



## General Assembly

Eleventh Session

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### First Committee – Disarmament and International Security

This committee aims to create a more peaceful world. Talks in this committee center around reducing weapons in the world. It also identifies threats to peace and finds solutions to international security.

This committee believes the world can become stable through cooperation. Countries can protect their people better if they work together for peace. For example, this committee might discuss how to keep weapons from terrorists. Or, how less weapons can make the world safer. Also, countries talk about policing weapons and finding ways to reduce the weapons they have.

**First Committee** works closely with **United Nations Disarmament Commission** and **Conference on Disarmament**. They have passed resolutions on ammunition, military spending and missiles.

### Agenda Item 98.N – General and complete disarmament: Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction

#### Background

Chemical weapons are devices that are used to kill or harm humans on a large scale. They are considered weapons of mass destruction because they can harm a large group of people when used. Humans have been using chemical weapons for centuries. For example, poisoned arrows are a type of chemical weapon. Alexander the Great was attacked by poisoned arrows when he invaded the area of the Indus valley in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century the English military stopped an attack by France by blinding its sailors with quicklime and then destroying their ships.

Since 1899, countries have agreed to ban certain types of chemical weapons. However, during World War I, countries used chemical weapons to fight each other. Chemical weapons are cheap to make and do not put your own soldiers in danger – unless the wind changes direction. By the end of the war, chemical weapons injured over 1 million people. After this experience, many countries wanted to ban these weapons. The Geneva Protocol of 1925 banned the use of these weapons in war. However, countries could still create and stockpile weapons to be used in the future.

During World War II, Nazi Germany murdered millions of people (the majority were Jewish) using gas. No chemical weapons were used by the armies on each other in Europe. Perhaps each side did not want to open the doors to using them in a military situation. After the war, all the chemical weapons that had been built in case they were needed were now useless. Some countries destroyed or buried their weapons. Some

## Background

countries thought the safest thing to do was to dump the chemical weapons in the ocean. The UK, the US and Russia did this and did not keep very good records on how much was dumped and where.

Countries began to realize the benefits of banning chemical weapons would be greater than the advantages they might get using them during conflict situations. It took over 50 years but finally in 1997 the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) became international law. Only Egypt, Israel, North Korea and South Sudan are not a party to this convention.

## Recent Developments

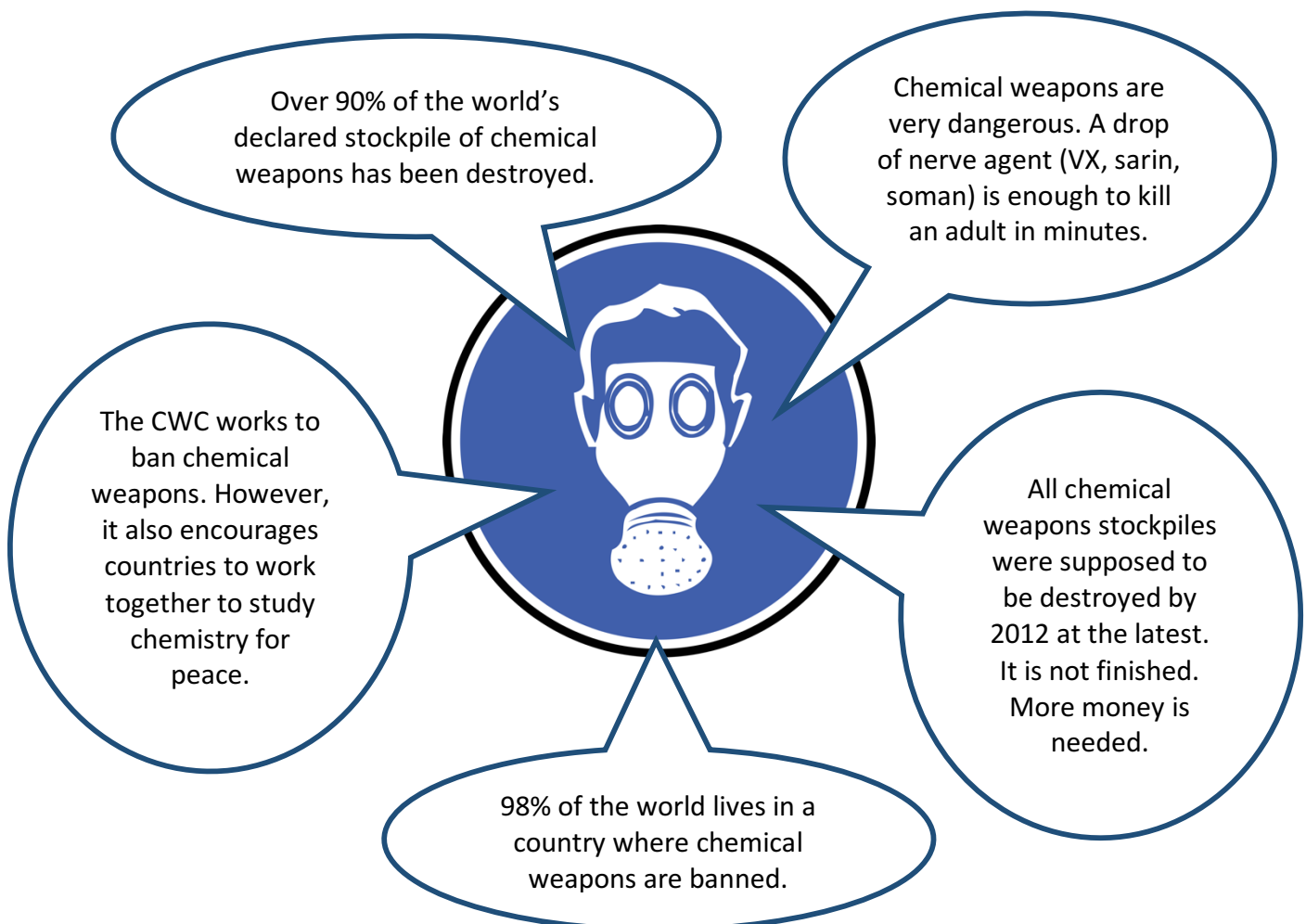
- The Chemical Weapons Convention asks countries to stop making chemical weapons and to destroy the weapons they do have. This includes weapons they might have abandoned in another country years ago.
- More than 90% of the world's chemicals used for weapons has been destroyed.
- Some countries still create chemical weapons in secret. The US suspects Egypt creates chemical weapons in secret. North Korea, Cuba and Syria are also suspected of having chemical weapons programs.
- Countries suspected Syria of creating chemical weapons before their civil war. Many countries believe they had a large stockpile for many years.
- In 2012 President Obama said the US would get involved if chemical weapons were used in Syria. In 2013 sarin was used to attack people in Ghouta, Syria. After this, Syria agreed to give up all their chemical weapons if the US did not attack. However, chemical attacks have continued. All the sides in the conflict blame the others.
- In 2017, President Trump ordered an airbase in Syria to be bombed. It is believed planes from this airbase dropped chemical weapons killing more than a hundred people.
- Some militaries in the past used herbicidal warfare. This is using chemicals that are supposed to destroy trees or plants. This can be used to starve the enemy or to get rid of their protection so they can be seen. Since humans are not the target it is not considered chemical warfare. Many people exposed to these herbicides have higher rates of cancer, skin diseases or breathing problems.
- During the Vietnam War, the US used Agent Orange to destroy the jungles where their enemies were hiding. Even though people were not the target the chemicals still affected people. Some estimates are as high as 1 million people affected. This affects US-Vietnam relations until today.
- Chemical weapons may not be used in war but they may be used by countries on their own people. For example, tear gas is a chemical weapon used by the police in many countries to disperse crowds. Why can weapons be used against your own population but not in a conflict situation?
- In Iraq, chemical weapons have been found by terrorist groups and used.
- In Japan, a religious cult called Aum Shinrikyo created sarin and used it to kill 13 people on the Japanese subway. This incident is also more concerning because the police do not know why they murdered 13 people. They just did it.

**Geneva Protocol**

- ✓ This treaty was created in 1925. The full name of the treaty is the *Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare*.
- ✓ This treaty says states cannot use biological or chemical weapons. The only problem is it does not say anything about creating, stockpiling, or transferring chemical weapons.
- ✓ Many countries agreed to the treaty but said that if a country used chemical weapons against them they would be allowed to use chemical weapons.

**Chemical Weapons Convention**

- ✓ This agreement gives more detail about what countries should do with chemical weapons. It came into force in 1997 and now has 192 countries that are parties to it.
- ✓ It stops countries from making chemical weapons and countries must destroy the chemical weapons they do have.
- ✓ The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) makes sure chemical weapons are destroyed.
- ✓ Countries can be inspected to make sure they are not making chemical weapons.

**Chemical Weapons Statistics**

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## Guiding Questions

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1. Does your country have chemical weapons? Did your country ever have/use chemical weapons in the past? Why might a country be interested in getting chemical weapons?
2. Research the *Geneva Protocol* and the *Chemical Weapons Convention*. Why are both documents needed? Do you think another treaty should be created? What would it cover?
3. What are the responsibilities of countries that used or had chemical weapons in the past? What do you think the responsibility of these countries should be?
4. How can the international community put pressure on countries that have chemical weapons?
5. Chemical weapons are being used in Syria. Can anything be done to stop this?
6. Countries are allowed to use riot control agents (tear gas, mace, etc.) on their own population but not in warfare. Do you think this is right? Why or why not?
7. How can terrorists be stopped from getting or making chemical weapons?
8. Does the problem exist in your community?
9. How does being a delegate from a different country help you understand this problem in your community?
10. How do the choices you make in your life help resolve this problem?

## Resources

Title	Hyperlink	How is it helpful?
<b><i>United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs</i></b>	<a href="http://www.un.org/disarmament/">http://www.un.org/disarmament/</a>	Gives broad information about disarmament.
<b><i>Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons</i></b>	<a href="https://www.opcw.org/about-opcw/">https://www.opcw.org/about-opcw/</a>	Official site of the OPCW which works to get rid of all chemical weapons.
<b><i>The Disarmament Yearbook</i></b>	<a href="https://s3.amazonaws.com/unoda-web/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/en-yb-vol-41-2016-part1.pdf">https://s3.amazonaws.com/unoda-web/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/en-yb-vol-41-2016-part1.pdf</a>	The Disarmament Yearbook. This document records all the votes for the Disarmament Committee in 2016.
<b><i>Spectre Orange</i></b>	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/mar/29/usa.adrianlevy">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/mar/29/usa.adrianlevy</a>	A Guardian newspaper article about the lasting effects of Agent Orange in Vietnam.
<b><i>The Five Most Deadly Chemical Weapons of War</i></b>	<a href="http://nationalinterest.org/feature/the-five-most-deadly-chemical-weapons-war-10897">http://nationalinterest.org/feature/the-five-most-deadly-chemical-weapons-war-10897</a>	Article about some of the different types of chemical weapons used in war.
<b><i>Chemical Weapons Munitions Dumped at Sea</i></b>	<a href="http://www.nonproliferation.org/chemical-weapon-munitions-dumped-at-sea/">http://www.nonproliferation.org/chemical-weapon-munitions-dumped-at-sea/</a>	An article about where chemical weapons were dumped after World War II.
<b><i>Almost 1500 Killed in Chemical Weapons Attack in Syria</i></b>	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/14/syria-chemical-weapons-attacks-almost-1500-killed-report-united-nations">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/14/syria-chemical-weapons-attacks-almost-1500-killed-report-united-nations</a>	A Guardian newspaper article about how chemical weapons keep killing people in Syria.
<b><i>Chemical Weapons</i></b>	<a href="https://www.opcw.org/about-opcw/">https://www.opcw.org/about-opcw/</a>	Background information on chemical weapons and the treaties.
<b><i>Timeline of Syrian Chemical Weapons Activity</i></b>	<a href="https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Timeline-of-Syrian-Chemical-Weapons-Activity">https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Timeline-of-Syrian-Chemical-Weapons-Activity</a>	An overview of all the chemical weapons attacks that have taken place in Syria since Syria has admitted to having chemical weapons.



# General Assembly

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Seventy-first session  
Agenda item 98 (m)

## Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 5 December 2016

[on the report of the First Committee (A/71/450)]

### 71/64. Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures

*The General Assembly,*

*Recalling* its resolutions 51/45 N of 10 December 1996, 52/38 G of 9 December 1997, 53/77 M of 4 December 1998, 54/54 H of 1 December 1999, 55/33 G of 20 November 2000, 56/24 P of 29 November 2001 and 57/81 of 22 November 2002, its decision 58/519 of 8 December 2003, as well as its resolutions 59/82 of 3 December 2004, 61/76 of 6 December 2006, 63/62 of 2 December 2008, 65/67 of 8 December 2010, 67/50 of 3 December 2012 and 69/60 of 2 December 2014, entitled “Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures”,

*Convinced* that a comprehensive and integrated approach towards certain practical disarmament measures often is a prerequisite to maintaining and consolidating peace and security and thus provides a basis for effective post-conflict peacebuilding; such measures include collection and responsible disposal, preferably through destruction, of weapons obtained through illicit trafficking or illicit manufacture as well as of stockpiled weapons and ammunition declared by competent national authorities to be surplus to requirements, particularly with regard to small arms and light weapons, unless another form of disposition or use has been officially authorized and provided that such weapons have been duly marked and registered; confidence-building measures; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants; demining; and conversion,

*Noting with satisfaction* that the international community is more than ever aware of the importance of such practical disarmament measures, especially with regard to the growing problems arising from the excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons, including their ammunition, which pose a threat to peace and security and reduce the prospects for economic and social development in many regions, particularly in post-conflict situations,

*Stressing* that further efforts are needed in order to develop and effectively implement programmes of practical disarmament in affected areas as part of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration measures so as to complement, on a case-by-case basis, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts,

*Taking note* of Security Council resolution 2171 (2014) of 21 August 2014, in which the Council affirmed that a comprehensive conflict prevention strategy should





include practical disarmament and other measures to contribute to combating the proliferation and illicit trade of arms,

*Welcoming* the work of the United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms mechanism, which was established by the Secretary-General to bring about a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to the complex and multifaceted global problems related to small arms,

*Welcoming also* the report of the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects,<sup>1</sup> which, inter alia, underlined the importance of the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action<sup>2</sup> and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (the International Tracing Instrument)<sup>3</sup> for attaining Goal 16 and target 16.4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,<sup>4</sup> and which noted the importance of arrangements that assist in matching needs and resources for the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument,

*Welcoming further* the sustainable operation of the flexible, voluntary United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, pursuant to the Programme of Action and the outcome of the Second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action,<sup>5</sup>

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to resolution 69/60,<sup>6</sup>

2. *Also takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects,<sup>7</sup> which highlighted recent developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design and implications for the implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (the International Tracing Instrument);<sup>3</sup>

3. *Emphasizes* the importance of including in United Nations-mandated peacekeeping missions, as appropriate and with the consent of the host State, practical disarmament measures aimed at addressing the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, including through weapons collection, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programmes and enhancing physical security and stockpile management practices, as well as relevant training programmes, with a view to promoting and implementing an integrated comprehensive and effective weapons management strategy that would contribute to a sustainable peacebuilding process;

4. *Welcomes* the activities undertaken by the Group of Interested States for Practical Disarmament Measures, and invites the Group to continue to promote, on

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<sup>1</sup> A/CONF.192/BMS/2016/2.

<sup>2</sup> Report of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, New York, 9–20 July 2001 (A/CONF.192/15), chap. IV, para. 24.

<sup>3</sup> See decision 60/519 and A/60/88 and Corr.2, annex.

<sup>4</sup> Resolution 70/1.

<sup>5</sup> A/CONF.192/2012/RC/4, annexes I and II.

<sup>6</sup> A/71/151.

<sup>7</sup> A/71/438-A/CONF.192/BMS/2016/1.

the basis of lessons learned from previous disarmament and peacebuilding projects, new practical disarmament measures to consolidate peace, especially as undertaken or designed by affected States themselves and regional and subregional organizations, as well as United Nations agencies;

5. *Encourages* the Group of Interested States to continue to function as an informal, open and transparent forum supporting the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects,<sup>2</sup> in particular to facilitate the exchange of views on issues related to the United Nations small arms and light weapons process, as well as to continue efforts to facilitate the effective matching of assistance needs with available resources, in line with requests from affected States as indicated in their national reports, pursuant to the outcome of the Second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action<sup>5</sup> and the outcome of the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action,<sup>8</sup> thus effectively facilitating the provision of international assistance in the implementation of the Programme of Action;

6. *Also encourages* the Group of Interested States to contribute to the development of voluntary indicators at the national level, based on the work of the Statistical Commission, the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, which could be used to measure progress made in the implementation of target 16.4,<sup>9</sup> and to support efforts towards the implementation of the target, including data collection for relevant indicators;<sup>10</sup>

7. *Encourages* Member States in a position to do so to financially contribute to the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation;

8. *Encourages* States parties to the Arms Trade Treaty in a position to do so to financially contribute to the Arms Trade Treaty Voluntary Trust Fund;

9. *Welcomes* the synergies within the multi-stakeholder process, including Governments, the United Nations system, regional and subregional organizations and institutions as well as non-governmental organizations in support of practical disarmament measures and the Programme of Action;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session a report on the implementation of practical disarmament measures, taking into consideration the activities of the Group of Interested States;

11. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-third session, under the item entitled “General and complete disarmament”, the sub-item entitled “Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures”.

*51st plenary meeting  
5 December 2016*

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<sup>8</sup> A/CONF.192/BMS/2016/2, annex.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., sect. I, para. 27.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., sect. I, para. 76.