; and sustainable development.<sup>62</sup>

In December, the Security Council adopted resolution [2616 \(2021\)](#), focusing on the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and diversion of arms and related materials in violation of Council-mandated arms embargoes. By the resolution, the Council’s first thematic resolution on small arms since 2015, the body urged

<sup>60</sup> Farida Nabourema (Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control), [statement](#) to the seventh Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms and Light Weapons, New York, 28 July 2021.

<sup>61</sup> [S/2021/839](#).

<sup>62</sup> [S/PV.8874](#).

Member States to mainstream perspectives that considered the disproportionate impact of illicit arms flows on women and children. The Council stated that such mainstreaming should take place in both policymaking and the implementation of programmes to combat the trafficking and diversion of arms and ammunition, adding that it recognized the importance of women's full, equal and meaningful participation in those efforts.

### Cybersecurity

Several States continued to highlight gender aspects of cybersecurity. In 2021, they did so in the context of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, which held its third and final substantive session in March.

In its final report,<sup>63</sup> the Working Group underscored the importance of narrowing the “gender digital divide” and promoting women's full and effective participation and leadership in decision-making processes related to the use of information and communications technologies. It also concluded that cybersecurity capacity-building should be gender-sensitive and inclusive, universal and non-discriminatory.

States took up gender issues in a cyber context again in December at the first substantive session of the succeeding Open-ended Working Group on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies. At the meeting, Canada proposed organizing a dedicated session on the topic of gender, which could explore “gender-related [cyber] threats, including how internet shutdowns and data breaches affect women and the LGBT community differently”. Other suggested areas for discussion included gender mainstreaming in national cyber strategies, taking gender into account when implementing the norms<sup>64</sup> agreed upon in 2015 by the relevant Group of Governmental Experts, and how to mainstream gender issues in the work of the Open-ended Working Group.<sup>65</sup>

Meanwhile, to assist States in their efforts to mainstream a gender perspective in cybersecurity discussions, UNIDIR produced two new studies: [Gender approaches to cybersecurity: Design, defence and response](#);<sup>66</sup> and [System update: Towards a women, peace and cybersecurity agenda](#).<sup>67</sup> The authors addressed many themes that appeared in the Working Group's final report,<sup>68</sup> including the importance of narrowing the gender digital divide and promoting women's effective and meaningful participation and leadership on cyber issues.

<sup>63</sup> A/AC.290/2021/CRP.2.

<sup>64</sup> A/70/174, para. 13.

<sup>65</sup> Office for Disarmament Affairs, “Canada's Proposal for the Work of the 2021-25 United Nations Open-Ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security”, December 2021.

<sup>66</sup> The authors of the study were Katharine Millar, James Shires and Tatiana Tropina.

<sup>67</sup> The authors of the study were Lisa Sharland, Netta Goussac and Emilia Currey.

<sup>68</sup> A/AC.290/2021/CRP.2.

### Ammunition

The Group of Governmental Experts established by the General Assembly resolution on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus (72/55) adopted its final report<sup>69</sup> by consensus in September. The report included a dedicated section on gender mainstreaming, as well as a call for States to encourage the full involvement of women and men in decision-making and implementation processes related to conventional ammunition management. Furthermore, the Group encouraged States to consider mainstreaming gender into their policies and practices.

The Group noted that the gendered impacts of accidental explosions at ammunition facilities and the diversion of ammunition needed to be better understood, including through research informed by the collection and analysis of gender- and age-disaggregated data. According to the Group, such data should be collected to enhance the benefits of through-life management and supply chain security approaches to conventional ammunition management, as well as to mitigate risks effectively. The Group further concluded that there was value in considering ammunition management throughout its life cycle using a gender analysis to identify relevant entry points for gender mainstreaming.

Later in 2021, the General Assembly adopted a new resolution on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus (76/233). By the resolution, the Assembly continued to recognize the need to encourage the full involvement of both men and women in ammunition management practice and policy.

To support national authorities in mainstreaming gender in their ammunition management policies and practices, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and Small Arms Survey, an independent research institute, launched a new report with practical gender considerations for managing ammunition throughout its life cycle.<sup>70</sup>

### Nuclear weapons

With the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in early 2021, renewed attention was drawn to the recognition in the Treaty of gender and humanitarian perspectives on nuclear weapons. The disproportionate impact of nuclear weapons on women and girls is recognized in the Treaty and, under article 6, States parties are obligated to provide age- and gender-sensitive assistance to those affected by nuclear weapons. The need for the equal, full and effective participation of both women and men in promoting peace and security is also recognized in the Treaty.

<sup>69</sup> A/76/324.

<sup>70</sup> Emile LeBrun, *Gender-sensitive Ammunition Management Processes: Considerations for National Authorities* (Office for Disarmament Affairs and Small Arms Survey, 2021). The publication was produced as part of a Germany-funded project on gender-sensitive ammunition management, which was launched at a virtual event.

Meanwhile, in anticipation of the tenth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty), States and other actors recommended including women and addressing gender, diversity and feminist perspectives in the forthcoming discussions. On 6 April, UNIDIR and the Office for Disarmament Affairs co-hosted a [webinar](#) entitled “[Integrating gender perspectives into the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty review process — towards an equal and secure future](#)”, which focused on the role of gender perspectives and analysis in strengthening the Treaty and its relevance to all three of its pillars—namely, disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In her [opening remarks](#) at the event, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs called for a gender-responsive and inclusive Review Conference. A panel comprising representatives of Australia, Malaysia, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Ploughshares Fund then discussed the importance of gender perspectives and gender balance in strengthening the Treaty, principles that the Review Conference’s President-designate reaffirmed.

### Convention on Cluster Munitions

During the second Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, a group of 24 States<sup>71</sup> submitted a working paper<sup>72</sup> on enhancing the Convention’s impact in the area of gender and diversity by fostering synergies with other international conventions and policies.

States parties also adopted the “Lausanne Declaration: Protecting Lives, Empowering Victims, Enabling Development”,<sup>73</sup> as well as the Lausanne Action Plan<sup>74</sup> for the period 2021–2026. By the Lausanne Declaration, States parties committed to (a) taking practical steps to consider the unique needs, vulnerabilities and perspectives of men, women, boys and girls from diverse populations and all ages, and (b) striving to ensure full, equal and meaningful gender-balanced participation in the work under the Convention. Furthermore, States parties agreed that the countries acting as Coordinators for the general status and operation of the Convention would also act as gender focal points, providing advice on gender mainstreaming and ensuring that matters related to gender and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities were taken into account in the Plan’s implementation.

<sup>71</sup> Australia, Austria, Belgium, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Mexico, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom.

<sup>72</sup> [CCM/CONF/2021/5](#).

<sup>73</sup> [CCM/CONF/2021/6](#), annex I.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, annex II.

### Explosive weapons

At the sixth Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons,<sup>75</sup> the High Contracting parties adopted an outcome document<sup>76</sup> in which they recognized the importance of gender balance in the Convention’s meetings.

Separately, the Group of Experts of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention’s Amended Protocol II recognized the importance of a balanced involvement of women and men in its work, including reviews of the Protocol’s implementation.<sup>77</sup> The Group also acknowledged the importance of equal opportunities for the participation of men and women in countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices.<sup>78</sup> However, participants did not reach agreement on a proposal to introduce language in the Convention’s declaration on improvised explosive devices about the differential impacts of such devices on women, men, girls and boys. The proposed language would have been similar to the text adopted by the General Assembly in its 2020 resolution on improvised explosive devices (75/59).

Meanwhile, the UNIDIR gender and disarmament programme published a fact sheet entitled “[Gendered Impacts of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas](#)”. In the document, UNIDIR outlined direct and reverberating impacts of explosive weapons on men, women, boys and girls. It also offered suggestions for mainstreaming gender, both in discussions on explosive weapons and in initiatives to protect civilians.

### Emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems

In 2021, the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems discussed the potential of weapons that rely on data sets that perpetuate or amplify unintentional social biases, including gender and racial bias. In that context, some States said that the gendered impacts of weapons should be addressed in the work of the Group, which had been convened within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

To support the Group, UNIDIR organized discussions and carried out research on gender bias in military applications of artificial intelligence (AI). In its final report, entitled *Does Military AI Have Gender? Understanding Bias and Promoting Ethical Approaches in Military Applications of AI*, UNIDIR outlined avenues for countering bias and avoiding harm. Its proposals included conducting a gender-based review of the military applications of artificial intelligence to highlight how such systems represented and responded to gender, as well as to explore past cases in which harmful effects related to bias had been mitigated.

<sup>75</sup> 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.

<sup>76</sup> [CCW/CONF.VI/11](#).

<sup>77</sup> [CCW/AP.II/CONF.23/6](#), para. 34 (g).

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, annex V, para. 9.

For its part, the Office for Disarmament Affairs engaged with industry actors, as well as youth and students, to discuss gender dimensions of the weaponized use of new technologies, including issues of data-based bias, algorithmic bias and the replication or exacerbation of bias. They also considered possible effects of the relative lack of diversity in relevant professional fields.<sup>79</sup>

### Biological Weapons Convention

In November, Panama submitted a working paper entitled “Enhancing Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment as an Integral Part of the Institutional Strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention”<sup>80</sup> to the Meeting of States Parties to the Convention.<sup>81</sup>

While Panama did not propose the use of any gender-related language in the Meeting’s final report,<sup>82</sup> the working paper garnered considerable attention and received positive feedback from several States parties.

In June, the Convention’s Implementation Support Unit and the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group<sup>83</sup> co-organized an interactive discussion on “[Advancing Gender Perspectives in the Biological Weapons Convention](#)”. The webinar enabled an informal exchange of views on the relevance of gender perspectives to the implementation of the Convention. Additionally, on 4 May, the Group launched a new [fact sheet on gender and biological weapons](#), summarizing the gender balance in recent meetings of the Convention. The fact sheet included an analysis of women’s participation in multilateral meetings, as well as potential sex-specific and gendered impacts of biological weapons.

### Women’s participation and leadership

At the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly First Committee, 35 per cent of delegates were women and 65 per cent were men, which was consistent with ratios from the previous year. While 53 delegations were composed entirely of men, eight had only women. Four of those eight delegations had only one person.<sup>84</sup>

Furthermore, only 25 per cent of the 165 delegations had a female head of delegation.<sup>85</sup> That ratio reflected a decrease from the previous two years, when about one in three heads of delegation were women. As many as 22 States<sup>86</sup> that had a female head of delegation in 2020 sent a male head of delegation in 2021.

At the First Committee’s meetings in 2021, women made up 25 per cent of the delegates who took the floor.<sup>87</sup> It was noted that women more commonly spoke about gender and women’s participation compared to men.<sup>88</sup>

On the margins of the First Committee session, UNIDIR and the International Peace Institute co-hosted the side event “[Where Are the Women? Staying Curious About Gender in International Security](#)”. Panellists shared their insights about women’s experiences in international security while also exploring ways to overcome structural gender inequalities in disarmament, arms control and peacekeeping.<sup>89</sup>

Similar gender gaps among speakers also persisted in other disarmament forums. In 2021, the percentages of women speakers in several major meetings were as follows: 23 per cent at the Conference on Disarmament; 29 per cent at the Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention; 30 per cent at the seventh Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons; 36 per cent at the meetings of the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems; and 37 per cent at the meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security.

At the second session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, women made up no more than 5 per cent of those who took the floor.

Responding to such gaps, on 27 October, UNIDIR published a [fact sheet on Arab women in international security and disarmament](#). It also partnered with UN-Women to hold an event on advancing the role of women in international security in the Middle East. The event included representatives of the organizing entities, as well as two focus groups with Arab women experts working in international security.

<sup>79</sup> For example, the Office for Disarmament Affairs organized workshops on responsible innovation with Vodafone Nova, Youth Leaders for Disarmament (a youth organization from Viet Nam) and the University of Tokyo.

<sup>80</sup> [BWC/MSP/2020/WP.6](#). An earlier version had been submitted to the 2020 Meeting of Experts on Institutional Strengthening of the Convention, held in September 2021, as [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.5/WP.6](#).

<sup>81</sup> Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, also known as the Biological Weapons Convention.

<sup>82</sup> [BWC/MSP/2020/7](#).

<sup>83</sup> Co-chaired by the Director of UNIDIR and the Ambassadors of Ireland, of Namibia and of the Philippines, the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group seeks to promote dialogue, shared knowledge and concrete opportunities to advance gender-responsive action within disarmament processes.

<sup>84</sup> Of the 53 delegations comprising only men, 15 (28 per cent) had only one person.

<sup>85</sup> The 41 delegations headed by women, based on the first name on each State’s list of delegates, included one-person delegations.

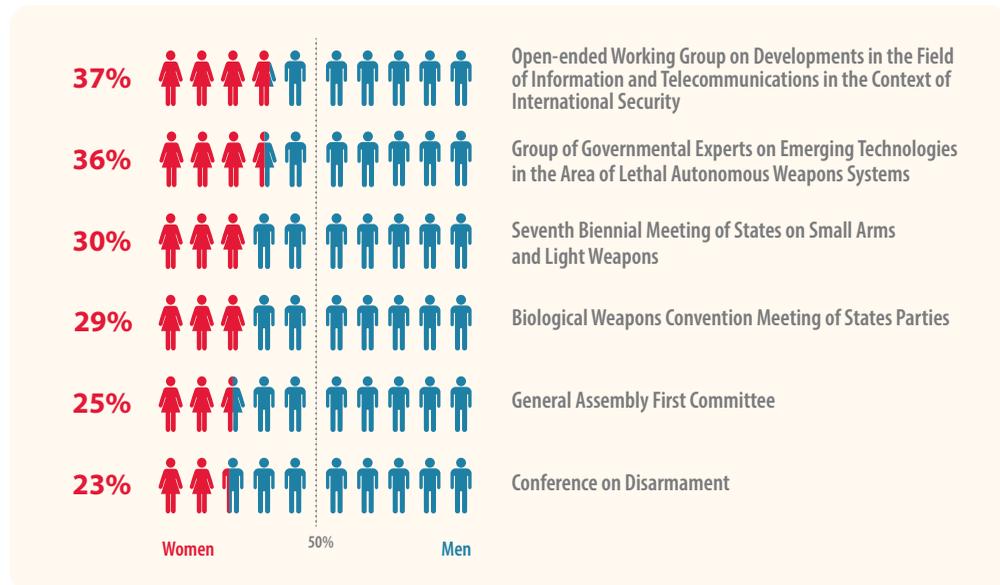
<sup>86</sup> Albania, Barbados, Belize, Bhutan, Burundi, Cuba, Czechia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Finland, Ghana, Italy, Jamaica, Kenya, Lithuania, Monaco, Panama, Poland, Samoa, Slovenia, Togo and United Arab Emirates.

<sup>87</sup> The cited figure was based on statements of Member States and groups in the general debate, the thematic cluster discussions, two virtual exchanges and the action phase. States are counted several times if they spoke in several meetings. That figure was 24 per cent in 2020.

<sup>88</sup> Around 40 per cent of such statements were delivered by women (exact number not yet analysed). To what extent that is owing to States championing gender equality by sending a woman as the head of delegation, or to women more often deciding to incorporate gender topics in their remarks, would also need to be further analysed.

<sup>89</sup> The event was co-sponsored by Canada, Costa Rica, Ireland, Namibia, Norway, the Philippines and Sweden, and attracted over 700 live views.

### Women speakers in 2021 disarmament meetings



The General Assembly recognized in a resolution on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, adopted in 2010, that women should participate equally, fully and effectively in disarmament discussions and decision-making. Yet women's voices were not yet heard as often as men's in any of the major disarmament forums in 2021. In the First Committee and the Conference on Disarmament, 25 per cent and 23 per cent, respectively, of speakers representing Member States were women, which corresponds to the proportion of women heads of delegations at these meetings.

Note: The data on speakers at the cited meetings are based on information by notetakers, not on official meeting records.

Meanwhile, the international community experienced mixed success in 2021 with respect to progress towards gender balance in disarmament-related groups of governmental experts. Gender parity had been achieved in the initial composition of the Group of Governmental Experts on Problems Arising from the Accumulation of Conventional Ammunition Stockpiles in Surplus, established by General Assembly resolution 72/55 of 4 December 2017. However, the subsequent replacement of experts by some States led to an imbalance in favour of male members for the third session, held in 2021. Separately, in forming the Group of Governmental Experts to Further Consider Nuclear Disarmament Verification Issues, established by General Assembly resolution 74/50 of 12 December 2019, the Secretary-General was requested to choose members based on an equitable representation of men and

women. Owing to favourable consideration of that mandate during the nomination process, the Group's membership reached a record level of 40 per cent women experts in 2021.

For its part, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and its regional centres systematically pursued and reported on gender balance and diversity in their activities. Of the 4,300 people who took part in 90 disarmament-related events, webinars and training sessions without a thematic gender focus, 38 per cent were women, and 62 per cent were men.

In 2021, greater focus was given to bridging the gender gap among women practitioners in the field of weapons and ammunition management. Under its programme on gender and disarmament, UNIDIR carried out quantitative analysis and interviews to better understand women's participation in technical arms control, including both challenges and good practices for fostering gender equality in that area. The findings were presented in the UNIDIR report *Women Managing Weapons*<sup>90</sup> and discussed at the seventh Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Furthermore, the Secretary-General referenced the study in his 2021 report<sup>91</sup> to the Security Council on small arms and light weapons, advocating for stronger women's participation in the field of small arms and light weapons control.

### Fellowships

Providing fellowship programmes and initiatives for women in disarmament continued to be seen as a short- and long-term strategy for pursuing women's equal participation in the field. In 2021, Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand and the United Kingdom helped implement an ongoing [fellowship programme](#) for women on international security in cyberspace, funding travel and providing other support for women experts to participate in the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security. UNIDIR and Women in International Security (Switzerland chapter) set up a new initiative, the "UNIDIR-WIIS CoLab", to promote scholarship, dialogue and networking for women in the field of disarmament and international security. In the 2021 United Nations Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament,<sup>92</sup> 10 out of 19 diplomats were women.

Under the European Union-sponsored [Youth for Biosecurity Initiative](#),<sup>93</sup> the Office for Disarmament Affairs organized the Biosecurity Diplomacy Workshop

<sup>90</sup> The authors were Hana Salama and Emma Bjertén-Günther.

<sup>91</sup> S/2021/839.

<sup>92</sup> The Programme contributes to the cadre of trained officials who are further qualified to hold multilateral and disarmament-related posts within their respective Governments. In 2021, the Office for Disarmament Affairs continued to ensure geographic diversity and encourage the nomination of women diplomats for the Programme.

<sup>93</sup> The Youth for Biosecurity Initiative was designed to increase meaningful youth participation in multilateral discussions taking place within the framework of the Biological Weapons Convention.

for Young Scientists from the Global South. Of the 49 scientists who joined, either as participants or as expert lecturers, 29 were women. The initiative supported the participation of young women scientists in the Biological Weapons Convention Meetings of Experts in 2021, as well as the adoption of the [Youth Declaration for Biosecurity](#) during the Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention in November. The Declaration contained a set of policy recommendations, including a call for increased representation of youth and women in all biosecurity-related matters under the Convention.

In 2021, the [Scholarship for Peace and Security](#), an annual training programme implemented by the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), awarded [scholarships](#) to 150 young professionals in the OSCE region in 2021, 87 per cent of whom were women. Furthermore, the Office's "[Disarmament4Educators](#)" project in South and South-East Asia organized round-table discussions, an online training course and a webinar to a cohort comprising more than 70 per cent women.

## Women, peace and security

### Security Council

In 2021, the Secretary-General's annual report<sup>94</sup> to the Security Council on women, peace and security had a thematic focus on "reversing the upward trajectory in military spending",<sup>95</sup> one of five goals identified in 2020 for implementing Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) during its third decade.

In his 2021 report to the Council, the Secretary-General observed that attention to military spending was lacking in frameworks on women, peace and security around the world, an observation that delegates had raised in the General Assembly First Committee and other forums. In his report, the Secretary-General encouraged United Nations entities and civil society organizations to advocate for people-centred policies and reductions in military spending, and called for greater investment in social and human security.<sup>96</sup>

The Security Council held its annual [open debate](#) on women, peace and security on 21 October under the presidency of Kenya,<sup>97</sup> which had joined with Ireland and Mexico to form a "presidency trio" initiative on women, peace and security for the months of September, October and November. While the open debate was focused on the theme "Investing in Women in Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding",<sup>98</sup> military

spending also featured prominently in the discussion. All three briefers,<sup>99</sup> 10 Member States<sup>100</sup> and groups that addressed the Council mentioned disarmament or reducing military spending; four of those States were current Security Council members.<sup>101</sup>

Addressing the Council during the open debate, the Secretary-General said that arms races and increasing nuclear threats were part of an "avalanche of crises" that the world faced.<sup>102</sup> He added that ongoing increases in military expenditure had come at the expense of investment in human security. Emphasizing that conflict prevention and disarmament were at the heart of the women's movement, the Secretary-General said that there was a direct link between increased investment in arms and decreases in gender equality.

Sima Bahous, Executive Director of UN-Women,<sup>103</sup> focused on two critical needs in her remarks: increasing funding for the women, peace and security agenda while curbing military spending; and securing women's meaningful participation in peace and security. She called on the Council to take a hard look at military overspending, as well as to increase transparency and accountability in budgeting for armed forces. She also recommended quotas—in combination with inclusive processes, data collection and gender analysis—as an effective mechanism to increase women's participation in all areas of peace and security.

Bineta Diop, African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, said that military spending came at the cost of human security, with particularly negative effects on women and girls during the COVID-19 pandemic. Then, in separate remarks, the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security<sup>104</sup> condemned militarized responses to social crises. In a statement<sup>105</sup> endorsed by many States, Canada highlighted the upward trajectory of military spending and commended the focus on military spending in the Secretary-General's report.

### Research and advocacy on military spending

In 2021, the Secretary-General requested that actors on disarmament and gender equality join forces to build evidence and advocacy for reductions in military spending. Acting on that goal, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

<sup>94</sup> S/2021/827.

<sup>95</sup> S/2020/946, para. 113 (c).

<sup>96</sup> The Secretary-General's report contained references to other aspects of disarmament and arms control, including the work of the Office for Disarmament Affairs and UNIDIR.

<sup>97</sup> The open debate of the Security Council was the first to allow participation by non-Council members since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

<sup>98</sup> For more information, see the concept note for the open debate (S/2021/875, annex).

<sup>99</sup> Sima Bahous, UN-Women Executive Director; Bineta Diop, African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security; and Celia Umenza Velasco of Cxhab Wala Kiwe (Association of Indigenous Councils of the North of Cauca), representative of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

<sup>100</sup> Austria, Canada, Costa Rica, Ireland, Mexico, Namibia, Norway, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Sweden.

<sup>101</sup> In the 2020 open debate, 3 of the 15 Council members mentioned disarmament and arms control, compared to two in 2019 and none in 2018 and 2017.

<sup>102</sup> See S/PV.8886.

<sup>103</sup> In 2021, Sima Bahous was appointed the new UN-Women Executive Director, replacing Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka.

<sup>104</sup> The Group was represented by Celia Umenza Velasco.

<sup>105</sup> Canada, on behalf of the 65 members of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security (S/PV.8886, pp. 26–27). Statements were also delivered by [Ireland](#); [Namibia](#); [Norway](#); and [Sweden](#), on behalf of the Nordic countries.

and the Executive Director of UN-Women published a joint op-ed,<sup>106</sup> in which they questioned militarized notions of security, then put forward an alternative, human-centred approach focused on the pursuit of disarmament and arms control measures.

Moreover, renewed international interest in the relationship between military spending and the women, peace and security agenda resulted in new research opportunities for United Nations entities, academic institutions and civil society organizations in 2021. Stakeholders in those groups came together on several occasions to share their experiences in pursuing common objectives for military spending, as well as to exchange information on gaps in related research.<sup>107</sup>

Meanwhile, UN-Women commissioned three studies that were focused, respectively, on the interplay between gender inequality and military spending levels, the relationship between social spending and military spending, and the role of peace operations in reducing military spending.<sup>108</sup> Research for the first study<sup>109</sup> showed a clear association between militarization and gender inequality, with a stronger link in countries with lower income or lower levels of democracy. In the second study,<sup>110</sup> data and analysis suggested that military spending left policymakers unable to respond to the needs of women and girls. The researchers of the third study<sup>111</sup> found that greater militarization led to higher gender inequality and that a higher representation of women in legislative and executive branches of government could lead to more social spending. Another finding was that United Nations peace operations could allow for more resources to be allocated for priorities supporting women because peace operations indirectly reduced levels of militarization, increasing women's empowerment and improving the overall stability of institutions.

### Women, peace and security compact

In 2021, the Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action<sup>112</sup> was launched. It was developed through a multi-stakeholder process within the framework of the Generation Equality Forum.<sup>113</sup> Covering the period 2021–2026,

<sup>106</sup> “Op-ed: For a safer and more resilient world, put people before runaway military spending”, 6 May 2021.

<sup>107</sup> Such events included an expert discussion organized by UN-Women and a public event by DCAF - Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, UN-Women and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on the links between gender inequality, women's participation and military spending.

<sup>108</sup> The studies are referenced in the report of the Secretary-General on women, peace and security (S/2021/827).

<sup>109</sup> Adem Elveren, “Evidence on the Impact of Militarization on Gender Inequality: Preliminary Finding” (2021), research using various panel regression methods of different militarization indicators and gender equality indicators between 1990 and 2019 for 153 countries).

<sup>110</sup> Ruth Carlitz, “Comparing military and human security spending” (2021).

<sup>111</sup> Michelle Benson and Ismene Gizelis, “Militarization and women's empowerment in post-conflict societies” (2021).

<sup>112</sup> Generation Equality Forum, *Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action Compact: Framework*, 2021.

<sup>113</sup> The Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action was collectively developed in a multi-stakeholder format with inputs from Member States, United Nations entities,

### Military spending and gender equality

Data from **153** countries between 1990 and 2019, using panel regression methods to analyze associations between **gender equality**<sup>1</sup> and **militarization**<sup>2</sup> with alternative variables on **development and conflict**<sup>3</sup>



Higher military spending crowds out social spending, which could disproportionately impact women.



Militarization is associated with higher gender inequality and lower female labour force participation.



The negative impact of military spending on gender equality is lower in wealthy and more democratic countries.



Higher representation of women in parliament is likely to reduce military spending.

<sup>1</sup> In his study, Adem Elveren used the following indices: UNDP Gender Inequality Index; Social Institutions and Gender Index of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; and Gender Development Index.

<sup>2</sup> The following were used in the study: Global Militarization Index on military expenditure, military personnel and heavy weapons, Bonn International Center for Conversion; ratio of military spending to gross domestic product (GDP), Stockholm International Peace Research Institute; and “Military in Politics” indicator, International Country Risk Guide (ICRG) data set, Political Risk Service (PRS) Group.

<sup>3</sup> The following were used in the study: GDP per capita, World Development Indicators; occurrence of major conflict, Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP)/Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) Armed Conflict Dataset; Internal and External Conflict indicators, ICRG data set; Polity2 on democracy, Polity IV Project; and Parliament, Anckar and Fredriksson data set for political regimes.

Following the Secretary-General's recommendation to the Security Council in 2020 for actors in disarmament and the women, peace and security agenda to develop evidence-based analysis that links savings in military spending to investments in economic and social development, UN-Women commissioned a series of studies on military spending and gender equality. By analysing correlations between indicators for gender equality and militarization from 153 countries, Adem Yavuz Elveren found that higher military spending was associated with higher gender inequality. The research also indicated that more women in parliament were associated with reduced military budgets.

the Compact was designed to provide a path for concerted action by Member States, United Nations entities, regional organizations, civil society, private-sector actors and academic institutions. Several thematic areas for joint action included financing the women, peace and security agenda; realizing women's full, equal and meaningful participation; and protecting women's human rights in conflict.

The Office for Disarmament Affairs contributed to consultations about developing a series of dedicated actions to which the Compact's stakeholders could commit. The Office focused its contributions, in particular, on target-setting for women's leadership in peace and security;<sup>114</sup> ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty;<sup>115</sup> and shifting military expenditure to human security, conflict prevention and peacebuilding.<sup>116</sup> Furthermore, in July, the Office became one of the Compact's 160 original signatories.

### National action plans on women, peace and security

Of the 10 States<sup>117</sup> that launched a new national action plan on women, peace and security in 2021, 55 included actions on disarmament or arms control.<sup>118</sup>

In adopting its first national action plan, [Mexico](#) committed to promoting a gender perspective and the empowerment of women in multilateral peace and security, including in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.<sup>119</sup>

The [Netherlands](#) issued its fourth national action plan, including measures for implementing article 7.4 of the Arms Trade Treaty<sup>120</sup> and advancing women's equal

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regional organizations, women's and youth networks, the private-sector, academic and research institutions, and participants at the Generation Equality Forum in Mexico in March 2021.

<sup>114</sup> Action D.3.1 states that Member States are to "adopt and regularly monitor targets to increase the number of women in leadership roles—with parity as the goal—in politics, peacekeeping, security sector, peacebuilding and humanitarian/refugee planning and coordination entities".

<sup>115</sup> Action E.3.3 states that Member States are to "ratify and domesticate the Rome Statute, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), including the legally binding provision on gender in Article 7.4, and other relevant international and regional legal instruments, including provisions relating to sexual and gender-based crimes and human rights violations".

<sup>116</sup> Action E.3.4 states that Member States are to "progressively and responsibly shift military expenditure to human security, conflict prevention and peacebuilding". Action E.4.11 states that academia is to "develop evidence-based analysis, policy recommendations and advocacy that links savings in military spending to investments in economic and social development". Action E.2.2 states that civil society is to "promote existing research linking savings in expenditure on militarized state security to investments in economic and social development".

<sup>117</sup> Australia, Cyprus, Estonia, France, Germany, Mexico, Netherlands, Slovakia, Uganda and United Arab Emirates (according to the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom database on national action plans on women, peace and security).

<sup>118</sup> Australia and Estonia do not include actions on disarmament and arms control. Slovakia's action plan mentions financial support to the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (UNDP), but no actions. The action plans of Cyprus and the United Arab Emirates were not available for review.

<sup>119</sup> As of 2021, about one third of current national action plans on women, peace and security included specific actions towards disarmament.

<sup>120</sup> Before authorizing the export of conventional arms or items covered by the Arms Trade Treaty, States parties are required by article 7.4 to assess the potential that the exported material could,

and meaningful participation in peace and security. In the plan, the Government identified increased militarization, the steady spread of small arms and light weapons, the development of new weapons, and the lack of a gender lens in the security and justice sector as factors exacerbating gender inequality.

[France](#) began the five-year period of its third national plan, which included actions on the following: national mechanisms for arms control and registration of small arms; gender-responsive disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes; and the effective participation of women in peace and security processes.

[Uganda's](#) third national action plan included measures for civil society participation in disarmament programmes. The plan also specified that Uganda's national focal point on small arms and light weapons should address issues related to gender-based and sexual violence.

[Germany's](#) action plan for the period 2021–2024 outlined the following priorities: gender analysis in arms control and disarmament; women's participation in decision-making on disarmament matters and national, regional and international processes; capacity development and promotion of the Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control; and targeted training programmes for women on disarmament and arms control.

### Conflict-related sexual violence

In 2021, the United Nations continued implementing various mandates contained in Security Council resolution [1888 \(2009\)](#) to tackle conflict-related sexual violence as an issue of peace and security.

Arms control was prominently reflected in the Secretary-General's report<sup>121</sup> to the Security Council on such violence. The report included a specific recommendation to address the proliferation and trafficking of small arms as drivers of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict zones, in line with the Arms Trade Treaty and other global instruments. The Secretary-General also recommended continued work—under various initiatives for policymaking, programming and capacity-building—to address the nexus between conflict-related sexual violence and the diversion of small arms from national stockpiles.

Meanwhile, through the [United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict](#),<sup>122</sup> the United Nations Secretariat continued to strengthen recognition of

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inter alia, be used to commit or facilitate serious acts of gender-based violence or serious acts of violence against women and children.

<sup>121</sup> [S/2021/312](#).

<sup>122</sup> United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict is a network of United Nations entities, united to end sexual violence during and in the wake of armed conflict. As of the end of 2021, it comprised 21 entities: Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, Department of Peace Operations, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, International Organization for Migration, International Trade Centre, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, Office for Disarmament Affairs, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Office of Counter-

the ways that small arms and light weapons are linked with conflict-related sexual violence. In a related development, Member States acknowledged that eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons was a key part of combating gender-based violence and sexual violence in conflict, adding a direct reference on the matter to the outcome document of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.<sup>123</sup> Throughout 2021, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and its regional centres continued to highlight such linkages through their activities.

### Gender mainstreaming in disarmament and arms control

In 2021, non-governmental organizations and United Nations entities published a variety of new toolkits for facilitating the integration of gender perspectives into the work of peace and security.<sup>124</sup>

Meanwhile, the United Nations continued to partner with civil society organizations to support incorporating gender considerations into the work of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. It did so with the support of the informal coordination mechanism, led by the Office for Disarmament Affairs, on small arms and light weapons and gender, which was expanded in 2021 to include 10 organizations<sup>125</sup> coordinating their work and learning from each other. Six meetings of the mechanism took place in 2021.

The Office for Disarmament Affairs integrated a gender perspective into about half of its reported activities in 2021. Those activities included 43 training sessions,

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Terrorism, Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, United Nations Population Fund, UN-Women and World Health Organization.

<sup>123</sup> A/CONF.192/BMS/2021/1, para. 77.

<sup>124</sup> UNIDIR and the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group issued the third edition of their *Gender & Disarmament Resource Pack*. The International Peace Institute published "How to Do a Gender Analysis: Practical Guidance for the United Nations Community". The British American Security Information Council, the Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy and Chatham House launched the *Gender, Think-Tanks and International Affairs Toolkit*. UN-Women published *Gender-inclusive Peace Processes: Strengthening Women's Meaningful Participation through Constituency Building*. Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament launched a new *programme on gender, peace and security*.

<sup>125</sup> Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy, Control Arms, International Action Network on Small Arms, Mines Advisory Group International, Office for Disarmament Affairs (including its regional centres), Pathfinders, Small Arms Survey, South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, UNIDIR and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

events and meetings that had gender equality as the main objective or significantly addressed gender equality.<sup>126</sup>

Separately, initiatives on gender equality directly benefited from 4 of the 12 [projects](#) selected for implementation during the 2020–2021 funding cycle of the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR). The four projects were focused on regional action plans on gender; women, peace and security; support for women parliamentarians; and capacity-building for gender-responsive activities by civil society.

Furthermore, the Office for Disarmament Affairs acted through the Saving Lives Entity (SALIENT), a United Nations funding facility on small arms and light weapons, to help advance a pilot project in Cameroon on promoting security for women and youth through small arms control, as well as two other pilot projects in Jamaica and South Sudan.<sup>127</sup>

During the year, the Office launched a new [Gender Policy](#) for 2021–2025, setting forth an overarching framework for its activities on gender equality and intersectionality.<sup>128</sup> In the Policy, the Office outlined the relevant roles and responsibilities of all its personnel at all duty stations, as well as common commitments and priorities for gender mainstreaming and other strategic gender dimensions across its policies, programmes, projects and institutional practices. The Office also described its internal efforts for diversity, inclusion and gender parity.<sup>129</sup>

For its part, UNIDIR continued to conduct research and support Member States through its programme on gender and disarmament. To help build capacity and support engagement by disarmament stakeholders in countries outside the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, UNIDIR organized a virtual, regional workshop with national officials and experts from 11 countries in South and South-East Asia. The Institute presented key takeaways of the discussions, as well as recommendations, in a report entitled *Gender Perspectives in Arms Control and Disarmament: Views from South and South-East Asia*.

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<sup>126</sup> More than 130 activities were reported through the Office's internal reporting tool for gender mainstreaming.

<sup>127</sup> Initiatives funded by SALIENT place special emphasis on gender transformative approaches, including the generation of reliable sex-disaggregated data; 30 per cent of SALIENT programming funds must be utilized for activities that support gender equality.

<sup>128</sup> In the Gender Policy, the Office built upon its earlier [gender mainstreaming action plan](#), which, in 2003, became the first such plan to be launched by a United Nations entity. That Office updated the plan twice, in 2014 and in 2016.

<sup>129</sup> The Policy had three goals: (a) achieve gender parity, diversity and women's equal, full and effective participation and leadership in disarmament and arms control bodies and decision-making; (b) advocate and build capacities for analysing and integrating a gender perspective in disarmament and strengthen synergies with agendas on gender and on women, peace and security; and (c) strengthen the Office's capacity for gender mainstreaming and conducting intersectional gender analysis.

### United Nations flagship project

With financial contributions from the European Union, in 2021, the Office for Disarmament Affairs continued to implement its [flagship project](#) to support gender-mainstreamed policies, programmes and actions in the fight against trafficking and misuse of small arms, in line with the women, peace and security agenda. The project's overall objective was to contribute to international peace, security, gender equality and sustainable development by enhancing the effectiveness of measures to control small arms. Specifically, the aim was to enhance national-level small-arms control by promoting approaches based on systematic gender analysis, integration of gender perspectives and empowerment of women stakeholders.

In line with the project's objectives, the Office for Disarmament Affairs conducted a [series of webinars](#) in May and June, providing training and a platform for exchange to 82 representatives of regional and subregional organizations promoting gender equality and arms control in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe. The five webinars, focused on the following topics, respectively: (a) an introduction to gender and small arms control, including the relevance of disaggregated data collection; (b) the convergence of policy agendas on arms control and on women, peace and security with other instruments; (c) operationalizing gender-responsive small-arms control and ammunition management; (d) the role of arms control in eliminating violence against women, as well as the need to integrate arms control considerations into COVID-19 response mechanisms; and (e) the importance of multi-stakeholder involvement for an inclusive approach to the issue of small arms. Each webinar highlighted expert findings and good practices identified by regional and subregional organizations, thus emphasizing their important role in advancing gender-responsive policies and programmes for fighting the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

On 19 October, on the margins of the General Assembly First Committee's seventy-sixth session, the Office held a [virtual event](#) entitled "The Programme of Action on Small Arms: Outcomes of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States and the Way Ahead". Panellists representing diverse geographical regions and entities<sup>130</sup> highlighted their success in securing progressive language on gender in the outcome document of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action, which included a call for disaggregated data by sex, age and disability. The speakers also recognized the role of small-arms control in achieving the goals of the women, peace and security agenda, and drew attention to the intrinsic linkages between arms control and efforts to eliminate gender-based violence and sexual violence in conflict.

Additionally, to help translate policies into national policies and strategies, the Office's regional centres for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia and the Pacific continued to carry out extensive work under the project. Throughout the

<sup>130</sup> International Action Network on Small Arms, the Office's implementing partner for the global project, was among the entities represented.

year, the three regional centres supported the project while accounting for national and regional priorities and realities.

### United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa

In 2021, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa continued to facilitate a range of capacity-building activities on gender for Member States in the region.

Collaborating closely with the national commissions on small arms and light weapons in Mali and Sierra Leone, as well as with the Ministry of External Relations in Cameroon, the Regional Centre in Lomé conducted a series of in-person training sessions to support States in integrating gender dimensions into national and local efforts against the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons.<sup>131</sup> With respect to [Mali](#), which had achieved significant progress in establishing policies on small arms and in mainstreaming gender perspectives into its national action plan on small-arms control, the Centre highlighted that key arms control legislation, such as the [Firearms Law No. 028](#) adopted in March, remained "gender-blind" and unresponsive to the important role of arms control in preventing gender-based violence. In [Cameroon](#), national experts stressed the importance of incorporating gender dimensions into domestic laws, in particular by adapting firearms legislation and regulations to address issues such as rape, sexual violence, forced pregnancy, forced abortion and human rights violations. The experts also called for small-arms licensing processes to include background checks for past incidents of domestic violence as a precondition to legally possess such weapons. Separately, during training in [Sierra Leone](#), the National Commission on Small Arms noted that, although the expired 2015 national action plan on small arms included a detailed intervention strategy for controlling small arms and a blueprint for concerted action, it lacked indicators for integrating gender dimensions, youth engagement and women's participation. The Commission recommended that those absences be corrected in the Plan's next edition.

Workshops on gender conducted in Cameroon, Mali and Sierra Leone were followed by one-day practical activities tailored to each country. The activities were action-oriented and placed particular importance on national ownership. In Cameroon, regulators examined the country's national action plan and developed recommendations for the country to further integrate measures and policies for controlling small arms into its ongoing implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#). A similar exercise was conducted in Mali, where participants formulated recommendations<sup>132</sup> to advance the integration of gender considerations into the country's arms control policies and programmes. Furthermore, in close

<sup>131</sup> A total of 141 participants were trained (45 from Cameroon, 48 from Mali and 48 from Sierra Leone).

<sup>132</sup> "Recommendations on the links between small arms control and gender developed by the participants to the workshop carried out from 6 to 8 September 2021 in Bamako, Republic of Mali", 8 September 2021.

collaboration with the International Action Network on Small Arms, the Mines Advisory Group, the Small Arms Survey and UNDP, participants in Sierra Leone developed a gender-mainstreamed action strategy for its next national action plan on women, peace and security. Their recommendations covered issues such as weapons and ammunition management, border control, cooperation with law enforcement and development of plans for safer communities.

In addition, building on the previous year's training activities, and responding to expressions of interest from Member States, the Centre provided new support for the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to address gender issues. In collaboration with the National Commission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Mine Action Service, the Centre developed a [gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation tool](#) for the country's national action plan on small arms control. The Commission had identified monitoring and evaluation as a national priority in 2020, and the new tool included goals and indicators for measuring progress in implementing the national action plan, as well as lists of implementing partners that could support the Commission in improving data-collection efforts. Meanwhile, in the Central African Republic, the Centre collaborated with an independent consultant to conduct a gender analysis of the country's arms control policies and programmes. The Government's national commission on small arms and light weapons reviewed initial findings from the study at a round-table discussion on 13 October, and the consolidated report was expected to be finalized in early 2022.

### **United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean**

Based in Lima, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean continued to offer its specialized course on "[Firearms Investigations from a Gender Perspective](#)" to interested Member States. Throughout the year, the Centre conducted the course for law enforcement agencies, as well as judicial- and executive-branch institutions in Argentina, El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico. A total of 134 government officials received training, with 60 per cent of attendees being women.<sup>133</sup> Participants learned about the importance of considering gender perspectives in firearms-related crimes, methods for incorporating gender perspectives in investigating cases that involve firearms and ways to apply technical knowledge in conducting such investigations. Furthermore, by bringing together participants from diverse government entities and backgrounds, the course succeeded in promoting cross-institutional cooperation to tackle gender-based violence through initiatives to control small arms.

The Centre also conducted a series of virtual seminars on "[Measures Preventing Armed Violence Against Women](#)" for representatives of government

<sup>133</sup> Breakdown by country: Argentina (22 women among 34 participants); El Salvador (18 women among 36 participants); Guatemala (18 women among 28 participants); and Mexico (23 women among 36 participants).

offices, civil society organizations and academic institutions across Argentina, Costa Rica and Guatemala. A total of 431 participants benefited from the training, and 65 per cent of them were women.<sup>134</sup> The seminar emphasized, among other things, that the presence of a firearm in the context of gender-based violence should be considered a risk factor not only because of its lethality but also because it could be used to threaten and intimidate victims, making them more vulnerable. In addition, the Centre presented the principal findings and recommendations from its [normative studies](#) on the links between gender-based violence, regulations on small arms and light weapons, and legislation in different countries in the region.

On 6 December, the Centre organized the first of three planned subregional virtual workshops to help incorporate gender perspectives in the implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. The workshop, entitled "20 years after the adoption of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons: progress and challenges in the inclusion of gender considerations", brought together 37 national officials, including 23 women, from Argentina, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama and Peru. The selected participants represented different government sectors involved in implementing the Programme of Action, including national coordination mechanisms on small arms and light weapons, agencies for arms control and regulation, offices of criminal statistics, foreign and interior ministries, and agencies for women, justice, security and defence. Participants examined progress and challenges in addressing gender issues through national initiatives to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, as well as to control and regulate arms. The Centre highlighted examples of progressive language on gender adopted at the sixth and seventh Biennial Meetings of States on the Programme of Action—held in 2016 and 2021, respectively—and at the Programme's third Review Conference in 2018. Participating States were also asked to share their national experiences and initiatives related to mainstreaming gender perspectives in their policies for controlling small arms and light weapons.<sup>135</sup>

Additionally, to commemorate the eleventh anniversary of the General Assembly's first resolution on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control (65/69), the Regional Centre held a regional symposium and launched a

<sup>134</sup> Breakdown by country: Argentina (104 women among 130 participants); Costa Rica (144 women among 252 participants); and Guatemala (34 women among 49 participants).

<sup>135</sup> Officials involved in maintaining the National Registry of Femicides of Argentina for the country's Supreme Court presented their work with the nation's arms control agency (Agencia Nacional de Materiales Controlados) to improve the Government's collection of disaggregated data on small arms involved in femicides. Furthermore, the agency shared initiatives on, among others, training security personnel on gender perspectives, cooperating with judicial officials to disqualify legal users of firearms with complaints of gender-based violence, and applying a gender lens to initiatives for controlling small arms and light weapons. For its part, the Guatemala National Commission for the Prevention of Armed Violence presented its new and expanded mandate and discussed the active inclusion of women's groups in the Commission's setup and mandate. Mexico's National Statistics Institute offered sex-disaggregated information on homicides, as well as the inclusion of a new category on firearms in the National Survey on Household Relationships.

series of [videos](#) to highlight the contribution of Latin American and Caribbean women to disarmament.

### **United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific**

In 2021, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific carried out a series of webinars and a hybrid training course on gender and small-arms control for officials in [Cambodia](#), the [Lao People's Democratic Republic](#) and [Papua New Guinea](#). The Centre in Kathmandu trained 82 representatives<sup>136</sup> of relevant government entities through the webinars, focusing on the linkages between gender-based violence and small-arms possession and misuse, as well as the need to improve regulatory frameworks to take those linkages into account.

The webinars concluded by identifying priorities for future activities. In Cambodia, the recommended activities included assisting in the review of the draft Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Convention Against Arms Smuggling<sup>137</sup> from a gender perspective, building capacity to enhance the collection and analysis of data disaggregated by sex and age, and developing practical mechanisms for ensuring women's meaningful participation in small-arms control. Similarly, the list of recommendations for Papua New Guinea included: updating and integrating gender considerations in the country's Firearms Act of 1996; developing programmes for community safety, including to create gun-free zones in the lead-up to the general election in 2022; and designing capacity-building activities to enhance institutional and operational capabilities to effectively address the issue of small-arms proliferation and misuse, as well as its gendered impacts. Participants in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, for their part, identified gaps and opportunities to take forward a gender-sensitive agenda for small-arms control. The Centre also conducted a practical exercise on national reporting under the Programme of Action, leading to the submission of the country's first national report.

In addition, the Centre organized an in-person [national workshop](#) in Nepal to promote the Arms Trade Treaty and support the country's potential accession.<sup>138</sup> Through thematic presentations, the workshop provided participants with an overview of commitments and processes under the Treaty while also explaining its convergence with global frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the women, peace and security agenda. Through the workshop, the Centre helped raise awareness about ways that the Treaty could complement gender-

responsive measures for controlling small arms and light weapons, thus serving as an effective instrument for tackling armed gender-based violence.

Furthermore, the Centre conducted a regional webinar on progress since 2020, when it last held related training sessions, in tackling gun violence and illicit trafficking in small arms from a gender perspective. The webinar included a discussion on the remaining challenges in promoting a gender-responsive framework for small-arms control, as well as complementary national and regional agendas. Participants noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had shifted Governments' attention away from advancing initiatives for controlling small arms, and stressed the importance of ensuring that peace, disarmament, security and gender equality remained on the agenda.

Another online activity that the Centre carried out was a [training session](#) on national reporting under the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument to support preparations for the Programme's seventh Biennial Meeting of States. The event brought together officials from eight countries<sup>139</sup> in the Asia-Pacific region, including eight representatives who had been designated as national focal points for the Programme of Action. The training incorporated a detailed session on the Programme's reporting template, including its gender-specific sections, with practical examples of how sex- and age-disaggregated data could contribute to more effective policies for controlling small arms.

<sup>136</sup> Breakdown by country: Cambodia (12 women among 30 participants); Lao People's Democratic Republic (17 women among 32 participants); and Papua New Guinea (10 women among 20 participants).

<sup>137</sup> As at the end of 2021, ASEAN was in the process of discussing and finalizing the draft Convention.

<sup>138</sup> Of the 33 participants, 19 were women.

<sup>139</sup> Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste.



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CHAPTER VII

# DISARMAMENT MACHINERY



*In these times of crisis, heightened tensions and conflict, the role of this Committee, and the pursuit of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control more broadly, is as pertinent as ever. In fact, it is essential.*

IZUMI NAKAMITSU, HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER VII

### Disarmament machinery

#### Developments and trends, 2021

IN 2021, THE DISARMAMENT MACHINERY continued to face considerable limitations owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to ongoing negotiation stalemates and organizational challenges.

In New York, the First Committee of the General Assembly convened within its traditional in-person format, concluding its seventy-sixth session with the adoption of 60 draft resolutions and decisions. The Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters held two virtual sessions, as scheduled, continuing its two-year programme of work. The Disarmament Commission was unable to hold a substantive session for a third consecutive year.

In Geneva, the easing of pandemic-related restrictions allowed the Conference on Disarmament to meet in person for most of its 2021 session, but the body remained mired in a stalemate that entered its twenty-fifth year. Despite efforts by three successive presidents<sup>2</sup> of the Conference to re-establish subsidiary bodies created in 2018 on the Conference's agenda items, States members agreed only to hold thematic discussions on those items.

As States continued to bemoan the persistent inability to reach a consensus on a programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament, the general atmosphere suffered further from the rejection of five observer requests, as well as the refusal of several States to consent to a technical update of the rules of procedure to



The General Assembly adopts a resolution on the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace during the Assembly's forty-fifth plenary meeting on 6 December 2021. UN Photo/Loey Felipe



<sup>1</sup> [Opening statement](#) to the First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, 4 October 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium), Gonçalo de Barros Carvalho e Mello Mourão (Brazil) and Yuri Borissov Sterk (Bulgaria).

incorporate gender-inclusive language. In his remarks to the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly First Committee, Frank Tressler Zamorano (Chile), the last President of the 2021 Conference, cited “deep mistrust” as the reason for the body’s inability to formally acknowledge the equal right of delegates to participate in the forum regardless of gender (for more information, see chap. 6).

More positively, the availability of remote simultaneous interpretation platforms allowed the Office for Disarmament Affairs to organize two thematic events for the Conference, the first on youth and disarmament, and the second on the role of women in international security.<sup>3</sup> The use of virtual platforms by professional translators also facilitated participation in the Conference’s high-level segment, which had the highest number of ministerial-level speakers of any session in a quarter century.

The First Committee contended with the impacts of the pandemic throughout its seventy-sixth session: delegates were not permitted to hold in-person consultations on draft resolutions, and their ability to organize other physical meetings was substantially limited. Nevertheless, the session proceeded with its traditional three-part programme of work, beginning with a general debate, followed by a thematic debate and action on draft resolutions. While States demonstrated a clear interest and willingness to return to traditional modes of working, many also emphasized that the Committee should improve upon pre-pandemic methods.

Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, the First Committee continued to pursue new proposals. Member States adopted two new resolutions: one tabled by China on promoting international cooperation on peaceful uses in the context of international security (76/234); and the other presented by Argentina and Brazil to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (76/52).

The Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters held two sessions in 2021, as scheduled, continuing a two-year programme of work to reflect on alternative approaches and a potential new vision for nuclear disarmament and arms control. Meeting virtually in February and June, the Board discussed possible ways to revitalize and modernize the disarmament architecture and machinery, particularly in the context of an international security landscape characterized by growing political and technological complexity. Drawing from its in-depth deliberations, the Advisory Board outlined a series of key recommendations: (a) to mobilize the support of Member States to reinvigorate nuclear disarmament and arms control; (b) to reduce siloed approaches and creating a better understanding of the interlinkages between evolving technological capabilities and emerging challenges across a wide range of arms control issues, including the risk of the use of nuclear weapons; and (c) to ensure that actions by the United Nations system will enable the development of creative, yet realistically achievable, new approaches towards achieving the common goal of nuclear disarmament.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The events were convened by the presidencies of Canada and Chile, respectively.

<sup>4</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters (A/76/183).

## First Committee of the General Assembly

### Organization of work

The First Committee<sup>5</sup> of the General Assembly (Disarmament and International Security) held its seventy-sixth session from 4 October to 5 November with Omar Hilale (Morocco) as its Chair.<sup>6</sup> Although the Committee had to conduct its work in an abridged format for a second year to comply with ongoing COVID-19-related restrictions, the body increased its number of in-person meetings to 18, which was three more than during the first year of the pandemic, but nine fewer than in 2019.

On 30 September, the Committee held a brief organizational meeting, at which Member States approved its agenda<sup>7</sup> and programme of work.<sup>8</sup> At the outset of the meeting, the Committee elected Andres Fiallo (Ecuador) as Vice-Chair. The Bureau also comprised Vice-Chairs Amir Hamzah Mohd Nasir (Malaysia) and Saša Milanović (Bosnia and Herzegovina), and Rapporteur Sanna Leena Orava (Finland).

Of the First Committee’s 18 in-person meetings, the first six featured the general debate. Those were followed by six meetings devoted to thematic debates on the following seven clusters: (a) nuclear weapons; (b) other weapons of mass destruction; (c) outer space (disarmament aspects); (d) conventional weapons; (e) other disarmament measures and international security; (f) regional disarmament and security; and (g) disarmament machinery. After forgoing its traditional thematic debates in 2020 owing to the pandemic, the Committee restored them in 2021 on a compressed schedule: debate on the first four of those clusters spanned four meetings, while discussion on the remaining three clusters took place over two meetings. During its final five in-person meetings, the Committee took action on all draft resolutions and decisions under consideration.

Before the start of the general debate, the Chair of the First Committee delivered remarks,<sup>9</sup> in which he stated that the Committee’s work was more crucial than ever in the current context of conflict and increased tensions; he cited the dangers of nuclear proliferation, arms races, mistrust between States, and increasing involvement by non-State actors in the illicit trade of conventional weapons. The Chair emphasized that cyberspace and outer space represented new frontiers to be explored, and must be safeguarded as arenas for the growth of all humanity.

<sup>5</sup> Pursuant to [Rule 58 \(a\)](#) of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the First Committee is the only Main Committee of the Assembly entitled to verbatim records. For the verbatim records of the Committee’s seventy-sixth session, see [A/C.1/76/PV.1–18](#) (forthcoming). For details on the resolutions and decisions on disarmament adopted at the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly (full texts, document symbols of draft and final resolutions/decisions and the Rapporteur’s reports, dates of adoption, sponsors, voting patterns, etc.), see [Part I](#) of the *Yearbook*.

<sup>6</sup> Omar Hilale, the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations, was elected on 7 June 2021 as Chair of the First Committee for its seventy-sixth session.

<sup>7</sup> [A/C.1/76/1](#).

<sup>8</sup> [A/C.1/76/CRP.1](#).

<sup>9</sup> See [A/C.1/76/PV.1](#).

The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs delivered opening remarks<sup>10</sup> on the range of disarmament and international security issues under the Committee's purview. She warned that the continued growth in global military spending—almost \$2 trillion in 2020—had contributed to cycles of insecurity and mistrust. The High Representative also expressed concern over the emergence of new domains of strategic conflict, including outer space and cyberspace, and the increasing hostility among nuclear-weapon States. She highlighted the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) as fundamental to the pursuit of the total elimination of nuclear arms. Turning to the disarmament machinery, the High Representative expressed regret that the Conference on Disarmament remained unable to agree on a way to structure its substantive discussions. She also called for action in other key areas, from effectively controlling conventional arms to realizing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

The Committee considered a total of 61 draft resolutions and decisions during its seventy-sixth session, down from 74 drafts in its previous session. In the course of adopting 60 and rejecting 1 of the texts for 2021, the body took 66 separate votes requested on specific paragraphs—including 18 for a single draft resolution.<sup>11</sup> In line with past practice, references to disarmament-related treaties, including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Arms Trade Treaty and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, were voted upon across draft resolutions. A new draft resolution on the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, recognizing its thirtieth anniversary in 2021, was tabled and adopted by consensus. A new draft resolution proposed by China, entitled “Promoting international cooperation on peaceful uses in the context of international security” (L.55), was adopted by a vote.

On 6 December, the General Assembly took action on 55 of the 60 draft resolutions and decisions on substantive items approved by the First Committee. The Assembly was not yet able to take action on the five remaining texts,<sup>12</sup> which had budget implications requiring review by the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary Questions). On 24 December, the General Assembly plenary approved those five drafts following consideration of their respective budget implications by the Fifth Committee.

The voting patterns in the plenary session of the General Assembly remained largely the same as in the First Committee. The draft resolution entitled

<sup>10</sup> [Opening statement](#) to the First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, New York, 4 October 2021.

<sup>11</sup> Draft resolution entitled “Joint courses of action and future-oriented dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons” (L.59).

<sup>12</sup> Draft resolutions entitled “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects” (L.43); “Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus” (L.47); “Reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours” (L.52); “Further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space” (L.53); and “Promoting international cooperation on peaceful uses in the context of international security” (L.55).

“Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty” (L.49)<sup>13</sup> was adopted as a whole by a vote of 182 to 1, with 3 abstentions, following a request from India, whose delegation said that a technical glitch had prevented it from requesting the vote in the First Committee.

In presenting the reports<sup>14</sup> of the First Committee to the full General Assembly, the Rapporteur (Finland) underscored that only one third of the Committee's interventions were delivered by women, indicating that more work was required to reach gender-balanced representation. To support greater transparency, the Rapporteur suggested that the First Committee consider making public any request by a State for a vote, in line with the practice of other Committees.

### **Interactive virtual dialogues**

The First Committee convened three virtual meetings (on 8, 15 and 21 October), during which it heard briefings by high-level officials<sup>15</sup> and held exchanges with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and civil society representatives.

The first virtual meeting<sup>16</sup> of the Committee included an exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. In her remarks,<sup>17</sup> the High Representative recalled the assessment<sup>18</sup> she had offered the Committee in 2020 on the impact of COVID-19 on the field of disarmament and international security. She noted that the pandemic's challenges remained daunting, expressing particular concern that the global public health emergency had not appeared to dampen the ongoing rise in worldwide military expenditure. The High Representative emphasized the importance of involving stakeholders such as civil society actors in disarmament and arms control. She also encouraged States to continue identifying creative means to maintain productive contact with those participants despite limitations resulting from the pandemic. Referencing a table<sup>19</sup> on the rates of contribution to various disarmament-related reports of the Secretary-General, the High Representative expressed disappointment in the declining number of States providing input for those

<sup>13</sup> For the corresponding resolution and decision numbers, determined after adoption by the General Assembly, of the draft texts cited in this section, see [Part I](#) of the *Yearbook*.

<sup>14</sup> [A/76/436–453](#).

<sup>15</sup> Chair, Group of Governmental Experts on Problems Arising from the Accumulation of Conventional Ammunition Stockpiles in Surplus; Directors, United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament; President, Conference on Disarmament; Chair, Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters; and Director, UNIDIR.

<sup>16</sup> For the video recording of the meeting, see United Nations Web TV, “[1st Informal Virtual Meeting of the First Committee - General Assembly, 76th session](#)”, 8 October 2021.

<sup>17</sup> [Statement](#) to the First Committee to follow up on draft resolutions and decisions adopted at the Committee's previous session and to present the reports of the Secretary-General, New York, 8 October 2021.

<sup>18</sup> [Remarks](#) (delivered virtually) to the First Committee during the exchange on the impacts of COVID-19 on arms control and disarmament, 13 October 2020.

<sup>19</sup> United Nations, Office for Disarmament Affairs, “[Table I. Reports of the Secretary-General presented to the First Committee at its seventy-sixth session that include a mandate to request information from or views of Member States](#)” (annex to the High Representative's [statement](#) on 8 August 2021), 10 August 2021.

General Assembly-mandated assessments, in particular for two reports<sup>20</sup> related to nuclear weapons.

The High Representative also gave an overview of two reports of the Secretary-General on the impacts of technology that were submitted to the present session: the first on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours;<sup>21</sup> and the second on current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts.<sup>22</sup> She recommended that Member States continue to seek ways to integrate reviews of developments in science and technology into their work, including through processes to review the operation of disarmament treaties, and within all relevant United Nations disarmament bodies.

Following the exchange with the High Representative, interventions were made by members of civil society. Fourteen organizations delivered remarks on a variety of topics, from nuclear weapons to small arms and light weapons to outer space security.<sup>23</sup>

At its second virtual meeting,<sup>24</sup> the Committee heard statements from two high-level officials<sup>25</sup> proposed by regional groups, followed by briefings from the Chair of the Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action<sup>26</sup> on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, Martin Kimani (Kenya); the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security, Guilherme de Aguiar Patriota (Brazil); and the Chair of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, Jürg Lauber (Switzerland).

Speaking for the Latin American and Caribbean States, the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, Flávio Roberto Bonzanini, emphasized the value of nuclear-weapon-free zones and the pioneering role of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco). He also provided highlights of his Agency's [twenty-seventh General Conference](#), including its agreement to conclude a memorandum of understanding with the African Commission on

Nuclear Energy; and its first formal acknowledgement of the relationship between gender, disarmament and non-proliferation through the consensus adoption of a resolution<sup>27</sup> dedicated to supporting women's participation in the Agency's bodies and programmes.

Charles Okoh (Nigeria) spoke on behalf of the African States. Highlighting that nuclear disarmament remained the highest priority of the United Nations, he said that African States called for the achievement of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all regions, including the Middle East. He also expressed the group's concern about the slow pace of progress by nuclear-weapon States towards the elimination of their stockpiles in accordance with article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, adding that the African States looked forward to that Treaty's upcoming Review Conference. The group welcomed the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which it believed did not undermine but rather complemented the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. In that context, it called for all States to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Regarding the disarmament machinery, the African States called for the Conference on Disarmament to resume substantive work while considering the security interests of all States. Regarding small arms and light weapons, they called for a global prohibition of arms transfers to any recipient, especially non-State actors, without authorization by the competent authorities of the importing States. In addition, the African States expressed support for the Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the International Tracing Instrument, as well as for regional initiatives such as the African Union initiative on "Silencing the Guns in Africa". They further recalled the adoption of the [African Space Policy](#) and welcomed the establishment in 2018 of the [African Space Agency](#), to be hosted by Egypt.

The third and final virtual meeting<sup>28</sup> of the Committee's seventy-sixth session included briefings from the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on Problems Arising from the Accumulation of Conventional Ammunition Stockpiles in Surplus, Marcus Bleinroth (Germany); the Directors of the three regional centres<sup>29</sup> of the Office for Disarmament Affairs; the President of the Conference on Disarmament, Frank Tressler Zamorano (Chile); the Chair of the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, Selma Ashipala-Musavyi (Namibia); and the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), Robin Geiss.

<sup>20</sup> [A/76/91](#) and [A/76/117](#).

<sup>21</sup> [A/76/77](#).

<sup>22</sup> [A/76/182](#).

<sup>23</sup> For the list of civil society organizations and their statements, see "[General Assembly First Committee: Civil Society and NGO Statements](#)", United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs Meetings Place.

<sup>24</sup> For the video recording of the meeting, see "[2nd Informal Virtual Meeting of the First Committee - General Assembly, 76th session](#)", United Nations Web TV, 15 October 2021.

<sup>25</sup> Secretary-General, Organization for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL); Head of the First United Nations Division, International Organisations Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria.

<sup>26</sup> Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

<sup>27</sup> OPANAL, documents [CG/Res.05/2021](#) and [CG/11/2021.Corr](#).

<sup>28</sup> For the video recording of the meeting, see "[3rd Informal Virtual Meeting of the First Committee - General Assembly, 76th session](#)", United Nations Web TV, 21 October 2021.

<sup>29</sup> United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa; United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean; and United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific.

## Overview of key substantive issues

### Nuclear weapons

In 2021, action on various draft resolutions and decisions related to nuclear weapons<sup>30</sup> continued to generate sharp divisions within the First Committee. States requested a growing number of votes, including on all references to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and its entry into force in January. Only four of the cluster's 18 draft resolutions were adopted without a vote, with frustration among many non-nuclear-weapon States continuing to run high over the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament commitments. Delegations reiterated their full commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, expressing hope that the tenth Review Conference, scheduled for 2022 after a considerable delay owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, would achieve a substantive outcome.

Debate on the annual draft resolutions addressing the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East (L.1 and L.2) reflected Israel's consistent opposition to the General Assembly-mandated Conference on the subject.<sup>31</sup> The United States, while reiterating its support for the long-term objective of such a zone, announced that it would not participate in the second session of the Conference.

The seventy-sixth session of the First Committee illustrated ongoing divisions among nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States on the way forward for nuclear disarmament. Disagreement persisted over the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, as indicated by split votes both on its dedicated draft resolution (L.17) and on all paragraphs of other draft resolutions containing reference to its entry into force. Meanwhile, positive acknowledgement was expressed regarding the extension of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START Treaty), the resumption of strategic dialogue between the United States and Russian Federation, and the reaffirmation of the Reagan-Gorbachev doctrine that a nuclear war could not be won and therefore must never be fought.<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, many States continued to decry the plans of States possessing nuclear weapons to modernize, upgrade and extend the lives of their arsenals, including delivery systems.

<sup>30</sup> For statements on the issue, see the following meeting records (forthcoming): A/C.1/76/PV.7-10 (thematic debate) and A/C.1/76/PV.13-15 (voting). See also "General Assembly First Committee: Statements" (2021), United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs Meetings Place.

<sup>31</sup> By its decision 73/546, the General Assembly entrusted the Secretary-General with convening, no later than 2019 at Headquarters, a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. It further requested that annual sessions of the Conference be convened until the elaboration of a legally binding treaty establishing such a zone.

<sup>32</sup> "U.S.-Russia Presidential Joint Statement on Strategic Stability", United States, The White House, 16 June 2021.

### Other weapons of mass destruction

The First Committee adopted three draft resolutions under its thematic cluster on other weapons of mass destruction.<sup>33</sup> Acting by consensus, it endorsed the annual draft resolutions dedicated to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (Biological Weapons Convention) (L.35) and measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction (L.8), respectively. The draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction" (L.10) remained highly contentious, with votes taken on six separate paragraphs.

A draft resolution proposed by the Russian Federation dedicated to the "Secretary General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons" (L.54) was rejected for a second consecutive year by a vote of 58 to 26, with 68 abstentions. As the draft resolution included language about seeking the views of States on aspects of the Mechanism's technical guidelines and procedures that should be updated, several States expressed concern that the initiative led by the Russian Federation would undermine the Mechanism's impartiality and independence.

Discussion related to chemical weapons was once again dominated by developments related to investigations of their alleged use in the Syrian Arab Republic. A decision<sup>34</sup> in April by States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention to suspend rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic under that agreement further exacerbated tensions, with some States asserting that the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons had become a political tool.<sup>35</sup>

In the area of biological arms, many States expressed hope for a successful outcome at the ninth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention in 2022, including demonstrable progress on a verification protocol. China and the Russian Federation delivered a joint intervention in which they introduced a joint statement<sup>36</sup> released on the same day by their respective Foreign Ministers.

<sup>33</sup> For statements on the issue, see the following meetings records (forthcoming): A/C.1/76/PV.7-10 (thematic debate) and A/C.1/76/PV.13-15 (voting). See also United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs Meetings Place, "General Assembly First Committee: Statements" (2021).

<sup>34</sup> Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, document C-25/DEC.9.

<sup>35</sup> Notably, the use of the nerve agent Novichok in the 2020 poisoning of the Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny featured prominently in many statements and various rights of reply.

<sup>36</sup> "Joint Statement by the Foreign Ministers of the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation on Strengthening the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, 7 October 2021.

### Outer space (disarmament aspects)

The First Committee's draft resolution entitled "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities" (L.60) returned to consensual adoption in 2021, ending a three-year streak in which every draft resolution of the Committee on outer space security<sup>37</sup> was put to a vote. The text was also the only draft resolution of the Committee's seventy-sixth session that garnered co-sponsorship from China, the Russian Federation and the United States together, underscoring the exception it represented to entrenched global divisions over the best way to address space-related threats.

For the second consecutive year, a draft resolution sponsored by the United Kingdom entitled "Reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours" (L.52) was adopted by a vote. When the General Assembly later adopted the measure as resolution 76/231 on 24 December, it established a new open-ended working group that would meet in 2022 and 2023 to, inter alia, undertake the following: (a) take stock of the existing international legal and other normative frameworks concerning threats arising from State behaviours with respect to outer space; (b) consider current and future threats by States to space systems, and actions, activities and omissions that could be considered irresponsible; and (c) make recommendations on possible norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours relating to threats by States to space systems, including, as appropriate, how they would contribute to the negotiation of legally binding instruments, including on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Other draft resolutions adopted under the First Committee's cluster on outer space included its annual draft resolutions entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" (L.3), "No first placement of weapons in outer space" (L.50) and "Further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space" (L.53).

### Conventional weapons

With regard to conventional weapons,<sup>38</sup> the Committee adopted seven draft resolutions and one draft decision, including two without a vote and two with a vote on individual paragraphs but without a vote on the text as a whole. Overall voting patterns were largely unchanged from previous years, with votes taken on draft resolutions dedicated to specific treaties on conventional weapons, such as the Arms Trade Treaty, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

The annual draft resolution entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects" (L.43) confirmed plans to hold the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to review the implementation of the Programme of Action on the

<sup>37</sup> For statements on the issue, see the following meetings records (forthcoming): A/C.1/76/PV.7-10 (thematic debate) and A/C.1/76/PV.15 (voting). See also United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs Meetings Place, "General Assembly First Committee: Statements" (2021).

<sup>38</sup> For statements on the issue, see the following meetings records (forthcoming): A/C.1/76/PV.9 (thematic debate) and A/C.1/76/PV.16-17 (voting).

illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in July 2022. Separately, in adopting a draft resolution tabled by Germany and France entitled "Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus" (L.47), States established a new open-ended working group, which would begin in 2022, to develop a set of political commitments as a global framework on ammunition. Based on a recommendation<sup>39</sup> by a group of governmental experts convened in 2020 and 2021, the initiative was widely welcomed by States, with none voting against and only nine States<sup>40</sup> abstaining.

### Other disarmament measures and international security

The Committee adopted eight draft resolutions under its cluster on other disarmament measures and international security,<sup>41</sup> including four without a vote and one that was subject to a paragraph vote but not a vote on the whole text.

A new draft resolution from China entitled "Promoting international cooperation on peaceful uses in the context of international security" (L.55) was adopted by a divided vote of 75 to 55, with 43 abstentions. States voting against that draft resolution argued that it would undermine existing export control regimes, while China asserted that the text appropriately balanced proliferation concerns with development objectives.

The First Committee returned to a single text on the topic of information technology and international security, adopting by consensus a draft resolution entitled "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" (L.13), tabled jointly by the United States and Russian Federation. Given that two separate resolutions (74/28 and 74/29) introduced by those States in 2018 resulted in parallel intergovernmental processes (a group of governmental experts and an open-ended working group),<sup>42</sup> States universally welcomed a return to a single resolution. They expressed positive expectations for the establishment of a new, five-year open-ended working group<sup>43</sup> that would begin its work in December.

Regarding matters of gender and diversity, the Committee adopted, for a second time, a draft resolution dedicated to "Youth, disarmament and non-proliferation"

<sup>39</sup> A/76/324, paras. 83–88.

<sup>40</sup> Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cuba, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

<sup>41</sup> For statements on the issue, see the following meetings records: A/C.1/76/PV.7-10 (thematic debate) and A/C.1/76/PV.17 (voting). See also United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs Meetings Place, "General Assembly First Committee: Statements" (2021).

<sup>42</sup> Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security and Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security. For more information, see their final reports (A/75/816 and A/76/135).

<sup>43</sup> Open-ended Working Group on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies, 2021–2025.

(L.36). The Committee also continued to hear calls from States and other stakeholders for inclusivity, the equal, full and effective participation of women, and the mainstreaming of gender perspectives across its work.

### Disarmament machinery

The First Committee adopted seven draft resolutions and one draft decision, all without a vote, under its cluster on the disarmament machinery.<sup>44</sup> Statements on that topic remained pessimistic, however, with States continuing to express regret about the continuing decades-old stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament, as well as the inability of the Disarmament Commission to hold substantive sessions in 2019, 2020 and 2021.

The Committee's annual draft resolution entitled "Convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament" (L.25) was adopted by consensus, with France, the United Kingdom and the United States shifting away from their previous positions against the measure.

The draft decision on the United Nations Disarmament Commission (L.33) also returned to adoption by consensus following the submission of dual decisions during the Committee's previous session.<sup>45</sup> By its 2021 decision, the General Assembly affirmed plans to hold the next substantive session of the Commission in April 2022.

### United Nations Disarmament Commission

The United Nations Disarmament Commission held no formal meetings in 2021. Informal consultations took place in February and March, culminating in the adoption of a formal decision (75/519 B) by the General Assembly on 25 March to postpone the Commission's 2021 substantive session to a later period to be decided by the Assembly.

The organizational meeting of the Disarmament Commission, originally scheduled for 18 February, was postponed owing to the absence of nominations for the positions of Chair and several other roles on the Commission's Bureau. Member States subsequently entrusted the Director and Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs to preside over the Commission's informal consultations as Acting Chair.

<sup>44</sup> For statements on the issue, see the following meeting records (forthcoming): A/C.1/76/PV.7-10 (thematic debate) and A/C.1/76/PV.17 (voting). See also United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs Meetings Place, "General Assembly First Committee: Statements" (2021).

<sup>45</sup> In 2020, the First Committee adopted the draft decision submitted by Australia entitled "Disarmament Commission" (L.49), without a vote, despite a request for a vote by the Russian Federation. The Committee rejected both a competing draft decision sponsored by the Russian Federation (L.48) and an amendment proposed by the Russian Federation to the draft proposed by Australia (L.79), both of which contained expressions of serious concern regarding the non-issuance of entry visas to certain representatives of certain Member States for previous sessions of the Commission.

To identify a Chair for the Commission, the Acting Chair held four rounds of informal consultations, in February and March, with regional coordinators and nominees for the position of Vice-Chair. Despite those efforts, Member States did not submit a nomination. Consequently, the Acting Chair stated in a letter dated 23 March, transmitted through the President of the General Assembly on 24 March, that Member States had decided to postpone the 2021 session of the Commission to a later period to be decided by the Assembly. To that end, the President of the General Assembly circulated a draft text to formalize the postponement, and the General Assembly plenary adopted that measure as decision 75/519 B of 25 March.

Following the decision to postpone the Commission's 2021 substantive session, States did not hold consultations on rescheduling it. Subsequently, during the First Committee's seventy-sixth session, Australia, in its capacity as the last formally elected Chair of the Disarmament Commission, submitted draft decision L.33, entitled "Disarmament Commission", on 12 October. The Committee adopted the text without a vote on 3 November, and the General Assembly did likewise on 6 December. In formally adopting the measure as decision 76/518, the Assembly decided to convene a substantive session of the Disarmament Commission for a period not exceeding three weeks in 2022, namely from 4 to 22 April.

### Conference on Disarmament

In 1978, at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, United Nations Member States recognized the continuing need for a single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.<sup>46</sup> The Conference on Disarmament assumed that role the following year,<sup>47</sup> succeeding other Geneva-based negotiating forums that included the Ten-Nation Committee on Disarmament (1960), the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament (1962–1968), and the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (1969–1978).

In her opening remarks<sup>48</sup> to the 2021 session of the Conference on Disarmament on 19 January, the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Conference, Tatiana Valovaya, stressed that the "acquis" of norms in the system of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control was crumbling, and all States had the responsibility to make maximum use of all multilateral forums and other channels to stop that negative trend and build trust and confidence among nations. She also recalled that 2021 marked the seventy-fifth anniversary of the General Assembly's first resolution (1/1), by which the Assembly, inter alia, sought proposals for the elimination of national armaments of atomic weapons and all other weapons

<sup>46</sup> General Assembly resolution S-10/2 of 30 June 1978, paras. 120–124.

<sup>47</sup> The Conference on Disarmament was referred to as the Committee on Disarmament until it was renamed in 1984.

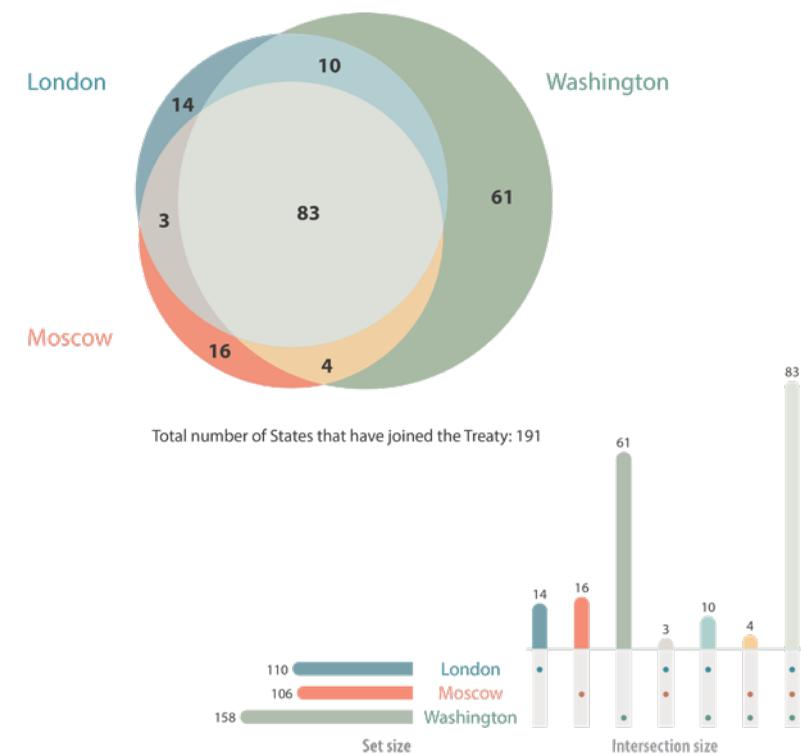
<sup>48</sup> CD/PV.1549

**States' expressions of consent to be bound to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Biological Weapons Convention received by depositaries (as at 31 December 2021)**

**Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty**



**Biological Weapons Convention**



For many multilateral treaties related to disarmament, the United Nations Secretary-General is the depositary accepting instruments of ratification or accession. Even in instances in which the depositary function belongs to States, the United Nations plays a vital role in consolidating information from those States in the [Disarmament Treaties Database](#). Through the database, the United Nations presents a full picture of the universality of a given treaty.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Biological Weapons Convention, both adopted within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, are two examples of how the Disarmament Treaties Database presents consolidated information. For both treaties, the depositary States are the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The infographics above show that States parties do not always deposit their instruments of ratification or accession with all three depositary States. The majority of States parties submit instruments to only one or two depositary States. Of the 191 States that joined the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, only 83 States, or 43 per cent, submitted to all three depositary States. In the case of the Biological Weapons Convention, 68 of 183 States parties, or 37 per cent, submitted to all three depositary States. Therefore, lists of the depositary States do not present a complete picture (e.g., the United Kingdom's list of States that joined the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty contains only 110 of the 191 States that have joined the Treaty). The Database combines the lists of the depositary States to present the complete list and calculate the total number of States parties.

adaptable to mass destruction. She stressed the urgent need to recommit to those principles and take urgent measures to implement them.

The Conference held its high-level segment from 22 to 24 February under the presidency of Brazil, with virtual participation by 55 dignitaries from States members and non-members of the Conference.<sup>49</sup> In their addresses, the high-level officials voiced support for the Conference and the principles of multilateralism, as well as for the critical importance of multilateral diplomacy and multilateral institutions in the context of the United Nations. Expressing concern about the Conference's current situation, the dignitaries urged States members to do their part to advance the international agenda by overcoming the body's ongoing deadlock and setting out their national priorities for its work.

The first three presidencies of the 2021 session—Belgium, Brazil and Bulgaria—pursued draft decisions for the Conference's organization of work, including for the establishment of five subsidiary bodies: one each for agenda items 1 to 4, and one for agenda items 5, 6 and 7.<sup>50</sup> Draft decisions proposed by the first President, Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium),<sup>51</sup> the second President, Gonçalo de Barros Carvalho e Mello Mourão (Brazil), and the third President, Yuri Borissov Sterk (Bulgaria), were intended to establish the five subsidiary bodies on the substantive agenda items of the Conference. Another draft decision was presented for appointing the coordinators of those bodies and establishing timetables for their work. However, the Conference did not reach a consensus on any of the proposals.<sup>52</sup>

The third, fourth and fifth Presidents of the Conference held thematic discussions on each of the Conference's agenda items. The third President (Bulgaria) held thematic discussions<sup>53</sup> on agenda item 1 (“Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament”) on 11 and 12 May. During those discussions, the Conference heard statements from Jørn Osmundsen (Norway), Chair-designate

of the Group of Governmental Experts on nuclear disarmament verification,<sup>54</sup> and Pavel Podvig, senior researcher on weapons of mass destruction and other strategic weapons at UNIDIR. Bulgaria also convened thematic discussions<sup>55</sup> on agenda item 2 (“Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters”) on 18 and 20 May, during which the Netherlands, UNIDIR, the Federation of American Scientists, the Fondation pour la recherche stratégique and Open Nuclear Network delivered presentations.

The fourth President, Salomon Eheth (Cameroon), held a thematic discussion<sup>56</sup> on agenda item 3 (“Prevention of an arms race in outer space”) on 1 and 3 June, with presentations by representatives from Egypt and Switzerland, UNIDIR and the Office for Disarmament Affairs. States shared their national space security policies, strategies or doctrines, further to General Assembly resolution 75/36. The President then convened a thematic discussion<sup>57</sup> on agenda item 4 (“Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons”) on 8 June, with presentations by the Director-General for the United Nations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, and the Geneva Centre for Security Policy. The President also convened a thematic discussion<sup>58</sup> on agenda item 5 (“Types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons; radiological weapons”) on 15 June, with presentations by Belarus and the Körber Strategic Stability Initiative. The fifth President, Leslie Norton (Canada), convened thematic discussions on agenda items 6 and 7 on 22 June<sup>59</sup> and 27 July,<sup>60</sup> respectively.

In addition to the thematic discussions on agenda items, the second President (Brazil) marked the thirtieth anniversary of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials by convening a panel discussion<sup>61</sup> on 9 March that featured the Agency's Secretary, its Deputy Secretary, the Research Director of the European Leadership Network, and the Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations. On 25 May, the fourth President (Cameroon) convened a plenary meeting,<sup>62</sup> at which the Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty (CTBT), Lassina Zerbo, addressed the Conference.

The fifth President (Canada) convened plenaries on 3 and 5 August on a proposal (CD/2218) to update the Conference's rules of procedure, which contains only male pronouns and possessive adjectives, to reflect that gender has no bearing

<sup>49</sup> The *dignitaries* comprised 45 ministers; four deputies, vice or assistant ministers; and six ambassadors. They represented the following States: Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Holy See, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Latvia, Malaysia, Malta, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

<sup>50</sup> The substantive agenda items of the Conference were as follows: agenda item 1, “Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament”; agenda item 2, “Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters”; agenda item 3, “Prevention of an arms race in outer space”; agenda item 4, “Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; agenda item 5, “Types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons; radiological weapons”; agenda item 6, “Comprehensive programme of disarmament”; and agenda item 7, “Transparency in armaments”. See CD/2209.

<sup>51</sup> On 18 December 2020, the incoming President, Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium), circulated a draft package before the beginning of the session.

<sup>52</sup> CD/2219, CD/2220, and CD/2221.

<sup>53</sup> CD/PV.1568 and CD/PV.1569.

<sup>54</sup> The General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to establish the Group of Governmental Experts by its resolution 74/50 of 12 December 2019.

<sup>55</sup> CD/PV.1570, CD/PV.1571, CD/PV.1572 and CD/PV.1573.

<sup>56</sup> CD/PV.1576, CD/PV.1577 and CD/PV.1578.

<sup>57</sup> CD/PV.1579 and CD/PV.1580.

<sup>58</sup> CD/PV.1582.

<sup>59</sup> CD/PV.1584.

<sup>60</sup> CD/PV.1585.

<sup>61</sup> CD/PV.1565.

<sup>62</sup> CD/PV.1575.

on the right of delegates to participate in its work. The Conference considered the possible update but did not reach an agreement to adopt the proposal.<sup>63</sup> On 10 August, the fifth President convened a plenary meeting<sup>64</sup> on the work and functioning of the Conference, based on an official document submitted by Australia (CD/2197).

To mark International Youth Day on 12 August, the fifth President convened a thematic plenary meeting<sup>65</sup> on youth and disarmament. The plenary featured the participation of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Jayathma Wickramanayak, and the United Nations [Youth Champions for Disarmament](#). The High Representative delivered [remarks](#) via a video message in which she underscored that inclusiveness was necessary to achieve the ultimate objectives of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. She invited the Conference to consider how to strengthen interaction between young people and the global disarmament community, which was sometimes insular and "siloed". In a [statement](#) delivered in a video message, the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth called for States to create enabling platforms for all young people to participate in shaping humanity's common future. She also called for States to invest in youth-led initiatives while continuing to strengthen trust between institutions and young people.

The sixth President, Frank Tressler Zamorano (Chile), convened a thematic plenary meeting<sup>66</sup> on 26 August on women's participation and role in international security, with the participation of the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Chile, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, the Under-Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Affairs of the United States, the Permanent Representative of Argentina, and UNIDIR. At the plenary meeting, the High Representative stressed that diverse voices and new ideas were necessary to revive the work of the Conference and preserve the body's relevance and effectiveness. She said such fresh perspectives were also needed to help ensure that outcomes from the broader disarmament architecture would be fit for responding to current and future realities.<sup>67</sup>

The sixth President also organized the negotiation of the Conference's final report for 2021. After adopting the report by consensus at its 1596th plenary meeting on 10 September, the Conference submitted it to the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly.<sup>68</sup> The First Committee adopted its draft resolution on the report of the Conference on Disarmament (L.48) without a vote on 3 November, and the General Assembly adopted it as resolution 76/62 of 6 December.

<sup>63</sup> CD/PV.1586.

<sup>64</sup> CD/PV.1587.

<sup>65</sup> CD/PV.1588.

<sup>66</sup> CD/PV.1591.

<sup>67</sup> [Remarks](#) to the Conference on Disarmament plenary meeting on "Women's Participation and Role in International Security", 26 August 2021.

<sup>68</sup> CD/2223 and A/76/27.

## Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters

The Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters held two sessions in 2021, as scheduled, continuing its two-year programme of work to reflect on alternative approaches and a potential new vision for nuclear disarmament and arms control. In July, the Secretary-General submitted a report<sup>69</sup> to the General Assembly summarizing the Board's deliberations and recommendations.

Meeting virtually in February and June, the Board discussed possible ways to revitalize and modernize the disarmament architecture and machinery, particularly in the context of an international security landscape characterized by growing political and technological complexity. As a result of its in-depth deliberations, the Advisory Board outlined key recommendations: (a) to mobilize the support of Member States to reinvigorate nuclear disarmament and arms control; (b) to reduce siloed approaches and creating a better understanding of the interlinkages between evolving technological capabilities and emerging challenges across a wide range of arms control issues, including the risk of the use of nuclear weapons; and (c) to ensure that the actions of the United Nations system would enable the development of creative, yet realistically achievable, new approaches towards achieving the common goal of nuclear disarmament.

To mobilize the support of Member States to reinvigorate the pursuit of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control for nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, the Board found, inter alia, that preserving and fortifying the existing architecture for achieving those ends was the essential foundation for recrafting strategies to reflect contemporary realities, challenges and dynamics. At the same time, it observed that global multipolarity made it necessary for all States, including nuclear-weapon States, to engage in effective dialogue on how to (a) refrain from competition in the strategic security arena and reduce nuclear dangers, and (b) adopt arms control and disarmament actions that would return States to a common path to a world free of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

The Advisory Board also underscored the need for reduction measures, including actions to demonstrate nuclear restraint, lower the likelihood of conventional conflict, and improve transparency and verification methodologies. In that regard, the Board called on States to renew or strengthen robust and action-oriented bilateral and multiparty dialogues on topics such as the size, make-up and management of nuclear arsenals, as well as on related plans. It also reaffirmed the need to establish clear channels of communication in the event of contingencies that could lead to nuclear weapons use.

Seeking to ensure that actions by the Secretary-General would enable the development of new approaches to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world, the Board recommended that the Secretary-General continue to encourage strengthened dialogue, particularly among relevant States, and offer his good offices to facilitate

<sup>69</sup> A/76/183.

informal dialogues to build trust and common understanding. Noting that the Security Council had devoted several past meetings to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, the Board recommended that the Secretary-General encourage the Council's members to consider holding a dedicated discussion on reducing the dangers posed by nuclear weapons and identifying potential ways forward. It also encouraged the Secretary-General to advance a global multi-stakeholder conversation about what a sustainable and secure world without nuclear weapons could look like.

To help address interlinkages across key technology domains affecting international security, such as cyberspace and outer space, the Advisory Board underscored the strong necessity of promoting a better understanding of such interlinkages across a wide range of arms control issues, particularly as they related to risks of the use of nuclear weapons. It found that a comprehensive review, potentially conducted by a new group of governmental experts or by the Secretary-General, of how nuclear and non-nuclear capabilities were becoming increasingly entangled would enable States and other stakeholders to develop practical ways to mitigate resulting risks.

The Board also emphasized the need for a convincing narrative on nuclear disarmament efforts that could both heighten public awareness and mobilize public support for decisive political action on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, including for nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. To support the development of such a narrative, the Board called on the United Nations system to seek out the advice and collaboration of diverse stakeholders in academia, the media, civil society, the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network, youth groups, think tanks and others, including the private sector and communities directly affected by nuclear arms manufacturing and testing. It also suggested that the Secretary-General appoint a special envoy for disarmament and civil society, who would report to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and engage with civil society, the public at large and other critical stakeholders to give prominence to the issues of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. The Advisory Board further recommended that the Secretary-General and the Office for Disarmament Affairs expand their efforts to generate greater awareness and understanding among the wider public by engaging in targeted public outreach, including by organizing informal gatherings and disarmament education activities.

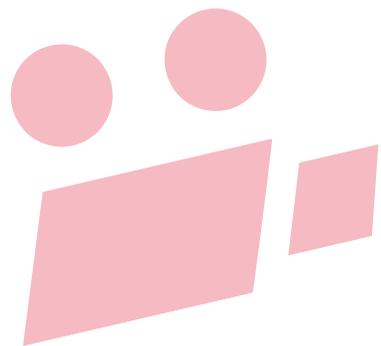
As the Board of Trustees of UNIDIR, the Advisory Board commended the Institute for issuing a record-breaking number of publications (52) and hosting 48 events in 2020, despite the limitations of the ongoing pandemic. In that context, it encouraged UNIDIR to further leverage partnerships and researchers around Geneva, where it was based, while also considering how its business model might change in the long term because of the pandemic. While noting the continued improvement in the Institute's financial situation, the Board welcomed the General Assembly's recent resolution (75/82) on UNIDIR, notably its invitation to the Secretary-General to submit a proposal for an increase in its subvention as part of the 2022 programme

budget, which was subsequently approved by the General Assembly. The Board also welcomed the Assembly's call in that resolution for all Member States to continue to make financial contributions—unearmarked and covering multiple years, if possible—to UNIDIR to contribute to the Institute's viability, independence and impartiality and the quality of its work over the long term.



CHAPTER VIII

# INFORMATION AND OUTREACH



*Emerging security issues, geopolitical tensions, rapid technological development and other challenges are reshaping the disarmament landscape. Unless we can fully engage with all the varied stakeholders necessary, finding sustainable disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control solutions will be impossible.*

IZUMI NAKAMITSU, HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS<sup>1</sup>



On 13 November 2021 in Seoul, 30 university students joined a student-focused hybrid webinar event in person to discuss disarmament and non-proliferation education.



## CHAPTER VIII

### Information and outreach

#### Developments and trends, 2021

THE OFFICE FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS published the *United Nations Disarmament Yearbook* (vol. 45) online in an interactive format ([yearbook.unoda.org](http://yearbook.unoda.org)), allowing diplomats, technical experts, journalists and other readers to effortlessly navigate the comprehensive overview of key developments and trends from the previous year in the area of multilateral disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

Only one Occasional Paper was produced in 2021: *Advancing the Process to Negotiate a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty: The Role of States in the African, Asia-Pacific and Latin American and Caribbean Regions* (No. 38). In the publication, the author explored the outcome of a project carried out by the European Union and the Office for Disarmament Affairs to promote participation by States in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean in the consultative process of the high-level expert preparatory group on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

In addition, the Office for Disarmament Affairs issued three ad hoc publications during the year.

Those publications included the second edition of the handbook entitled *Effective Weapons and Ammunition Management in a Changing Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Context*, which was developed for United Nations practitioners in the field of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. The Office published the new edition in both English and French.

<sup>1</sup> [Remarks](#) at the webinar “Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education: 20 Years of the UN Study and Looking Ahead”, 7 December 2021.

The Office also released *Gender-sensitive Ammunition Management Processes: Considerations for National Authorities*. Developed in partnership with Small Arms Survey, an independent research institute, the report contained reflections on incorporating gender considerations in the management of ammunition throughout its life cycle. Several practical suggestions for applying gender analysis to ammunition management were highlighted.

Third, the Office published, with support from the European Union and the Government of Ireland, the second edition of *The Biological Weapons Convention: An Introduction*. First published in 2017, the updated publication provided an overview of the Biological Weapons Convention, including the history of the negotiations and the current state of its implementation.

Meanwhile, the Office continued to use its websites as a key means of communication to engage with delegates, civil society stakeholders, staff members and the public at large. To improve the speed and reliability of its main website, the Office invested considerable resources in transferring all the existing content to the most efficient software so as to support the collection, management and sharing of information. The website is scheduled to be launched in 2022 on a more robust content management platform.

The International Day against Nuclear Tests on 29 August was marked through commemorations in Kazakhstan and a high-level plenary session of the General Assembly in New York. Secretary-General António Guterres, in a [statement](#) to the General Assembly, delivered on his behalf by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs on 8 September, called the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty “the centrepiece of global efforts to eliminate nuclear tests once and for all”.

The International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons was observed on 28 September at a high-level plenary meeting convened by the President of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly, Abdulla Shahid (Maldives). In a [statement](#) to the meeting, the President of the General Assembly said that the COVID-19 pandemic had forced humanity to reflect on the kind of world it wanted. “Nuclear weapons are incompatible with the collective views of that new world”, he said.

Meanwhile, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs co-authored two joint opinion articles highlighting actions that Member States and the public could take to support key United Nations goals. To mark the Global Days of Action on Military Spending (12 April to 17 May), the High Representative and Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), highlighted the adverse effects of the stark growth in military outlays since the end of the cold war. Jointly with Asako Okai, Assistant Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Director of its Crisis Bureau, the High Representative advocated for new approaches to tackling the negative impact of small arms and light weapons on countries’ social and economic development.

In anticipation of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty), the Secretary-General warned in an opinion piece that the risk of nuclear-weapon use was higher than at any point since the cold war. Comparing the nuclear landscape to a tinderbox, he warned that one accident or miscalculation could set it alight. His op-ed was published by 18 media outlets in 15 countries.

Separately, the General Assembly issued its second resolution on youth, disarmament and non-proliferation (76/45),<sup>2</sup> encouraging Member States, the United Nations, relevant specialized agencies and regional and subregional organizations to continue to promote the meaningful and inclusive participation of young people in discussions in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. Noting the prominent participation of youth in the intergovernmental process,<sup>3</sup> the Assembly expressly requested the Secretary-General to promote the meaningful and inclusive participation and empowerment of youth in relation to disarmament and non-proliferation issues, including through token grants and awards supported by voluntary contributions.

The Office for Disarmament Affairs, for its part, continued to make significant headway in engaging with, educating and empowering young people through its youth outreach initiative, “#Youth4Disarmament”. Despite ongoing constraints from the global pandemic, the Office organized an array of activities that used art, writing and physical activity as expressive mediums to encourage young people of all interests, backgrounds and experience levels to participate in disarmament efforts.

The Office implemented an adjusted and abridged Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament for 2021, following an analysis that the COVID-19 environment was somewhat more permissive than in 2020, when the Programme had been suspended for the first time in its 40-year history. As per established practice, the 2021 Programme comprised a variety of theoretical activities and practical exercises, including lectures and round-table debates on current disarmament topics with senior diplomats and representatives of international, regional, bilateral and civil society organizations and academia; an ambassadorial-level panel discussion on nuclear disarmament; a simulated session on a draft resolution; and discussions of case studies on conventional weapons. However, most of the traditional field visits had to be cancelled or replaced by virtual or other similar alternatives.

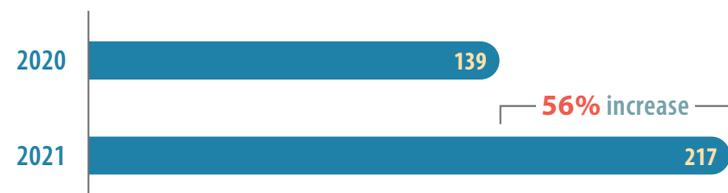
Owing to continuing restrictions on physical access at United Nations facilities resulting from the pandemic, in-person attendance at intergovernmental disarmament meetings remained largely off limits to civil society representatives for much of 2021. In that context, Member States adopted modalities by which

<sup>2</sup> The General Assembly adopted its first resolution on youth, disarmament and non-proliferation (74/64) in 2019.

<sup>3</sup> By operative paragraph 4, the Assembly noted the holding of a formal plenary meeting on youth and disarmament by the Conference on Disarmament on 12 August, during which youth participants expressed their readiness to contribute to the consideration of issues relating to disarmament and non-proliferation, including those on the agenda of the Conference.

## Increased interest in intergovernmental disarmament forums despite pandemic

### Number of non-governmental organizations accredited to two postponed disarmament meetings



In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the postponement of two key intergovernmental disarmament meetings in New York: the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and the seventh Biennial Meeting of States on the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Health restrictions in force at United Nations Headquarters in 2021 substantially limited the ability of civil society organizations to attend meetings in person. Nevertheless, the number of civil society organizations accredited to the Review Conference and the Biennial Meeting of States jumped by 56 per cent in 2021, when those non-governmental groups were provided with new opportunities to register their interest in attending each meeting.

relevant non-governmental actors could participate remotely in key processes, either by delivering remarks by video or submitting comments in writing. In October, for example, the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly participated in its second [interactive virtual dialogue](#) with civil society representatives. Meanwhile, non-governmental actors received new opportunities to request accreditation to attend meetings that had been postponed the previous year.

The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, an autonomous policy institute within the United Nations, implemented a range of activities on disarmament and security focused on generating knowledge and promoting dialogue and action. During the year, the Institute researched various topics, including nuclear risk reduction and verification, data issues and military autonomous systems, distributed ledger technology, space security, weapons and ammunition management, gender approaches to cybersecurity, and the establishment of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction. The Institute also engaged in and facilitated dialogue among disarmament stakeholders through 48 conferences, workshops and events, which drew over 9,000 participants.

## Disarmament Information Programme

### Print and e-publications

The *United Nations Disarmament Yearbook* remained the flagship publication of the Office for Disarmament Affairs in 2021. The forty-fifth volume of the Yearbook<sup>4</sup> was made available on a dedicated website ([yearbook.unoda.org](http://yearbook.unoda.org)), allowing diplomats, technical experts, journalists and other readers to effortlessly navigate the comprehensive overview of key developments and trends from the previous year in the area of multilateral disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. To further highlight key findings, the 2021 edition included a collection of explanatory graphics and charts. The Office also issued the latest versions of the *Yearbook* in [PDF](#) and [e-book](#) formats.

In May, the Office published under its Occasional Papers series the title *Advancing the Process to Negotiate a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty: The Role of States in the African, Asia-Pacific and Latin American and Caribbean Regions* (No. 38). The author, Jean du Preez of the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, reviewed the outcome of a project by the European Union and the Office for Disarmament Affairs to promote participation by States from those regions in the consultative process of the high-level expert preparatory group on a fissile material cut-off treaty. The paper also included perspectives shared by participants in the project's workshops and expert meetings.

In December, the Office issued the 2020–2021 edition of *Programmes Financed from Voluntary Contributions*, showcasing concrete results of its partnerships with donors and underscoring the essential role of their support in attaining important disarmament goals. The extrabudgetary activities featured in that publication included laying the groundwork for a successful tenth Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference; translating global commitments on gender into national and regional initiatives to control small arms; promoting responsible innovation for a secure environment in Asia and the Pacific; and engaging with, empowering and educating youth under the “#Youth4Disarmament” initiative, including through the launch of its [website](#).

In addition, the Office released six stand-alone publications during the year. In February, it issued the *UNODA Strategic Plan, 2021-2025*, setting out core priorities for the next five years and describing its vision for contributing to the goal of general and complete disarmament. The Office also released, in December, the *UNODA Gender Policy, 2021-2025*, providing an overarching framework for its efforts to facilitate progress in gender-responsive disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, as well as to advance gender equality, human rights and the elimination of gender-based violence. The Gender Policy also outlined

<sup>4</sup> Part I of the *United Nations Disarmament Yearbook* (“Disarmament Resolutions and Decisions of the Seventy-fifth Session of the United Nations General Assembly”) was released in April. Part II was issued in October.

internal goals, roles and responsibilities for achieving gender parity, inclusion, gender mainstreaming and other strategic gender dimensions across its policies, programmes, projects and structures.

In April, the Office published the second edition of the handbook entitled *Effective Weapons and Ammunition Management in a Changing Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Context*, developed for United Nations practitioners in the field of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.<sup>5</sup> Authored by Savannah de Tessières and co-published with the Department of Peace Operations, the handbook was written to provide specialists in the field with practical guidance for designing and implementing state-of-the-art initiatives for disarmament and weapons and ammunition management, as part of integrated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes. The publication featured good practices and innovative approaches developed in the field, as well as relevant international standards and guidelines. The update of the 2018 edition reflected relevant policy developments, while ensuring consistent mainstreaming of gender perspectives and systematic integration of youth considerations.

The Office also collaborated with Small Arms Survey, an independent research organization, to develop the report entitled *Gender-sensitive Ammunition Management Processes: Considerations for National Authorities*. Written by Emile LeBrun and drawn from his 2020 [briefing paper](#) on the matter, the report contained reflections on incorporating gender considerations into the management of ammunition throughout its life cycle. The author also provides practical suggestions for applying gender analysis to the field of ammunition management.

In November, the Office released the *Report of the Secretary-General on Current Developments in Science and Technology and Their Potential Impact on International Security and Disarmament Efforts* in book format. Originally issued in July as a parliamentary document<sup>6</sup> of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly, the report was graphically enhanced to support Action 24 of the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament—namely, raising awareness about the implications of new weapon technologies. The report contained an exploration of recent scientific and technological developments relevant to the means and methods of warfare. It also included a summary of the broader impacts of those developments on security and disarmament, their implications for efforts to limit the humanitarian consequences of armed conflict, and the relevant intergovernmental processes in which the developments were being addressed.

Also in November, the Office published, with support from Ireland and the European Union, the second edition<sup>7</sup> of *The Biological Weapons Convention: An Introduction*. The updated publication provided a comprehensive overview of the

Biological Weapons Convention, including the history of its negotiation, the current state of its implementation and the Convention's significance in the modern world.

Throughout the year, the Office for Disarmament Affairs continued to produce the “[UNODA Update](#)”, an online chronicle of events and activities of the Office and various disarmament forums. The Office posted 67 articles for the Update in 2021, collated by quarter.

The Office also continued the biannual updates of its two-page [fact sheets](#), providing relevant and up-to-date information on various issues relating to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control in a clear, easy-to-read format. In 2021, the Office posted 41 fact sheets on disarmament issues, covering categories such as weapons of mass destruction, conventional arms, the disarmament machinery and regional disarmament. Fact sheets on cross-cutting issues, such as gender perspectives, emerging technologies and youth engagement, were also issued.

For a list of the Office's 2021 publications, including those of its regional centres, see annex II.

## Websites

The Office for Disarmament Affairs continued to use its websites as a key means of communicating with delegates, representatives of civil society, United Nations staff and the public at large. Its main website ([www.un.org/disarmament](http://www.un.org/disarmament)) received more than 642,000 unique visitors in 2021, and it remained the Office's primary channel for sharing updates, speeches, remarks and news in the area of multilateral disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

During the year, the Office migrated its main website to a modern content management system and began to fully host it through a cloud service. Those steps made the website more responsive as content was delivered from servers located closer to users.

In 2021, the Office continued using its main website to deliver fresh, dynamic and up-to-date content. In addition to regularly updating the website's “Spotlight” and “UNODA Update” sections with new statements, articles, stories and events, the Office devoted additional resources to providing as much content as possible in the six official languages of the United Nations.

In 2021, like the previous year, the *United Nations Disarmament Yearbook* was deployed on a dedicated website ([yearbook.unoda.org](http://yearbook.unoda.org)). With its attractive and interactive design, the website enabled users to easily navigate the key highlights, as well as a visual timeline and other graphical representations.

The Office for Disarmament Affairs continued to maintain “[UNODA Meetings Place](#)” as the primary source of information about the meetings it supports. By empowering meeting organizers to upload and maintain content directly in real time, Meetings Place enabled attendees to access the most up-to-date information on meetings of interest, particularly with respect to their content and related logistics.

<sup>5</sup> The French version was published in November.

<sup>6</sup> [A/76/182](#).

<sup>7</sup> The first edition was released in 2017.

As of the end of 2021, the tool had become a comprehensive source of information on intergovernmental disarmament meetings that were previously posted on dedicated pages or websites.

### Databases

In 2021, the Office maintained and updated the following public databases:

- [General Assembly Resolutions and Decisions](#), which hosts information about every disarmament-related resolution adopted by the Assembly since its fifty-second session (a new version of that platform was being developed in 2021)
- [Disarmament Treaties](#), which houses information on disarmament-related treaties, including their States parties and signatories (the database was redesigned in 2021)
- [Documents Library](#), a specialized archive of United Nations disarmament-related documents
- [Military Expenditures Database](#), which catalogues the national reports received from Member States
- [United Nations Register of Conventional Arms](#), which presents data provided by Member States in an interactive information platform.

### International days

#### **International Day against Nuclear Tests**

The International Day against Nuclear Tests<sup>8</sup> on 29 August was marked through commemorations in Kazakhstan and a high-level plenary session of the General Assembly in New York.

The Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, Robert Floyd, travelled to Kazakhstan on 26 August. There, he visited the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, where more than 450 nuclear tests had been conducted from 1949 to 1989. In Nur-Sultan, the Executive Secretary spoke with Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, the President of Kazakhstan; Nurlan Nogayev, the Minister of Energy; and Nursultan Nazarbayev, who, as Kazakhstan's first president, had taken the national decision to renounce nuclear weapons and end nuclear testing. The Executive Secretary also met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mukhtar Tleuberdi, with whom he issued a joint statement<sup>9</sup> calling, inter

<sup>8</sup> By resolution [64/35](#) of 2 December 2009, introduced at the initiative of Kazakhstan, the General Assembly declared 29 August the International Day against Nuclear Tests to commemorate the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site on 29 August 1991. Member States and others were invited to use the Day to raise awareness about the effects of nuclear-weapon test explosions and the need to strengthen the international norm against all nuclear tests as a valuable step towards achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

<sup>9</sup> Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, "[IDANT 2021 – Joint Statement by Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan and CTBTO Executive Secretary](#)", 27 August 2021.

alia, for the eight remaining Annex 2 States<sup>10</sup> to demonstrate their commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation by ratifying the Treaty.

The high-level plenary session<sup>11</sup> of the General Assembly was held on 8 September at United Nations Headquarters in New York. States voiced strong support for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and called for its entry into force, which required ratification by eight more Annex 2 States to become international law.

The Secretary-General, in a statement<sup>12</sup> delivered on his behalf by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, called the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty "the centrepiece of global efforts to eliminate nuclear tests once and for all".

Volkan Bozkir (Turkey), President of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly and Chair of the high-level meeting held on 8 September, recalled how nuclear tests had devastated communities and had had a catastrophic impact on the environment. "I would like to take this opportunity to call on States that have yet to sign or ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, to do so as soon as possible", he said.<sup>13</sup>

The Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission gave a statement<sup>14</sup> in which he pointed to the Treaty's success in underpinning a near-universal norm against nuclear testing over the 25 years since it opened for signature. "However, the only way to put in place an enduring and verifiable prohibition on nuclear testing is through the entry into force and universalization of the [Treaty]", he said. "The promise of a world without nuclear weapons is not possible unless the international community comes together on this important cause."

#### **International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons**

The International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons<sup>15</sup> was observed on 28 September at a high-level plenary meeting convened by the

<sup>10</sup> Annex 2 States are the 44 States listed in annex 2 of the Treaty, whose ratifications of the Treaty are necessary for its entry into force.

<sup>11</sup> For the video recording of the session, see United Nations Audiovisual Library, "[General Assembly High-level Plenary Meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day against Nuclear Tests](#)", 8 September 2021.

<sup>12</sup> [Message](#) to the General Assembly on the occasion of the International Day against Nuclear Tests, New York, 8 September 2021.

<sup>13</sup> President of the General Assembly, [statement](#) at the high-level meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day against Nuclear Tests, New York, 8 September 2021.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Floyd, Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, [statement](#) at the high-level meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day against Nuclear Tests, New York, 8 September 2021.

<sup>15</sup> The International Day was established in 2013 through an initiative of the Non-Aligned Movement following the first high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament. The initiative was advanced under General Assembly resolutions [68/32](#) of 5 December 2013, [69/58](#) of 2 December 2014, [70/34](#) of 7 December 2015, [71/71](#) of 5 December 2016, [72/251](#) of 24 December 2017, [73/40](#) of 5 December 2018, [74/54](#) of 12 December 2019, [75/45](#) of 7 December 2020 and [76/36](#) of 6 December 2021, by which the General Assembly called for immediately commencing

President of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly, Abdulla Shahid (Maldives). In a statement<sup>16</sup> to the meeting, he said that the COVID-19 pandemic had forced humanity to reflect on the kind of world it wanted. “Nuclear weapons are incompatible with the collective views of that new world”, he said.<sup>17</sup>

The Secretary-General offered a message<sup>18</sup> in which he warned that the world faced the highest level of nuclear risk in almost four decades. “These weapons are not yesterday’s problem. They remain today’s threat. Despite our progress, humanity remains unacceptably close to nuclear annihilation”, he said. In that context, the Secretary-General welcomed a recent decision by the Russian Federation and the United States to extend the New START Treaty;<sup>19</sup> he also welcomed the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. He said that the upcoming tenth Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty would provide “a window of opportunity for all countries to take practical steps to prevent the use of, and eliminate, these weapons, once and for all”.

The commemorative event included statements<sup>20</sup> from 72 Member States. Two non-governmental organizations (World’s Youth for Climate Justice and YOUNGO)<sup>21</sup> also delivered statements.<sup>22</sup>

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negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons, as well as for enhancing public awareness and education about the threat of nuclear weapons and the necessity of their total elimination.

<sup>16</sup> President of the General Assembly, [statement](#) at the high-level plenary meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, New York, 28 September 2021.

<sup>17</sup> For the report of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Preparations for the Commemoration of the United Nations Seventy-Fifth Anniversary on key findings of the UN75 survey and dialogues, which include reflections and views of respondents on nuclear weapons, see *Shaping Our Future Together: Listening to People’s Priorities for the Future and their Ideas for Action* (United Nations publication, 2021).

<sup>18</sup> [Message](#) on the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, New York, 26 September 2021.

<sup>19</sup> Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms.

<sup>20</sup> For the written statements, see Journal of the United Nations, “[High-level plenary meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons](#)”, 28 September 2021. For all statements as delivered, see United Nations Web TV, “General Assembly: High-level plenary meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons” ([Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)), video, 28 September 2021.

<sup>21</sup> YOUNGO, coined from “youth” and “NGO” (non-governmental organization), is the children and youth constituency of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

<sup>22</sup> For the pre-recorded video statements from civil society, see UNPGA 76 General Assembly, “[Message of a representative of WYCF for a High-level meeting on Elimination of Nuclear Weapons](#)”, YouTube video, 28 September 2021; and “[Message of a representative of the YOUNGO for a High-level meeting on Elimination of Nuclear Weapons](#)”, YouTube video, 28 September 2021.

### **Commemoration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki**

On 6 August, the Secretary-General delivered a [video message](#) at the seventy-sixth Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony. In his message, the Secretary-General recalled how a single nuclear weapon had brought unimaginable suffering to the people of that city, killing tens of thousands of people instantly, tens of thousands in its aftermath and many more in the following years. In that context, he hailed the unparalleled advocacy of the hibakusha as a testament to the resilience of the human spirit, while also underscoring that the United Nations shared their vision of a world without nuclear weapons. The Secretary-General expressed deep concern about the lack of progress towards the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world, but he welcomed the decisions by the Russian Federation and the United States to extend the New START Treaty and engage in a dialogue on arms control as welcome first steps towards reducing the risk of nuclear catastrophe. He concluded by calling on all States that possessed nuclear weapons to adopt risk-reduction measures, individually and jointly, and urged Governments to use the tenth Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to strengthen their commitment to a nuclear-weapon-free world.

On behalf of the Secretary-General, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs delivered a [video message](#) at the seventy-sixth Nagasaki Peace Memorial Ceremony on 9 August. In his message, the Secretary-General reaffirmed the full support of the United Nations to ensure that the voices of the hibakusha were heard by the world’s people, especially by younger generations. “More than three quarters of a century after the destruction of Nagasaki, we continue to dwell in the shadow of the mushroom cloud”, he said. “Prospects for the use of nuclear weapon are as dangerous as at any time since the height of the cold war. States are racing to create more powerful weapons and broadening the potential scenarios for their use. Warlike rhetoric is turned up to maximum volume, while dialogue is on mute.”

However, the Secretary-General welcomed the reaffirmation by the United States and the Russian Federation that a nuclear war could not be won and must never be fought, as well as the commitment of those countries to engaging in arms control dialogue. He also congratulated the parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on its entry into force, noting that the Treaty represented the legitimate fears of many States about the existential danger posed by nuclear weapons.

“I hope these developments herald a turning point”, the Secretary-General said. To conclude, he called on all States parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to use the forthcoming tenth Review Conference to reinforce the norm against nuclear weapons and take steps towards their elimination. “Together, we must prevent the tragedy of what happened here on 9 August 1945 from ever occurring again”, he said.

## Media

In 2021, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs published two joint opinion articles highlighting actions that Member States and the public could take to support key United Nations goals.

To mark the Global Days of Action on Military Spending (12 April to 17 May), the High Representative and Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN-Women, in a joint article, highlighted the adverse effects of a stark increase in global military spending since the end of the cold war. As women leading United Nations efforts on gender equality and disarmament, the authors urged countries to consider redirecting excessive military spending towards strengthening women's social and economic security and promoting more inclusive and resilient societies. In their article, entitled “[For a safer and more resilient world, put people before runaway military spending](#)”, the authors proposed a “reset” and outlined three actions to reshape security in a way that could simultaneously advance gender equality and disarmament. The article was published in nine languages—including Arabic, French, Russian and Spanish—by 21 media outlets based in 14 countries.

In a joint opinion piece, the High Representative together with Asako Okai, Assistant Administrator of UNDP and Director of its Crisis Bureau, advocated for new approaches to tackling the negative impact of small arms and light weapons on countries' social and economic development. They noted that, whether an area was generally stable but had a high level of crime or gang violence, was recovering from conflict or remained an active war zone, the presence of unregulated small arms hurt all its inhabitants—often in very diverse ways. What was needed, they explained, was an approach that addressed the full spectrum of challenges of illicit small arms and their complex social impact. In that regard, they highlighted the Saving Lives Entity (SALIENT), a United Nations funding facility, as part of a broader multilateral effort to deliver consistent, reliable support to the countries most affected by illegal arms (for more information about SALIENT, see chapter III). Their opinion article<sup>23</sup> was published in the *Mainichi Shimbun* in English and Japanese, and it also appeared in other outlets in [Spanish](#) and [Portuguese](#).

The Office also helped publicize an opinion article<sup>24</sup> by the United Nations Secretary-General in advance of the tenth Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.<sup>25</sup> Noting that the risk of nuclear-weapon use was higher than at any point since the cold war, the Secretary-General warned that one accident or miscalculation could set the nuclear “tinderbox” alight. He called on States to seize the opportunity of the Review Conference to reverse course and steer the world

away from nuclear cataclysm, outlining suggestions for bold action on six fronts. The article was published by 18 media outlets in 15 countries.

The High Representative promoted disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control issues via international television, radio and print outlets, conducting 40 interviews and participating in numerous press conferences and media briefings. In August, she addressed reporters at the Japan National Press Club on autonomous weapon systems, cybersecurity and outer space. Additionally, in a contribution to the Japanese newspaper *Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbun*, the High Representative appealed directly to readers on matters relating to disarmament and international cooperation.<sup>26</sup>

## Disarmament and non-proliferation education

In 2021, the Office for Disarmament Affairs continued its efforts to promote disarmament and non-proliferation education, including through the further implementation of recommendations contained in the 2002 United Nations study<sup>27</sup> on the matter.

As part of those efforts, the Office partnered with Mexico to hold a virtual event on 7 December, entitled “Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education: 20 Years of the UN Study and Looking Ahead”. During the event, representatives of Member States, civil society and academia, as well as educators and students, considered progress made and challenges that remained more than two decades after the General Assembly mandated the study by its resolution [55/33 E](#) of 20 November 2000.

Meanwhile, the Office continued its outreach to students and young practitioners in science, technology, engineering and mathematics as an audience not traditionally engaged in disarmament and non-proliferation education. As part of its “responsible innovation” efforts—launched in 2019 in response to the accelerating use of new and emerging technologies with potential implications for international peace and security—the Office partnered with leading universities, regional organizations, industry actors and civil society organizations to carry out capacity-building workshops, seminars, dialogues, pitch events and team challenges for over 400 young participants in 2021.

The Office also took forward direct engagement in Asia and the Pacific to build capacities for disarmament and non-proliferation education. In 2021, teachers from the region participated in “[Disarmament4Educators](#)”, a tailored online course hosted on the Office's [Disarmament Education Dashboard](#). Throughout the moderated eight-week programme, educators undertook coursework and interacted with experts on a variety of matters related to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

<sup>23</sup> Izumi Nakamitsu and Asako Okai, “[Opinion: New global approach to countering illegal firearms crucial for peace, development](#)”, *The Mainichi Shimbun*, 1 December 2021.

<sup>24</sup> António Guterres, “[Tenth Review Conference of Parties to Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons](#)”, *The Astana Times*, 10 December 2021.

<sup>25</sup> The Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was since postponed to a later date in 2022,

<sup>26</sup> For the articles published, see United Nations Information Centre, “[10月31日付 熊本日日新聞の「くまにち論壇」に 中満事務次長の寄稿が掲載されました](#)”.

<sup>27</sup> [A/57/124](#).

The Office also continued adding new modules and courses to the Dashboard, whose total number of registered users surpassed 10,000 in 2021. In addition, the Office produced a series of [disarmament explainer videos](#) to support educators who reported difficulties in identifying appropriate introductory educational materials on disarmament and non-proliferation. Designed to engage the interest of new and non-traditional audiences, on social media and in classrooms, the videos had been viewed over 15,000 times as at the end of 2021.

Separately, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific continued to actively collaborate with the Hiroshima office of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research in implementing a [training programme on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation](#). Launched in 2015 for diplomatic representatives of States in Asia, the programme was developed to increase understanding of the current state of the nuclear disarmament debate; equip participants with insight into their communication practices, as well as the structure and practice of negotiation at relevant events; and contribute to the development of a network of like-minded professionals.

The Office for Disarmament Affairs also worked to support disarmament and non-proliferation education more broadly throughout 2021. In that regard, it participated in activities led by the World Federation of United Nations Associations, various model United Nations groups, civil society organizations, universities and high schools around the world. The Office's contributions included organizing guest lectures, seminars, presentations and workshops on disarmament and non-proliferation for motivated young audiences.

## Youth and disarmament

In 2021, Member States continued their efforts with United Nations entities, relevant specialized agencies and regional and subregional organizations to engage youth in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, as the General Assembly had encouraged for the first time in its resolution [74/64](#) of 12 December 2019, entitled "Youth, disarmament and non-proliferation".

### #Youth4Disarmament

Despite constraints from the global pandemic, the Office for Disarmament Affairs achieved further headway in engaging with, educating and empowering young people through its outreach initiative, "#Youth4Disarmament". As at the end of 2021, youth participation in formal and informal disarmament meetings had jumped by more than 500 per cent since the launch of #Youth4Disarmament in 2019.<sup>28</sup>

In the second year of the initiative's flagship training programme, for example, 10 previously selected United Nations Youth Champions for Disarmament continued

to participate in exchanges with experts from think tanks, civil society organizations and the diplomatic community. At the same time, the Youth Champions developed and implemented projects to engage with their communities on disarmament-related issues.

Meanwhile, the Office partnered with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea to hold the [Youth Forum on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation](#) in Seoul on 29 and 30 June. The participants adopted, on 30 June, the "[Seoul Youth Declaration on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation](#)", comprising recommendations on the role of young people in advancing disarmament and achieving the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, approaching opportunities and challenges posed by new and emerging technologies, and addressing issues related to gender and disarmament.

Then, on 12 August, four Youth Champions for Disarmament delivered remarks<sup>29</sup> at a [formal plenary of the Conference on Disarmament during a dedicated session on youth and disarmament](#) timed to mark International Youth Day.

The Office also facilitated an array of activities, in which young people of diverse interests, knowledge and backgrounds could participate in disarmament efforts through expressive mediums such as art, writing and physical activity. Those activities included the following:

- "[What If – Speterra](#)" [Youth Video Challenge](#), a worldwide contest, in which young people showcased visions of a world without weapons of mass destruction, where conventional arms are strictly regulated and resources are directed towards tangible social and economic benefits for people and the planet
- [#StepUp4Disarmament Youth Campaign](#), intended to raise awareness of the International Day against Nuclear Tests on 29 August
- [#YouthInAction for Disarmament Campaign](#), in which young people were encouraged to showcase their activities promoting disarmament and non-proliferation, in celebration of the second anniversary of the General Assembly's first biennial resolution on youth, disarmament and non-proliferation ([74/64](#)).

### General Assembly

During its seventy-sixth session, the General Assembly adopted its second biennial resolution on youth, disarmament and non-proliferation ([76/45](#)). By that resolution, the Assembly noted the holding of the formal plenary meeting on youth and disarmament by the Conference on Disarmament on 12 August, during which youth participants had expressed their readiness to contribute to the consideration of issues relating to disarmament and non-proliferation, including those on the Conference's agenda. The General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General

<sup>28</sup> [Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization 2021](#) (United Nations publication, 2021), p. 110.

<sup>29</sup> See [CD/PV.1588](#).

to seek specific measures to promote the meaningful and inclusive participation and empowerment of youth in disarmament and non-proliferation issues, including through token grants and awards supported by voluntary contributions. The Assembly further requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States, the United Nations, other relevant international and regional organizations and civil society organizations on the promotion of youth engagement and empowerment activities in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation, and to submit a report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session.

### United Nations Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament

The United Nations Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament was established by the General Assembly at its tenth special session (first special session devoted to disarmament)<sup>30</sup> in 1978, at the initiative of Nigeria. The Programme is intended to train and build the capacity of officials from Member States to participate more effectively in international disarmament deliberations and negotiations. The Programme is implemented each year by the Office for Disarmament Affairs for about 25 Fellows nominated by their respective Governments. As at the end of 2021, the number of public officials trained under the Programme had reached 1,052. Those officials were mostly diplomats or military experts from 170 States.<sup>31</sup>

Following the suspension of the Programme in 2020 and an analysis of the COVID-19 environment, which was considered slightly more permissive in 2021, the Office for Disarmament Affairs assessed how to implement the Programme's core activities during the year through an adjusted and abridged Programme.

Against that background and in line with established practice, the 2021 Programme was organized in three segments comprising a variety of theoretical activities and practical exercises. The 2021 Fellows attended lectures and round-table debates on current disarmament topics with senior diplomats and representatives of international, regional, bilateral and civil society organizations and academia; an ambassadorial-level panel discussion on nuclear disarmament; a simulated session on a draft resolution on lethal autonomous weapon systems; and discussions of case studies on conventional weapons. The Office had to cancel most of the Programme's

traditional field visits,<sup>32</sup> replacing them in some instances with virtual or other similar alternatives. Furthermore, the Office developed several introductory videos on disarmament and arms control topics that Fellows could access before the Programme's formal commencement.

In the initial segment of the Programme, launched in Geneva on 6 September, the Fellows were exposed to the work related to the Conference on Disarmament and various treaty regimes, in particular the Biological Weapons Convention (1972),<sup>33</sup> the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (1980),<sup>34</sup> the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (1997),<sup>35</sup> the Convention on Cluster Munitions (2008) and the Arms Trade Treaty (2013). In that context, the Fellows received background information on relevant weapons systems and their effects, as well as on applicable laws, in particular international humanitarian law. Furthermore, the Fellows took part in case study exercises on weapons law.

The Fellows also attended briefings on the impact of new technologies on the means and methods of warfare, the work of civil society in the field of disarmament, and the activities of three Geneva-based non-governmental organizations<sup>36</sup> in the area of peace and security. The Programme's initial segment also included a study visit to Bern, organized by the Government of Switzerland.

During the second segment of the Programme, the Fellows participated in study visits to several international organizations and offices related to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. In Vienna, they visited the offices of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and export control regimes such as the Wassenaar Arrangement, the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Zangger Committee.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation provided briefings on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (2017). In The Hague, the Fellows visited the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and a nuclear reactor at the Delft University of Technology. They also went to the European Union institutions in Brussels, which was organized by the European

<sup>30</sup> The Programme was established pursuant to the final document (S-10/2) of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. In its paragraph 108, the Assembly stated, "In order to promote expertise in disarmament in more Member States, particularly in the developing countries, the General Assembly decides to establish a programme of fellowships on disarmament".

<sup>31</sup> Through specialized training, the Programme helped Fellows to further develop their expertise in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control issues, as well as their understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the field of multilateral disarmament and international security. The Programme enabled former Fellows to participate more effectively in regional and global disarmament efforts, and, by creating an informal world-spanning network, to work cooperatively and constructively in pursuit of disarmament and non-proliferation goals. Many former Fellows went on to hold important disarmament-related positions or responsibilities within their Governments or in international organizations.

<sup>32</sup> Traditional activities that were cancelled included visits to China, Germany, Japan, Kazakhstan and the Republic of Korea, as well as to the offices of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials.

<sup>33</sup> Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction.

<sup>34</sup> 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.

<sup>35</sup> Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

<sup>36</sup> Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, Geneva Centre for Security Policy and Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces.

<sup>37</sup> For more information on the Wassenaar Arrangement, see chapter III. For further details about the Nuclear Suppliers Group, see chapter I. For more information about the Zangger Committee, refer to its [website](#).

Union Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium.<sup>38</sup> Additionally, they took part in special events organized by Japan, Kazakhstan and the Republic of Korea.

The third segment of the Programme took place in October at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, where the Fellows followed the work of the First Committee of the General Assembly and developments related to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. In parallel, the Fellows conducted and discussed research work on various topics related to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

After completing the Programme at the United Nations Headquarters on 30 October, the 2021 Fellows were awarded certificates of participation by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and the Chair of the First Committee, Omar Hilale (Morocco).

### Vienna Office of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs

In 2021, the Vienna Office continued its efforts to raise awareness and provide educational opportunities in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

During the year, the Office added 13 new self-paced courses to its online learning platform, the [Disarmament Education Dashboard](#), addressing key issues linked to international security in general and disarmament in particular.<sup>39</sup> In addition, the Dashboard received updates and new features designed to make the website easier to access and navigate, and the Office placed its self-paced courses in a new interactive format to improve the experience of learners. The Dashboard's reach grew significantly in 2021, with 10,696 active registered users as at the end of the year.

Meanwhile, the Vienna Office continued to partner with OSCE to train young professionals in the OSCE region through the [Scholarship for Peace and Security](#). A total of 150 scholarships were awarded through the programme, 87 per cent of which went to women. The 2021 scholarship programme, comprising eight weeks of online coursework, marked the fourth round of training courses organized jointly by OSCE and the Vienna Office.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> The support from the European Union was pursuant to its Council's decision [2018/299](#).

<sup>39</sup> The self-paced courses added in 2021 focused on the following topics respectively: the United Nations SaferGuard Programme and the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines; nuclear security; the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; small arms and light weapons; regional disarmament; national implementation action plans for Security Council resolution 1540 (2004); explosive weapons in populated areas; gender and small arms control; lethal autonomous weapons systems; cluster munitions; landmines; outer space; and the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament. An additional self-paced course was developed as part of the "Disarmament4Educators" pilot project.

<sup>40</sup> The in-person, week-long component of the programme was postponed to 2022, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Office's other education and outreach efforts in 2021 included "[Disarmament4Educators](#)", a joint pilot project that brought together 25 representatives of accredited universities and Governments in South and Southeast Asia. Designed to support the development of regional academic networks and the participants' substantive knowledge of disarmament-related subjects, the project consisted of an eight-week online training course and a live webinar. Those segments of the programme encouraged an exchange of experiences among disarmament education practitioners based around the globe.

In 2021, the Vienna Office also undertook several additional projects including developing a four-week online training course on Security Council resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) for national points of contact in northern Africa and the Sahel. Moreover, in collaboration with the United Nations Regional Centre for Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, the Vienna Office was preparing an online self-paced training course intended to help educate and build the capacity of relevant stakeholders in the Asia-Pacific region to establish and maintain gun-free zones.

In the area of outreach, the Vienna Office continued its activities to promote dialogue about various issues related to international peace and security. For example, to mark the seventy-sixth anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, the Office hosted a two-part webinar to raise awareness about the threat posed by nuclear weapons and about the United Nations' long-standing goal of their total elimination, respectively. Held as part of the Vienna Office's [Disarmament Web Talks](#) series, the webinar brought together youth, academics, civil society and international organizations, and one hibakusha also attended.

Meanwhile, the Office's social media platforms became particularly active throughout 2021. The number of followers doubled on both Twitter and Instagram, and the Office continued tailoring content for broader audiences.

### United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

In 2021, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) implemented a range of activities on disarmament and security aimed at generating knowledge and promoting dialogue and action. Its work during the year included producing policy-relevant research and analysis, building capacity on traditional and emerging issues, and delivering tools to assist Member States in implementing their disarmament commitments.

As an autonomous institution within the United Nations, UNIDIR provides research and policy support to Member States, United Nations bodies, international and regional organizations and other stakeholders. Under its strategic research agenda,<sup>41</sup> the Institute concentrated on four multi-year programmes on conventional

<sup>41</sup> The programme of work and financial plan of UNIDIR for 2021 and 2022 received approval from its Board of Trustees. See the report of UNIDIR ([A/76/175](#)).

arms, gender and disarmament, security and technology, and weapons of mass destruction and other strategic weapons, respectively, as well as a project on a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction. In each of those programmes, the Institute considered new issues related to the diverse security concerns of the twenty-first century; integrated them with relevant peace, security and development priorities; and produced research and events accessible to a global audience, in multiple languages and targeting youth.

During the year, UNIDIR accomplished the following:

- Researched topics including nuclear risk reduction and verification, data issues and military autonomous systems, distributed ledger technology, space security, weapons and ammunition management, gender approaches to cybersecurity, and a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction.
- Engaged in and facilitated dialogue among disarmament stakeholders through 48 conferences, workshops and events, which drew over 9,000 participants. Those activities included a regional workshop on gender and disarmament, with the participation of 52 national officials and experts from 11 countries in South and South-East Asia; a series of regional table-top exercises on “the human element and autonomous weapons systems” that brought together 198 technical, military and legal experts from 75 countries; the UNIDIR flagship conference on outer space security; and, in partnership with the Office for Disarmament Affairs, a course of six thematic modules, each comprising a reading list, an introductory video and an interactive online videoconference session.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, in addition to its annual Cyber Stability Conference, UNIDIR convened its flagship Innovations Dialogue to discuss “deepfakes” and their implications for international security.
- Offered advisory services to intergovernmental processes and forums, including the following: served as a consultant to two groups of governmental experts on “problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus” and “advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security”, respectively; and briefed the Security Council on the impact of arms diversion and trafficking for peace and security.
- Issued 58 publications (and 12 translations) on subjects as varied as science and technology review mechanisms under the Biological Weapons Convention, cyber operations against critical infrastructure, and enhancement of the protection of civilians through conventional arms control as an opportunity for United Nations peace operations (for a list of UNIDIR publications in 2021, see annex II).

<sup>42</sup> The course was a joint endeavour of UNIDIR and the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

- Expanded the content of its website, which saw a 46 per cent increase in annual users, with visitors based in all Member States, and a 49 per cent growth in social media followers.

The 2021 highlights from UNIDIR research programmes, all of which supported the implementation of the Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament, are discussed below.<sup>43</sup>

### Weapons of mass destruction and other strategic weapons

The work of UNIDIR in this programme fell into five main areas: finding measures to reduce nuclear-weapon risk; strengthening compliance and enforcement of weapons of mass destruction-related regimes; new approaches to transparency and verification in nuclear disarmament; improving space security and sustainability; and addressing the future of arms control and disarmament related to weapons of mass destruction. In the latter area, UNIDIR continued work on the “Nuclear Disarmament, Deterrence and Strategic Arms Control Dialogue”, bringing together experts from around the world to identify concrete options for recrafting strategic arms control and revitalizing the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. Three dialogue events were hosted in 2021.

Under the programme, UNIDIR published outputs in all those areas, including a report<sup>44</sup> on findings from the UNIDIR Dialogue. In addition, UNIDIR organized several online workshops and events, in which it presented the findings of various research activities, including work on nuclear risk reduction, nuclear disarmament verification, the implementation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the Biological Weapons Convention, and convened the 2021 Outer Space Security Conference.

### Conventional arms

In 2021, UNIDIR conducted research for its conventional arms programme in three priority areas: strengthening policy and practice for weapons and ammunition management; integrating conventional arms control into prevention and peacemaking; and adapting arms control to address the urbanization of violence. Those activities supported the active engagement of States in various multilateral processes, including the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons;<sup>45</sup> the Arms Trade Treaty; the Group of Governmental Experts on

<sup>43</sup> UNIDIR provided a full account of its activities, as well as its proposed programme of work and financial plan for 2021, in the annual report of its Director to the General Assembly (A/76/175). Detailed information about specific projects of the Institute, as well as on all its research and activities, was posted on its [website](#).

<sup>44</sup> UNIDIR, “[Identifying Collaborative Actions to Reduce Today’s Nuclear Dangers](#)”, 1 September 2021.

<sup>45</sup> Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Problems Arising from the Accumulation of Conventional Ammunition Stockpiles in Surplus; and relevant Security Council committees.

In the area of weapons and ammunition management, the achievements of UNIDIR included enhancing knowledge among States on ways<sup>46</sup> to better identify and mitigate diversion risks in arms transfers, in line with the Arms Trade Treaty; enabling Member States to conduct national weapons and ammunition management baseline assessments using the [UNIDIR reference methodology](#); identifying gaps in and measures to strengthen national institutions, policies and practices for weapons and ammunition management; [facilitating regional lessons-learned dialogue on weapons and ammunition management in Africa](#); and generating ideas to achieve progress on conventional ammunition management at the national, regional and international levels in support of the relevant group of governmental experts process.

In addition, UNIDIR actively supported Action 21 of the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament by exploring opportunities for integrating conventional arms risks and control measures into United Nations conflict analysis and conflict prevention and peacemaking strategies and activities.<sup>47</sup> Through its research in that area, UNIDIR continued to generate ideas for United Nations practitioners that would be useful in further integrating conventional arms control into multilateral agendas on conflict prevention, peacebuilding, human rights and sustainable development.

In 2021, UNIDIR also produced a menu<sup>48</sup> of indicators to support efforts to measure the reverberating effects on civilians of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. The menu was intended to help actors in the areas of conflict prevention and humanitarian assistance gather evidence that could persuade parties to conflicts in populated areas, especially urban areas, to take measures to reduce civilian harm and suffering. Furthermore, the UNIDIR counter-improvised explosive device capability maturity model and self-assessment tool<sup>49</sup> and its ammunition-profiling handbook<sup>50</sup> underwent testing by United Nations partners and Member States, helping to inform national policies and practices for preventing and mitigating the risks and impacts of armed violence.

<sup>46</sup> See Manuel Martinez, Alfredo Malaret, Erica Mumford and Natalie Briggs, *Arms Trade Treaty: Diversion Analysis Framework* (Geneva, UNIDIR, 2021).

<sup>47</sup> See Simon Yazgi and Erica Mumford, *The Arms-Related Risk Analysis Toolkit: Practical Guidance for Integrating Conventional Arms-Related Risks into Conflict Analysis and Prevention* (Geneva, UNIDIR, 2021).

<sup>48</sup> Christina Wille and Alfredo Malaret Baldo, *Menu of Indicators to Measure the Reverberating Effects on Civilians from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas* (Geneva, UNIDIR, 2021).

<sup>49</sup> Bob Seddon and Alfredo Malaret, *Counter-IED Capability Maturity Model and Self-Assessment Tool* (Geneva, UNIDIR, 2021).

<sup>50</sup> Alfredo Malaret Baldo and Manuel Martinez Miralles, *Handbook to Profile Small Arms Ammunition in Armed Violence Settings* (Geneva, UNIDIR, 2021).

## Security and technology

Through its security and technology programme, UNIDIR helped practitioners and multilateral disarmament processes respond effectively to the security challenges resulting from technological innovation. The programme's objectives were to support the development and implementation of norms, increase understanding of digital destabilization, and help modernize the "arms control toolbox".

The programme focused on three priority areas: cyber stability; artificial intelligence and the weaponization of increasingly autonomous technologies; and the security dimensions of innovations in science and technology. Within each area, UNIDIR aimed to build knowledge and awareness, promote multilateral discourse on the implications and risks of specific technological innovations for international security, and convene stakeholders who would explore ideas and develop new thinking on ways to address those implications and risks.

In 2021, UNIDIR also continued to help advance the international cyber debate through activities such as the following: (a) facilitating the operationalization of norms of responsible State behaviour through a combination of research activities and multi-stakeholder dialogues; (b) continuously maintaining and further developing the UNIDIR [Cyber Policy Portal](#);<sup>51</sup> (c) supporting the relevant intergovernmental processes established by the General Assembly;<sup>52</sup> (d) producing research reports and organizing workshops and webinars on pertinent issues in the cyber domain such as the application of the Charter of the United Nations in the cyber context,<sup>53</sup> the intersection between information and communications technologies, international security and cybercrime, and the impact of artificial intelligence on cyber operations; and (e) convening the Institute's annual Cyber Stability Conference in December.<sup>54</sup>

As part of its workstream on artificial intelligence, UNIDIR carried out original research projects, as well as an ambitious programme to engage with stakeholders across regions. For example, its research team released a report<sup>55</sup> on data issues and military autonomous systems. The team also reported<sup>56</sup> on key findings from the following activities organized during the year: two regional workshops exploring an operational framework for remotely piloted vehicles; and five regional table-top exercises, conducted as part of a larger series on the "human element and autonomous weapons systems" that brought together 198 individual

<sup>51</sup> The Cyber Policy Portal was launched in January 2019 and showcased at the Paris Peace Forum, held annually from 11 to 13 November.

<sup>52</sup> Support provided pursuant to General Assembly resolutions *73/27* and *73/266*, and including advising the respective Chairs of both Groups at their February in-person meetings, consolidating relevant national inputs, positions and comments, and preparing draft texts for both processes.

<sup>53</sup> Talita de Souza Dias, *Applying Chapters VI and VII of the Charter of the United Nations in the Cyber Context* (Geneva, UNIDIR, 2021).

<sup>54</sup> Notably, the Conference was convened for the first time in a hybrid format, combining in-person attendance in Geneva with virtual participation of speakers and audiences from around the world.

<sup>55</sup> Arthur Holland, *Known Unknowns: Data Issues and Military* (Geneva, UNIDIR, 2021).

<sup>56</sup> See Giacomo Persi Paoli, Alice Spazian and Alisha Anand, *Table-Top Exercises on the Human Element and Autonomous Weapons System* (Geneva, UNIDIR, 2021).

technical, military and legal experts from 75 countries. The Institute also maintained a diverse and broad programme of public engagement under its artificial intelligence workstream, holding two side events for the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems and conducting international speaking and media appearances on an ongoing basis.

Through its workstream on science, technology and innovation, UNIDIR pursued activities on a variety of topics, including deepfakes, distributed ledger technology, drones and counter-drone technology, directed energy weapons, and issues of the Biological Weapons Convention. In that regard, it undertook hands-on research; issued three publications; held four events, including its flagship Innovations Dialogue, which drew nearly 1,000 participants from around the world; and participated in several external speaking engagements.

### Gender and disarmament

In 2021, through its programme on gender and disarmament, UNIDIR continued to assist the diplomatic community in bridging gender and disarmament frameworks. To support stakeholders in their efforts to mainstream a gender perspective in cybersecurity discussions, UNIDIR produced two new studies: *Gender Approaches to Cybersecurity*;<sup>57</sup> and *System Update: Towards a Women, Peace and Cybersecurity Agenda*.<sup>58</sup>

The associations between gender norms and military applications of artificial intelligence were another topic of research. In that regard, UNIDIR set up a project in which it examined instances of gender bias in data collection, algorithms and computer processing that were relevant for military applications of artificial intelligence. In its report *Does Military AI Have Gender? Understanding Bias and Promoting Ethical Approaches in Military Applications of AI*,<sup>59</sup> UNIDIR outlined several possible avenues for countering bias and avoiding harm from artificial intelligence. For example, it noted that a gender-based review of military applications of artificial intelligence could highlight how military systems that incorporate artificial intelligence could represent and respond to gender, and how previously known harmful effects related to bias had been mitigated.

Under the programme, UNIDIR also carried out quantitative analysis and interviews with practitioners in the field of weapons and ammunition management to better understand women's participation in technical arms control, including challenges and good practices for fostering gender equality in that area. The resulting report, *Women Managing Weapons*,<sup>60</sup> was launched at an event on the margins of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Following the launch, UNIDIR briefed relevant United

Nations experts on the research and engaged with them to consider best practices for promoting gender equality in technical arms control. The partners welcomed the report's data and analysis, which were later referenced in the Secretary-General's 2021 report<sup>61</sup> to the Security Council on small arms and light weapons. Likewise, the Secretary-General's 2021 report<sup>62</sup> on women, peace and security included references to two of the programme's earlier publications: *Still Behind the Curve*, published in 2019, and *Connecting the Dots*, issued in 2020.

To build capacity and support the engagement of disarmament stakeholders in different parts of the world, UNIDIR organized a virtual, regional workshop with 52 national officials and experts from 11 countries in South and South-East Asia. The key takeaways of the discussions, as well as recommendations, were presented in the report *Gender Perspectives in Arms Control and Disarmament: Views from South and Southeast Asia*.<sup>63</sup>

Another task under the gender and disarmament programme was developing specific activities to engage with women from Arab countries, which resulted in two focus groups formed to determine and understand the main obstacles and gather ideas on how to promote women's participation in security in the regional context. The discussions informed the [fact sheet on Arab women in international security and disarmament](#), which outlined the current state of gender imbalance in terms of Arab women's participation in international security and disarmament, as well as ideas on how to bridge the gap going forward.

Additionally, as part of its work with the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group,<sup>64</sup> UNIDIR launched a new [fact sheet on gender and biological weapons](#), with recommendations to promote gender equality and mainstream gender perspectives in the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention. The Impact Group also updated and distributed the third edition of the *Gender and Disarmament Resource Pack*.

### Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction

Through its project on a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, which was fully funded by the European Union, UNIDIR pursued four overarching objectives: (a) to fill an important research gap related to how the issue evolved, including lessons for current and future prospects; (b) to build analytic capacity to support new thinking on regional security issues and the zone, including drawing on lessons from the establishment of other regional nuclear-weapon-free zones; (c) to collect ideas and develop new proposals on how to move forward on the issue; and

<sup>61</sup> [S/2021/839](#).

<sup>62</sup> [S/2021/827](#).

<sup>63</sup> Renata H. Dalaqua, Shimona Mohan and Hana Salama wrote the report.

<sup>64</sup> Co-chaired by the Director of UNIDIR and the Ambassadors of Ireland, Namibia and the Philippines, the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group seeks to promote dialogue, share knowledge and pursue concrete opportunities to advance gender-responsive action within disarmament processes.

<sup>57</sup> Katharine Millar, James Shires and Tatiana Tropina wrote the report on the study.

<sup>58</sup> Lisa Sharland, Netta Goussac, Emilia Currey, Genevieve Feely and Sarah O'Connor wrote the report on the study.

<sup>59</sup> Katherine Chandler wrote the report.

<sup>60</sup> Hana Salama and Emma Bjertén-Günther wrote the report.

(d) to foster inclusive dialogue among experts and policymakers on regional security issues and the zone, which in turn could contribute to ongoing multilateral processes.

In 2021, the project focused on conducting dialogues, producing contemporary tools and analysing current international and regional events with a view to understanding how they may contribute towards and influence regional security, as well as prospects for establishing a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

Throughout 2021, UNIDIR disseminated preliminary findings through a dedicated quarterly newsletter and briefings to stakeholders. In that regard, it participated in the second Informal Workshop on Good Practices and Lessons Learned with Respect to Existing Nuclear-Weapon Free Zones, held in February by the Office for Disarmament Affairs, and provided support to the second session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, held in December.

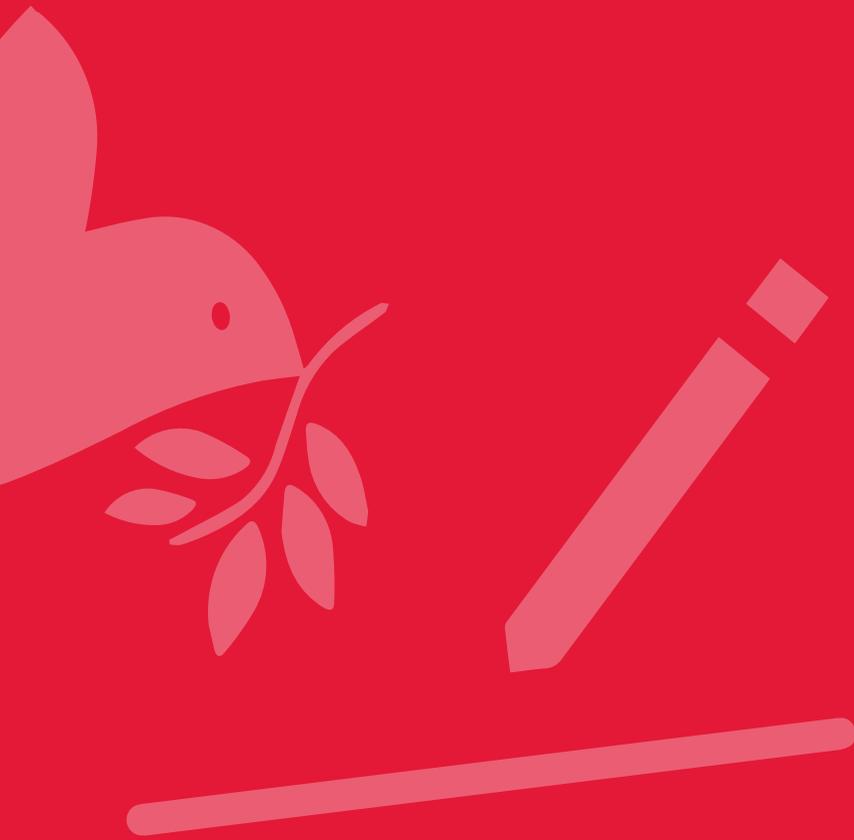
UNIDIR also carried out the following activities: published a paper<sup>65</sup> outlining nuclear verification of the future Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction based on lessons learned from past nuclear verification and safeguards cases; organized a round-table discussion with regional experts to consider the incentives, disincentives and missing incentives of different States in the region to engage in the processes for creating such a zone; issued a report<sup>66</sup> discussing the lessons learned from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action for establishing the prospective zone; and organized two workshops and a public [event](#) with UN-Women on the margins of the meetings of the First Committee to discuss how to advance the role of women in regional security issues, while also releasing a [fact sheet](#) on that same topic. In addition, a UNIDIR researcher authored an article<sup>67</sup> for *Arms Control Today* on nuclear negotiations with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

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<sup>65</sup> John Carlson, *Nuclear Verification in a Middle East WMD-Free Zone: Lessons from Past Verification Cases and Other Precedents*, Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone Series (Geneva, UNIDIR, 2021).

<sup>66</sup> Chen Zak and Farzan Sabet, eds., *From the Iran nuclear deal to a Middle East Zone? Lessons from the JCPOA for an ME WMD Free Zone*, Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone Series (Geneva, UNIDIR, 2021). The report was published in English and the three regional languages (Arabic, Persian and Hebrew).

<sup>67</sup> Farzan Sabet, “Iran Deal Scenarios and Regional Security”, *Arms Control Today*, October 2021.



ANNEX I

**STATUS OF MULTILATERAL  
ARMS REGULATION AND  
DISARMAMENT AGREEMENTS**

## ANNEX I

### Status of multilateral arms regulation and disarmament agreements

The most up-to-date information on disarmament treaties, including their status of adherence, are available at the Disarmament Treaties Database of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs:

<https://treaties.unoda.org>

The data contained in this annex has been provided by the depositaries of the treaties or agreements. Inclusion of information concerning the treaties and agreements of which the United Nations Secretary-General is not the depositary is as reported by the respective depositaries and implies no position on the part of the United Nations with respect to the data reported.

The treaties are presented below by depositary.

#### Secretary-General of the United Nations

Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies

Arms Trade Treaty

Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and All Parts and Components That Can Be Used for Their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly (Kinshasa Convention)

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

Convention on Cluster Munitions

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

Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques

Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction

Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention)

International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

#### African Union

African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Pelindaba Treaty)

#### Canada and Hungary

Treaty on Open Skies



**France**

Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare (1925 Geneva Protocol)

**Kyrgyzstan**

Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia

**Mexico**

Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco)

**Netherlands**

Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe

**Organization of American States**

Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials

Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions

**Pacific Islands Forum**

South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Rarotonga Treaty)

**Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States**

Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction

Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water (Partial Test Ban Treaty)

Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (Outer Space Treaty)

Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof (Sea-bed Treaty)

**Thailand**

Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty)

**United States**

Antarctic Treaty

**Actions reported for the period 1 January to 31 December 2021**

The following list shows any actions during the period from 1 January to 31 December 2021 with regard to multilateral arms regulation and disarmament agreements, as reported by the depositaries. The order in which the agreements are listed is according to the date of signature or opening for signature.

A new State party is listed below based on the date of deposit with the respective depositary of a State's instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession. However, please refer to the footnotes to ascertain whether that State actually becomes a State party at a later date, as some treaties only enter into force for a State after a specified period of time from the date of deposit. If a State expressed its consent to be bound by a means other than ratification, the date of deposit is further noted as follows: (a) = accession; (A) = acceptance; (AA) = approval; (P) = consent to be bound; and (s) = succession.<sup>a</sup>

In the case of multi-depositary clauses, depositary action may be completed with one or more of the several depositaries. The following notation indicates where the reported action was completed: (M) = Moscow, (L) = London and (W) = Washington; Canada (C) and Hungary (H).

Certain treaties that establish nuclear-weapon-free zones (Bangkok Treaty, Pelindaba Treaty, Rarotonga Treaty, Treaty of Tlatelolco and Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia) have associated protocols concerning security guarantees from the nuclear-weapon States and some also have protocols for States outside the zone of application, but which have some territory within the zone. They are at different stages with regard to signature, ratification and entry into force. (For the status of adherence of these protocols, see the table in chapter IV on p. 139.)

**Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare (1925 Geneva Protocol)**

SIGNED AT GENEVA: 17 June 1925

ENTERED INTO FORCE: 8 February 1928

DEPOSITARY: France

NEW PARTIES: None

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 146

**Antarctic Treaty**

SIGNED AT WASHINGTON: 1 December 1959

ENTERED INTO FORCE: 23 June 1961

DEPOSITARY: United States

NEW PARTIES: None

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 54

<sup>a</sup> For a glossary of terms, see United Nations Treaty Collection, "[Glossary of terms relating to Treaty actions](#)".

**Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water (Partial Test Ban Treaty)**

SIGNED BY THE ORIGINAL PARTIES<sup>b</sup> IN MOSCOW: 5 August 1963  
 OPENED FOR SIGNATURE AT LONDON, MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON: 8 August 1963  
 ENTERED INTO FORCE: 10 October 1963  
 DEPOSITARY: Russian Federation (M), United Kingdom (L) and United States (W)  
 NEW PARTIES: None  
 TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 125

**Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (Outer Space Treaty)**

OPENED FOR SIGNATURE AT LONDON, MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON: 27 January 1967  
 ENTERED INTO FORCE: 10 October 1967  
 DEPOSITARY: Russian Federation (M), United Kingdom (L) and United States (W)  
 NEW PARTIES: None  
 TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 111

**Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco)**

OPENED FOR SIGNATURE AT MEXICO CITY: 14 February 1967  
 ENTERED INTO FORCE: for each Government individually  
 DEPOSITARY: Mexico  
 NEW PARTIES: None  
 TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 33

**Amendment to article 7<sup>c</sup>**

NEW PARTIES: Nicaragua  
 TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 25

**Amendment to article 25<sup>d</sup>**

NEW PARTIES: Nicaragua  
 TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 25

**Amendment to articles 14, 15, 16, 19 and 20<sup>e</sup>**

NEW PARTIES: None  
 TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 28

<sup>b</sup> The original parties are the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States.

<sup>c</sup> Amendment adopted by the General Conference of OPANAL, pursuant to resolution 267 (E-V) of 3 July 1990.

<sup>d</sup> Amendment adopted by the General Conference of OPANAL, pursuant to resolution 268 (XII) of 10 May 1991.

<sup>e</sup> Amendment adopted by the General Conference of OPANAL, pursuant to resolution 290 (VII) of 26 August 1992.

**Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons**

OPENED FOR SIGNATURE AT LONDON, MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON: 1 July 1968  
 ENTERED INTO FORCE: 5 March 1970  
 DEPOSITARY: Russian Federation (M), United Kingdom (L) and United States (W)  
 NEW PARTIES: None  
 TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 191

**Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof (Sea-bed Treaty)**

OPENED FOR SIGNATURE AT LONDON, MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON: 11 February 1971  
 ENTERED INTO FORCE: 18 May 1972  
 DEPOSITARY: Russian Federation (M), United Kingdom (L) and United States (W)  
 NEW PARTIES: None  
 TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 94

**Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction**

OPENED FOR SIGNATURE AT LONDON, MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON: 10 April 1972  
 ENTERED INTO FORCE: 26 March 1975  
 DEPOSITARY: Russian Federation (M), United Kingdom (L) and United States (W)  
 NEW PARTIES: None  
 TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 183

**Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques**

OPENED FOR SIGNATURE AT GENEVA: 18 May 1977  
 ENTERED INTO FORCE: 5 October 1978  
 DEPOSITARY: Secretary-General of the United Nations  
 NEW PARTIES: None  
 TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 78

**Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies**

OPENED FOR SIGNATURE AT NEW YORK: 18 December 1979  
 ENTERED INTO FORCE: 11 July 1984  
 DEPOSITARY: Secretary-General of the United Nations  
 NEW PARTIES:<sup>f</sup> None  
 TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 18

<sup>f</sup> Article 19, paragraph 4, states:

“For each State depositing its instrument of ratification or accession after the entry into force of this Agreement, it shall enter into force on the thirtieth day following the date of deposit of any such instrument.”

**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**

OPENED FOR SIGNATURE AT NEW YORK: 10 April 1981

ENTERED INTO FORCE: 2 December 1983

DEPOSITARY: Secretary-General of the United Nations

NEW PARTIES:<sup>g</sup> None

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 125

**Amendment to Article 1 of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (entered into force on 18 May 2004)**

NEW PARTIES: None

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 86

**Amended Protocol II (entered into force on 3 December 1998)**

NEW PARTIES: None

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 106

**Protocol IV (entered into force on 30 July 1998)**

NEW PARTIES: None

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 109

**Protocol V (entered into force on 12 November 2006)**

NEW PARTIES: None

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 96

**South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Rarotonga Treaty)**

OPENED FOR SIGNATURE AT RAROTONGA: 6 August 1985

ENTERED INTO FORCE: 11 December 1986

DEPOSITARY: Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum

NEW PARTIES: None

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 13

**Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe**

SIGNED AT PARIS: 19 November 1990

ENTERED INTO FORCE: 9 November 1992

DEPOSITARY: Netherlands

NEW PARTIES: None

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 30

<sup>g</sup> Article 5, paragraphs 2 and 3, of the Convention state:

“2. For any State which deposits its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession after the date of the deposit of the twentieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, this Convention shall enter into force six months after the date on which that State has deposited its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.

“3. Each of the Protocols annexed to this Convention shall enter into force six months after the date by which twenty States have notified their consent to be bound by it in accordance with paragraph 3 or 4 of Article 4 of this Convention.”

**Agreement on Adaptation**

ADOPTED AND SIGNED AT ISTANBUL: 19 November 1999

NOT YET IN FORCE<sup>h</sup>

NEW SIGNATORIES: None

TOTAL NUMBER OF SIGNATORIES: 30

NEW PARTIES: None

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 3

**Treaty on Open Skies**

SIGNED AT HELSINKI: 24 March 1992

ENTERED INTO FORCE: 1 January 2002

DEPOSITARY: Canada and Hungary

NEW PARTIES: None

WITHDRAWAL: Russian Federation

—18 December (C) (H)

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 32

**Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction**

SIGNED AT PARIS: 13 January 1993

ENTERED INTO FORCE: 29 April 1997

DEPOSITARY: Secretary-General of the United Nations

NEW PARTIES:<sup>i</sup> None

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 193

**Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty)**

SIGNED AT BANGKOK: 15 December 1995

ENTERED INTO FORCE: 27 March 1997

DEPOSITARY: Thailand

NEW PARTIES: None

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 10

<sup>h</sup> Article 31, paragraph 3, states:

“This Agreement on Adaptation shall enter into force 10 days after instruments of ratification have been deposited by all States Parties listed in the Preamble, after which time the Treaty shall exist only in its amended form.”

<sup>i</sup> Article XXI, paragraph 2, states:

“For States whose instruments of ratification or accession are deposited subsequent to the entry into force of this Convention, it shall enter into force on the 30th day following the date of deposit of their instrument of ratification or accession.”

**African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Pelindaba Treaty)**

SIGNED AT CAIRO: 11 April 1996  
 ENTERED INTO FORCE: 15 July 2009  
 DEPOSITARY: Secretary-General of the African Union  
 NEW PARTIES: None  
 TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 41

**Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty**

OPENED FOR SIGNATURE AT NEW YORK: 24 September 1996  
 NOT YET IN FORCE<sup>j</sup>  
 DEPOSITARY: Secretary-General of the United Nations  
 NEW SIGNATORIES: Cuba —4 February  
 TOTAL NUMBER OF SIGNATORIES: 185  
 NEW PARTIES: Comoros —19 February  
 Cuba —4 February  
 TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 170

**Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention)**

OPENED FOR SIGNATURE AT OTTAWA: 3 December 1997  
 ENTERED INTO FORCE: 1 March 1999  
 DEPOSITARY: Secretary-General of the United Nations  
 NEW PARTIES:<sup>k</sup> None  
 TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 164

<sup>j</sup> Article XIV, paragraph 1, states:

“This Treaty shall enter into force 180 days after the date of deposit of the instruments of ratification by all States listed in Annex II to this Treaty, but in no case earlier than two years after its opening for signature.”

<sup>k</sup> Article 17, paragraph 2, states:

“For any State which deposits its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession after the date of the deposit of the 40th instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, this Convention shall enter into force on the first day of the sixth month after the date on which that State has deposited its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.”

**Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials**

OPENED FOR SIGNATURE AT WASHINGTON, DC: 14 November 1997  
 ENTERED INTO FORCE: 1 July 1998  
 DEPOSITARY: Organization of American States  
 NEW PARTIES:<sup>l</sup> None  
 TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 31

**Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions**

OPENED FOR SIGNATURE AT GUATEMALA CITY: 7 June 1999  
 ENTERED INTO FORCE: 21 November 2002  
 DEPOSITARY: Organization of American States  
 NEW PARTIES: None  
 TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 17

**International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism**

OPENED FOR SIGNATURE AT NEW YORK: 14 September 2005  
 ENTERED INTO FORCE: 7 July 2007  
 DEPOSITARY: Secretary-General of the United Nations  
 NEW PARTIES:<sup>m</sup> Botswana —12 July (a)  
 TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 118

**Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia**

OPENED FOR SIGNATURE AT SEMIPALATINSK: 8 September 2006  
 ENTERED INTO FORCE: 21 March 2009  
 DEPOSITARY: Kyrgyzstan  
 NEW PARTIES: None  
 TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 5

<sup>l</sup> Article XXV states:

“This Convention shall enter into force on the 30th day following the date of deposit of the second instrument of ratification. For each State ratifying the Convention after the deposit of the second instrument of ratification, the Convention shall enter into force on the 30th day following deposit by such State of its instrument of ratification.”

<sup>m</sup> Article 25, paragraph 2 states:

“For each State ratifying, accepting, approving or acceding to the Convention after the deposit of the twenty-second instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, the Convention shall enter into force on the thirtieth day after deposit by such State of its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.”

**Convention on Cluster Munitions**

OPENED FOR SIGNATURE AT OSLO: 3 December 2008

ENTERED INTO FORCE: 1 August 2010

DEPOSITARY: Secretary-General of the United Nations

NEW PARTIES:<sup>n</sup> None

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 110

**Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and All Parts and Components That Can Be Used for Their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly (Kinshasa Convention)**

OPENED FOR SIGNATURE AT BRAZZAVILLE: 19 November 2010

ENTERED INTO FORCE: 8 March 2017

DEPOSITARY: Secretary-General of the United Nations

NEW PARTIES:<sup>o</sup> None

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 8

**Arms Trade Treaty**

OPENED FOR SIGNATURE AT NEW YORK: 3 June 2013

ENTERED INTO FORCE: 24 December 2014

DEPOSITARY: Secretary-General of the United Nations

NEW PARTIES:<sup>p</sup> None

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 110

**Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**

OPENED FOR SIGNATURE AT NEW YORK: 7 July 2017

ENTERED INTO FORCE: 22 January 2021

DEPOSITARY: Secretary-General of the United Nations

<sup>n</sup> Article 17, paragraph 2, states:

“For any State that deposits its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession after the date of the deposit of the thirtieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, this Convention shall enter into force on the first day of the sixth month after the date on which that State has deposited its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.”

<sup>o</sup> Article 36, paragraph 2, states:

“For each State that deposits its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession after the date of deposit of the sixth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, the Convention shall enter into force 30 days after the date of deposit of that instrument.”

<sup>p</sup> Article 22, paragraph 2, states:

“For any State that deposits its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession subsequent to the entry into force of this Treaty, this Treaty shall enter into force for that State ninety days following the date of deposit of its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.”

NEW PARTIES:<sup>q</sup>

Cambodia

—22 January

Chile

—23 September

Comoros

—19 February

Guinea-Bissau

—15 December

Mongolia

—10 December (a)

Peru

—23 December

Philippines

—18 February

Seychelles

—9 July

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTIES: 59

<sup>q</sup> Article 15, paragraph 2, states:

“For any State that deposits its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession after the date of the deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, this Treaty shall enter into force 90 days after the date on which that State has deposited its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.”



ANNEX II

# RESOURCES



## ANNEX II

### Resources

#### United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs publications and other information materials in 2021

- *United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*, vol. 45 (Parts I and II): 2020 (Sales Nos. E.21.IX.1 and E.21.IX.3) (also available in e-book format)
- Jean du Preez, *Advancing the Process to Negotiate a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty: The Role of States in the African, Asia-Pacific and Latin American and Caribbean Regions*, United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs Occasional Papers, No. 38, May 2021 (Sales No. E.21.IX.2)
- *Programmes Financed from Voluntary Contributions, 2020–2021*
- *UNODA Strategic Plan, 2021-2025*
- *UNODA Gender Policy, 2021-2025*
- Savannah de Tessières, *Effective Weapons and Ammunition Management in a Changing Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Context*, second edition (English and French)
- Emile LeBrun, *Gender-sensitive Ammunition Management Processes: Considerations for National Authorities*
- *Report of the Secretary-General on current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts*
- *The Biological Weapons Convention: An Introduction*, second edition.
- *UNODA Update* (online news updates): First Quarter, Second Quarter, Third Quarter and Fourth Quarter
- *Fact sheets* on disarmament issues

#### Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa

- *Gender-Mainstreaming Small Arms Control in Sierra Leone* (developed in collaboration with the Sierra Leone National Commission on Small Arms)
- *National Workshop Recommendations for the Integration of Small Arms Control Dimensions into the Cameroonian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security*

### Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

- *Armas de fogo em escolas da América Latina e Caribe: Abordagens, desafios e respostas*
- *Les armes à feu dans les écoles d'Amérique latine et des Caraïbes: Approches, défis et réponses*
- *Prévention de la violence contre les femmes par le contrôle des armes en Amérique latine et dans les Caraïbes: Recommandations à suivre pendant la crise de la COVID-19*
- *Étude Juridique - Établir le lien entre les normes de prévention de la violence contre les femmes et les normes de contrôle et de réglementation des armes de petit calibre : Analyse de Haïti*
- *Estudio Normativo - La necesaria vinculación entre las normas sobre violencia contra la mujer y las normas de regulación y control de armas pequeñas: Análisis de países de Sudamérica: Argentina, Bolivia, Brasil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Uruguay y Venezuela*
- *Estudo Normativo - A correlação necessária entre as normas sobre violência contra a mulher e as normas de regulamentação e controle de armas pequenas: Análise dos países da América do Sul: Argentina, Bolívia, Brasil, Chile, Equador, Paraguai, Uruguai e Venezuela*

### United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research publications in 2021

#### Conventional arms

##### Publications

- *Menu of indicators to measure the reverberating effects on civilians from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas*
- *Handbook to Profile Small Arms Ammunition in Armed Violence Settings* (Spanish translation published in 2021)
- *A Reference Methodology for National Weapons and Ammunition Management Baseline Assessments* (French and Spanish translations published in 2021)
- *Arms Trade Treaty Issue Brief 3: Diversion Analysis Framework*
- *Arms-Related Risk Analysis Toolkit*

##### Journal and Working Group papers

- “Post-conflict reconstruction and local government”, *Peacebuilding*, vol. 10, issue 1 (8 March 2021)

- “Peace and conflict studies: perspectives from South Asia”, *International Affairs*, vol. 97, issue 6 (November 2021)
- “The rebels’ credibility dilemma: A new approach to the search for credibility towards the international community and the population”, *Peace and Conflict Studies Journal*, vol. 28, no. 1 (November 2021)
- *Proposal to Develop a Comprehensive Framework for Conventional Ammunition Management, a Chair’s Food-for Thought non-paper for the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on “Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus”* (second edition) (by Manuel Martinez Miralles)
- “Implementation Mechanism for a Conventional Ammunition Framework: Internal brainstorming paper for the Chair of the GGE on ‘Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus’” (by Manuel Martinez Miralles)

### Gender and Disarmament

#### Publications

- *Gender Approaches to Cybersecurity*
- Fact sheet: “Gendered Impacts of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas”
- *Gender & Disarmament Resource Pack* (2021 edition)
- Fact sheet: “Gender and Biological Weapons”
- *Connecting the Dots* (Arabic translation published in 2021)
- *Women Managing Weapons*
- *System Update: Towards a Women, Peace and Cybersecurity Agenda*
- Fact sheet: “Arab Women in International Security and Disarmament”
- Fact sheet: “Gender and Chemical Weapons” (2021 edition)
- *Does Military AI Have Gender? Understanding bias and promoting ethical approaches in military applications of AI*
- *Gender Perspectives in Arms Control and Disarmament: Views from South and Southeast Asia*

### Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction

#### Publications

- *Nuclear verification in a Middle East WMD-Free Zone: Lessons from Past Verification Cases and Other Precedents*
- *From the Iran nuclear deal to a Middle East Zone? Lessons from the JCPOA for an ME WMD-Free Zone* (Arabic, Hebrew and Persian translations of introductory essay also published in 2021)

- Fact sheet: “Arab Women in International Security and Disarmament”

#### Journal and Working Group papers

- “Iran Deal Scenarios and Regional Security”, *Arms Control Today*, October 2021

#### Security and technology

##### Publications

- *International Cooperation to Mitigate Cyber Operations against Critical Infrastructure*
- *Known Unknowns: Data Issues and Military Autonomous Systems*
- *International Cyber Operations: National Doctrines and Capabilities Research Paper Series*
- *Building Cyber Operational Capabilities: Brazil’s Efforts over the Past Two Decades*
- *Exploring Science and Technology Review Mechanisms under the Biological Weapons Convention*
- *UNIDIR on Lethal Autonomous Weapons*
- *Table-Top Exercises on the Human Element and Autonomous Weapons System*
- *Exploring Distributed Ledger Technology for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation: A Primer*
- *Applying Chapters VI and VII of the Charter of the United Nations in the Cyber Context*
- *ICTs, International Security, and Cybercrime*
- *The Projection of Cyber Power by Australia and Japan: Contrasting Their Doctrines and Capabilities for the Rule-Based International Order*
- *The Cyber Operations Strategies of the United States and Canadian Governments: A Comparative Analysis*
- *Due diligence in cyberspace: Normative expectations of reciprocal protection of international legal rights*
- *The 2021 Innovations Dialogue Conference Report*

#### Weapons of mass destruction and other strategic weapons

##### Publications

- *Some Thoughts on the Logic of Strategic Arms Control: Three Perspectives*
- *Tools for Compliance and Enforcement from Beyond WMD regimes*
- *Nuclear Risk Reduction: Engaging the non-NPT Nuclear-Armed States*

- *Preparing for Success at the Ninth Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention Review Conference*
- *WMD Compliance and Enforcement in a Changing Global Context*
- *Revitalizing Pursuit of Nuclear Disarmament*
- *Exploring Science and Technology Review Mechanisms under the Biological Weapons Convention*
- *Nuclear Escalation Strategies and Perceptions: The United States, the Russian Federation, and China*
- “Identifying Collaborative Actions to Reduce Today’s Nuclear Dangers” (Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish translations published in 2021)
- *Restoring Confidence Across Today’s Nuclear Divides: Symposium Report*
- *Space Industry Workshop Report*
- *The Cyber-Nuclear Nexus: Interactions and Risks*
- *Enhancing the Management and Enforcement of Compliance in the Regime Prohibiting Chemical Weapons*
- *2021 Outer Space Security Conference Report*

#### Journal and Working Group papers

- “Biosecurity” (by James Revill and Anna Roeßing, in Geiß, R. and Melzer, N. eds., *Oxford Handbook of the International Law of Global Security* (Oxford University Press))
- “The TPNW in Practice: Elements for Effective National Implementation” (by James Revill, Renata Hessmann Dalaqua and Wilfred Wan, *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament*)
- “Practical Implementation of the Join-and-Disarm Option in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons” (by Pavel Podvig, *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament*)
- “Recommendations On Education, Training And Capacity Building” (by Alastair Hay, Alexander Hamilton, Anissa Chouikha, Brian Rappert, Daniel Feakes, Elias Rahal, Francesco Marelli, Halima Benbouza, James Revill, Lane Warmbrod, Lay Ching Chai, Louise Bezuidenhout, Malcolm Dando, Peter McGrath, Samuel Ujewe, Sana Masmoudi, Zabta Khan Shinwari, WHO, *Connecting the Dots* (Arabic translation published in 2021))

### Events held on the margins of the 2021 session of the First Committee

- 5 October [Nuclear Stockpile Transparency](#) (organized by the Permanent Mission of the United States)
- 13 October [Exploring the role of the Hague Code of Conduct and other confidence-building measures in the field of missiles](#) (organized by the Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique with the Delegation of the European Union)
- [Information and Communications Technologies, International Security and Cybercrime: Understanding their Intersection for Better Policy Making](#) (organized by UNIDIR)
- [Non-Governmental Perspectives on Reducing Space Threats](#) (organized by the Permanent Mission of the United States)
- 14 October [“What if – Spesterra” Youth Video Challenge Congratulatory Event](#) (organized by the Office for Disarmament Affairs)
- [Addressing Today’s Nuclear Challenges: Findings from a UNIDIR Dialogue](#) (organized by UNIDIR)
- 18 October [Future Directions for Gender-sensitive Ammunition Management Processes: New Publication Launch and Discussion](#) (organized by the Office for Disarmament Affairs and Small Arms Survey)
- [Nuclear Risk Reduction: Friction Points](#) (organized by UNIDIR)
- 19 October [The Challenges of Improvised Explosive Devices in Humanitarian Mine Action](#) (organized by the Permanent Mission of France and Action on Armed Violence)
- [The Programme of Action on Small Arms. Outcomes of the Seventh Biennial Meeting of States and the Way Ahead](#) (organized by the Office for Disarmament Affairs and Small Arms Survey)
- [Exploring Prospects for Missile Verification](#) (organized by UNIDIR)
- 20 October [Renforcement capacitaire dans le cyberspace](#) (organized by the Permanent Mission of France, the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie and UNIDIR)
- 22 October [Where are the Women? Staying curious about gender in international security](#) (organized by UNIDIR)
- 25 October [Launch of the French and Spanish Reference Methodology for National Weapons and Ammunition Management Baseline Assessments: Insights and a Practical Guide for Implementation](#) (organized by UNIDIR)
- 27 October [Achieving the Possible: A regional organization for a Weapons of Mass Destruction–Free Zone in the Middle East](#) (organized by the Middle East Treaty Organization and the Permanent Mission of Ireland)
- 28 October [Transparency in the Arms Trade: Examining the Role and Efforts of the Arms Trade Treaty](#) (organized by the Stimson Center and Control Arms with the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Geneva and the German Federal Foreign Office)
- 2 November [Moving forward on the Arms Trade Treaty globally and regionally](#) (organized by Control Arms and the Permanent Mission of Germany)

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