Reaching Critical Will’s

GUIDE TO THE
CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

2014

Part One: 20 January–28 March
Part Two: 12 May–27 June
Part Three: 28 July–12 September

Reaching Critical Will is a project of the
Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

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**Introduction**

The Conference on Disarmament (CD), based in Geneva, Switzerland, is mandated to negotiate multilateral disarmament treaties. Past successes of the CD include such multilateral disarmament treaties as the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological and Toxin Convention, and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). However, since negotiations on the CTBT concluded in 1996, the CD has not been able to resume serious substantial work and critical issues on its agenda have been left unresolved, much to the peril of international security.

While criticism against the CD has grown the last few years, the majority of states are still considering it a vital body for disarmament negotiations - despite the fact that it has not accomplished anything for 17 years. At the same time, treaties like the Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions, or the Arms Trade Treaty have been negotiated and concluded outside the CD, effectively proving that it is not only no longer the world’s sole multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations, it is not a forum for disarmament negotiations at all.

Several attempts to break the deadlock, through resolutions in the General Assembly or other methods, have been made. Unfortunately, no concrete results have been achieved. During its 2014 session, governments must either change the working methods of the CD drastically, or find other places to negotiate such pressing issues like nuclear disarmament.

Reaching Critical Will, the disarmament programme of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, created this Guide as an advocacy and learning tool for everyone. In it, you can find a history of the CD, learn about the items on its agenda, a summary of the major issues, an overview of the current political context, and much more.

You can also subscribe to Reaching Critical Will’s CD Report, which provides short, timely, informative reports on every plenary meeting of the Conference. To subscribe, visit: [http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/news/subscribe](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/news/subscribe).

If you or your organisation would like to learn more about the CD, the issues, or what you can do to engage your representatives, please contact Reaching Critical Will at info[at]reachingcriticalwill.org.

Beatrice Fihn
Programme Manager, Reaching Critical Will
January 2014

**RCW’s Guide to the CD**

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**General information about the CD**

**WHAT:** The CD is the world’s sole multilateral disarmament treaty negotiating body. Decisions are made by consensus. While the CD is independent of the United Nations, its secretary is appointed by the UN Secretary-General. It is required to consider recommendations from the General Assembly, and it submits reports at least annually to the General Assembly.

**WHEN:** The CD has three sessions each year. The first begins in the penultimate week of January and lasts for 10 weeks. The second begins in May and lasts 7 weeks, and the third in July lasts for 7 weeks.

**ACCESS:** The CD holds at least one public plenary per week that it is in session. In 2004, the CD took its first decision on NGO access, officially formalizing access to open debates. In addition, the 2004 decision permits NGOs to submit documents as official documents of the Conference, and allows NGOs to present their documents (at their own expense) twice annually in front of the CD chamber. In 2009, for the first time, NGOs were allowed to address the Conference during an informal meeting and in 2010 Reaching Critical Will delivered the first NGO statement to the Conference in a formal plenary meeting on International Women’s Day.

**PRESIDENTS:** Each year, the CD has six Presidents (the P6). For 2014, the P6 will be Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, and Malaysia. In 2006, the P6 began coordinating their presidencies to serve the CD more efficiently. This initiative has led to smoother transitions between monthly presidential rotations.

**NEGOTIATIONS:** When the CD is ready to begin negotiating a treaty, a working group or ad hoc committee is established and continues meeting until the text is finalized. The whole Conference must agree by consensus on decisions like establishing working groups.

**RECENT PAST EFFORTS:** In 1998, the CD agreed to a fissile material cut-off negotiating mandate, but only established a working group with the mandate to negotiate such a treaty in 2009. The working group was unable to commence negotiations in 2009, and since then, the member states again disagreed on the mandate. During the 2013 session an Informal Working Group to “produce a programme of work robust in substance and progressive over time in implementation.” So far the group has not succeeded in its taks.
CD Groups

There are a number of groupings among countries within the CD. Some of these work in cooperation with each other on specific issues rather than unilaterally. They usually meet at least once a week when the CD is in session, in a closed, informal meeting. Civil society has no access to these meetings and there is no transparency in their decision-making.

Western Group (25)
Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States

Group of 21 (33)
Algeria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, DPR Korea, DR Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Senegal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Syria, Tunisia, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe

Eastern European Group (6)
Belarus, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Romania, Russian Federation, Ukraine

Group of One
China often refers to itself as the Group of One

Informal Group of Observer States
Every year non-members can participate in the work as observers to the CD. They have the right to attend meetings of the CD ad hoc committees, and can speak, circulate papers and make contributions, but cannot deny consensus on any issues. They have to renew their status as non-member participant states each year whereas CD members maintain their status permanently. In 2010 some of the active Observer States organized themselves in an Informal Group of Observer States in order to increase their coordination and advocate for expansion of the membership of the Conference.

CD Agenda

The CD has a permanent agenda, known as the Decalogue, which addresses the following issues:

- Nuclear weapons in all aspects;
- Chemical weapons (removed after the CD completed the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1992);
- Other weapons of mass destruction;
- Conventional weapons;
- Reduction of military budgets;
- Reduction of armed forces;
- Disarmament and development;
- Disarmament and international security;
- Collateral measures; confidence building measures; effective verification methods in relation to appropriate disarmament measures, acceptable to all parties; and
- Comprehensive programme of disarmament leading to general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

The Decalogue includes practically all multilateral arms control and disarmament problems, so a narrower agenda is adopted each year. Currently, the CD primarily focuses its attention on the following issues:

- Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament;
- Prevention of nuclear war; including all related matters;
- Prevention of an arms race in outer space;
- Effective international arrangements to assure non nuclear weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons (negative security assurances);
- New types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons, including radiological weapons;
- Comprehensive programme of disarmament; and
- Transparency in armaments.

In recent sessions, some member states have raised the idea of discussing “new issues” at the CD, including terrorism, missiles, and man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS), following the rules of procedure (para 41) which allows for any issue to be brought up at any time.
### Brief Chronology

1960. What is now the CD was first known as the Ten Nation Committee on Disarmament (TNC), and was formed in March 1960 in Geneva. The TNC was made up of five Eastern Bloc countries (Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, and the Soviet Union) and five Western Bloc countries (Canada, France, Italy, the UK, and the US), jointly chaired by the US and the USSR. During this time, it tried, unsuccessfully, to attain consensus on the many complex issues facing both sides on their way to general disarmament. The TNC’s failure to reach agreement can be understood in the context of the strained relations between East and West at the time.

1960-1968. The Institute became known as the Eighteen Nations Disarmament Conference (ENDC), jointly chaired by the US and USSR. The ENDC first convened in March 1961 following a resolution of the UN General Assembly in 1961, making the addition of eight “non-aligned” states. Parties of the ENDC were: Burma, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia, France, India, Italy, Mexico, Nigeria, Poland, Romania, Sweden, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, and the Soviet Union.

1963. An accomplishment of the ENDC was the negotiation of the Limited Test Ban Treaty, which banned all nuclear-weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space, and under water. The US, USSR, and UK are signatories (and also depositaries). It was negotiated in six weeks.

1969-1978. The Institute became the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD), expanding to 30 members.

1970. The CCD concluded negotiations on the nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), which seeks to halt the spread of nuclear weapons to countries that do not already possess them, and prevent the diversion of nuclear material from peaceful purposes. The NPT became international law in 1970. At that time there were three nuclear weapon states: US, UK, USSR, France, and China. Since then, India, Israel, Pakistan, and North Korea have developed nuclear weapons and remain the only countries outside the Treaty (North Korea ratified the NPT but later withdrew).

1972. The CCD negotiated the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), banning the development, production, and stockpiling of bacteriological and toxin weapons. The BTWC entered into force in 1975 and, as of 2007, has 159 States Parties and 15 signatories. It builds on the protocols of the Geneva conventions that first banned the use of gas in war. It is the first treaty to ban an entire category of mass destruction weapons. However, the BWC has no verification provisions. A verification protocol has been under negotiation since 1995. Hopes of progress during the CD’s 24th session (13 July 23 - 17 August 2001) were effectively dashed on the third day with the rejection of the current draft Protocol—the Chair’s composite text—as were further efforts to negotiate such an agreement. Current discussions on a BTWC verification mechanism take place in the framework of annual meetings of states parties to the BTWC.

1977. The CCD negotiated the Environmental Modification Convention, banning all significant hostile use of environmental modification techniques. This Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques entered into force in 1977 and attempts to inhibit the development of new types of warfare.

1979. The Committee on Disarmament was established as a result of the first Special Session on Disarmament of the United Nations General Assembly held in 1978.

1982-1989. The General Assembly’s second special session on disarmament was held in 1982, which prompted the CD to continue negotiating a draft comprehensive programme of disarmament. At the end of the CD’s session in 1989, however, it suspended work on the programme “until the circumstances were more propitious for progress.”

1983. The re-named Conference on Disarmament (CD) grew to 38 members.

1992. The CD negotiated the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The CWC was opened for signature in 1993, and entered into force in April 1997. It has 182 States Parties, including the US, Russia, and China. It bans the “development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons” (earlier agreements only banned the use). The treaty contains an extensive list of banned chemicals and precursors and provides for an elaborate and intrusive verification regime as well as a secretariat, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).


1995 and 1996. Only one ad hoc committee met, on the Nuclear Test Ban. In 1996, the CD expanded its membership to 61.

1996. The CD negotiated the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), banning nuclear weapons test explosions or any other nuclear explosions. The final negotiations were difficult, and divisive issues remained until the end. Nevertheless, the CTBT was subsequently adopted by the General Assembly in Resolution A/RES/50/245 on 10 September 1996 and opened for signature on 24 September. The CTBT has been signed by 177 countries and ratified by 141. It requires ten more ratifications, from the states listed in Annex II of the Treaty, to enter into force.

1998. The CD appointed ad hoc committees on negative security assurances and a fissile material cut-off treaty, and it appointed special coordinators to deal with issues related to prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS), a comprehensive programme of disarmament, and transparency in armaments. In addition, it appointed three reform coordinators to review the agenda, consider membership expansion, and improve the Conference’s functions. The Conference considered adopting five new members—Jordan, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, and Tunisia—but failed to reach consensus. Work on the outer reform areas did not make much progress.

1999. The CD approved the 1998 proposal for expansion, and membership of the CD expanded to its current level of 65 countries. However, the Conference failed to agree on a programme of work, and the ad hoc committees on fissile materials and negative security assurances were not reconvened.

1999-2002. The US opposed any negotiating mandate on PAROS or nuclear disarmament, while China opposed negotiating a fissile material treaty without negotiations on PAROS. The CD appointed three special coordinators to examine its agenda, improve its functioning, and consider membership. Failing to find consensus on these issues, the three coordinators recommended that the CD reappoint special coordinators for these issues in 2002.

2002. The Ambassadors of Algeria, Belgium, Chile, Columbia, and Sweden, in what became known as the A5 proposal, proposed the establishment of four ad hoc committees—two to negotiate a fissile material treaty and negative security assurances and two to discuss PAROS and nuclear disarmament—and for special coordinators to seek the views of states on new types of weapons of mass destruction, a comprehensive programme of disarmament, and transparency in armaments. Despite enjoying widespread support, this proposal ultimately did not succeed in breaking the impasse, yet is still frequently referenced in discussions on a programme of work.

2003. Although the A5 proposal was updated and received more support, including from China, the CD closed without agreeing on a programme of work.

2004. The CD engaged in informal plenaries to assist its work, however it was ultimately unable to reach agreement on a programme of work. It did, however, reach consensus on formalizing and enhancing NGO access and participation in the CD.

2005. The President of the CD in March circulated a “food for thought” non-paper, based on the A5 pro-
2009. On 29 May 2009, the CD succeeded in adopting a programme of work for the first time since 1998. The programme included agreement to begin negotiations on a fissile cut-off treaty on the basis of the Shannon mandate. It also included agreement to begin substantive discussions on the CD’s three other core issues. Regrettably, the Conference was unable to adopt a framework to implement its programme before the end of the 2009 session, primarily due to reservations by Pakistan (see below for details). As a result, the CD did not actually manage to engage in substantive work, once again.

2010. After another fruitless session, the CD failed to adopt a programme of work in 2010 due to Pakistan’s opposition of negotiating a FMCT based on the Shannon Mandate. Frustrated with the lack of progress, the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon convened a high-level meeting on revitalizing the CD on 24 September in New York. On the occasion of the International Women’s Day on 8 March, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom delivered the first statement in a formal plenary meeting from a non-governmental organization.

2011. The CD held extensive discussions on a programme of work and the four core issues. At the request of 49 member states, the UN General Assembly convened three plenary meetings on 27-29 July 2011 under agenda item 162, entitled “Follow-up to the high-level meeting held on 24 September 2010: revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations.” At the General Assembly’s First Committee in 2011 a draft resolution called “Revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations,” was adopted by consensus. It does call on states to “explore, consider and consolidate options, proposals and elements for a revitalization” of the CD but contains no concrete timeline or measures.

2012. While nothing happened during the CD session, patience was running low amongst countries. During the First Committee of the General Assembly, two resolutions were adopted that directly affects the topic of the CD, “Taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations” which set up an open-ended working group (OEWG) to develop “proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons”, and “Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices” that sets up a group of governmental experts (GGE) to make “recommendations on possible aspects which could contribute to, but not negotiate, a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons*.

2013. Despite various efforts, the work of the CD was again limited to thematic debates during its 2013 session. Three different proposals for a programme of work, CD/1948, CD/1952 and CD/1955, that were introduced to the CD over the course of the year could not achieve consensus. However, in August, the CD agreed to establish an Informal Working Group (IWG) to “produce a programme of work robust in substance and progressive over time in implementation.” The IWG met on three occasions and reported back to the CD during its final session, but did not succeed in producing a programme of work for the 2013 session.

Summary of Critical Issues

Programme of work

In 2009, the six presidents of the CD tabled draft decision CD/1864, a comprehensive programme of work, substantially from the other recent proposed programmes of work in 2007 and 2008. CD/1864 establishes working groups on the four core issues and special coordinators on the other three agenda items. It calls, inter alia, for negotiation of a fissile materials treaty on the basis of the 1995 Shannon Mandate, for recommendations for dealing with negative security assurances, and for an “exchange of views and information on practical steps for progressive and systematic efforts to reduce nuclear weapons with the ultimate goal of their elimination, including on approaches toward potential future work of multilateral character.”

While the vast majority of CD member states expressed their support for this document, many also noted its many imperfections. Some delegations would like to see negotiations start simultaneously on all four core issues, while others think this would be impossible. However, Pakistan is still the only delegation publicly stating that they will not join consensus. During the 2012 session, the Egyptian delegation during its Presidency in March 2012 put forward CD/1933.Rev1. That proposal was not able to achieve consensus either.

In 2013 many attempts have been made at agreeing on a programme of work for the CD. In February, the Hungarian delegation introduced CD/1948, however, it failed to reach consensus in the conference. Later, in June, the Iranian delegation circulated a draft programme of work as contained in CD/1952, but decided to not formally take action on the text as not all delegations supported the draft. Finally, in July, the Iraqi delegation tabled CD/1953, which too did not reach consensus. Later during their presidency, the Iraqi delegation introduced draft decision CD/1956/Rev.1, which establishes an informal working group to produce a programme of work. This decision could reach consensus.

More information

CD/1956/Rev1

Fissile Materials

Fissile materials are the ingredients used to make nuclear weapons: highly enriched uranium and plutonium. For more information on fissile materials, please see www.fissilematerials.org.

In December 1993, the UN General Assembly adopted by consensus a resolution recommending the negotiation of a non-discriminatory, multilateral, and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Early on, the issue of existing stocks blocked consensus on the negotiation of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) in the CD. Some states, such as those belonging to the Non-Aligned Movement, believe that a cut-off level should include fissile materials already produced and stockpiled. Others, such as the United States, United Kingdom, and Japan, favour a future-production cut-off. Some states also think an FMCT should include management
of existing fissile material, not only a ban on production.

On 25 January 1994, the CD appointed a Special Coordinator, Ambassador Gerald Shannon of Canada, to seek the views of member states on the most appropriate arrangement to negotiate the type of FMCT requested by the UN General Assembly. In March 1995, the resulting “Shannon Mandate” proposed that an ad hoc committee, charged to pursue the negotiations, would settle the issue of existing stocks and other issues.

All of the states parties to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) endorsed the immediate commencement and early conclusion of FMCT negotiations at the 1995 and 2000 NPT Review Conferences. The negotiation of an FMCT was agreed as one of the 13 practical steps towards disarmament at the 2000 NPT Review Conference (for more information, see www.reachingcriticalwill.org/legal/nptindex1.html).

For several years, China and Russia insisted that starting work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space (see below) be linked to starting work on an FMCT. In August 2003, China and Russia broke from this position, agreeing to go forth with FMCT negotiations based on the Shannon Mandate.

The controversial issues surrounding the FMCT are verification and stockpiles. In 2004, the US stated that an FMCT could not be verifiable, something most other states disagreed with. However, in 2009, the Obama administration reversed its position and agreed to a programme of work that included negotiations of an FMCT on the basis of the Shannon Mandate - which would include verification. Most nuclear weapons possessors agree that a FMCT should be a simple cut-off, and not deal with existing stockpiles of fissile material for weapons purposes. However, many other states and civil society believe that the scope should include stockpiles.

Despite a brief moment of agreement on a negotiating mandate for an FMCT in 2009, Pakistan blocked the actual commencement of negotiations for the remainder of the session. In 2010, the Pakistani position on a FMCT hardened and it could no longer support negotiations based on the Shannon mandate.

The Pakistani delegation in the CD assert that a fissile materials treaty which does not address existing stocks will “freeze existing asymmetries” that threaten Pakistan’s security and is therefore unacceptable. This is undoubtedly a manifestation of Pakistan’s concern with regional rival India. India not only has a much larger stockpile of weapons-grade nuclear material, but has also entered into a nuclear cooperation agreement with the United States which allows it to import nuclear fuel from the US for energy purposes, thereby freeing up fissile material produced domestically to potentially be used for military purposes. Therefore, Pakistan opposes any programme of work that involves negotiations of fissile materials based on the Shannon mandate.

This opposition continued during the 2010 First Committee meetings, where there was nothing to indicate that the impasse on this issue would be broken. Canada’s 2010 resolution entitled “Treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices”– a virtually identical version of the resolution it tabled during 2009—was adopted by a vote of 163-1-2, but Pakistan continued to oppose plans to begin negotiations without preconditions. Moreover, Pakistan also voted against any reference to negotiations of an FMCT in the CD in any other resolutions tabled at First Committee.

During the 2012 CD session, the governments of Netherlands and Germany organized two Scientific Expert meetings to explore different aspects of technical nature around a potential treaty.

In the General Assembly in 2012, Canada proposed the convening of a group of governmental experts (GGE) on fissile material which would meet for two weeks in 2014 and two weeks in 2015. The GGE will be tasked to make “recommendations on possible aspects which could contribute to, but not negotiate, a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons”. The resolution was adopted with 148-1-20, with four of the P5 voting in favour (China abstained) and Pakistan as the only opposing country.

More Information
A few positive steps have happened outside of the CD. In 2010, the General Assembly adopted a resolution that set up a group of governmental experts (GGE) to explore transparency and confidence-building measures. During the 2013 First Committee the Chair of the GGE reported back on the work of the GGE and noted that “further measures are needed to address the challenges pertaining to outer space activities.”

More Information

Statements on Space in the CD can be found here
http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/documents
China-Russia draft treaty on preventing the placement of weapons in outer space
Report by the Chair of the GGE to the 2013 First Committee
http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/1com/1com13/statements/22Oct_ChairGGE.pdf

NGO Resources

Reaching Critical Will: http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/legal/npt/issues.html#NSA

Negative Security Assurances

Negative security assurances (NSAs) constitute promises from nuclear weapon states to non-nuclear weapon states that they will not use nuclear weapons against them. Currently, the only assurances that exist are not legally-binding, such as unilateral declarations contained within nuclear weapon free zone treaty protocols and in Security Council Resolution 984 (1995).

The Non-Aligned members of the CD (the G-21) increased their demands for a legally-binding instrument after the completion of the CTBT negotiations and the extension of the NPT in 1995. Most non-nuclear weapon states continue to demand legally-binding assurances, although the context remains a debate. Some states argue legally-binding assurances should be negotiated at the CD; others, such as those in the New Agenda Coalition, argue that NSAs should only be given to and by states parties to the NPT. In 2007, New Zealand argued there are many complications in negotiating legally-binding NSAs in the CD, such as “the potential conferring of the status of Nuclear Weapons States on all of the States that possess nuclear weapons” if they are bound to give legally-binding assurances under a treaty.

The NSA ad hoc committee, while re-established in 1998, has not yet met. Substantive discussions on NSAs were included in CD/1864.In CD/1948, CD/1952 and CD/1955 a working group on the matter was included.

More Information

Statements on nuclear disarmament in the CD can be found here:
http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/statements
Reports of the work of the OEWG
http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/disarmament-fora/oewg/reports
NGO Resources
International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons: www.icanw.org
Reaching Critical Will: http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/

Radiological Weapons

The CD also has on its agenda the negotiation of a ban on radiological weapons, a new type of weapon of mass destruction that could disperse radioactive materials without a nuclear explosion. Such weapons could include waste material from non-military nuclear applications such as spent reactor fuel.

In 2012 at the General Assembly, Austria, Mexico, and Norway put forward a draft resolution “Taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations” which set up an open-ended working group (OEWG) to develop “proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons”. The resolution was adopted with 134-4-34, with France, the Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States opposing. The OEWG meet in Geneva for 15 days during 2013 and submitted a report to the 2013 session of the General Assembly. For 2014 no sessions for the OEWG to meet were scheduled.

More Information

Statements on nuclear disarmament in the CD can be found here:
http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/statements
Reports of the work of the OEWG
http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/disarmament-fora/oewg/reports
NGO Resources
International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons: www.icanw.org
Reaching Critical Will: http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/

Reaching Critical Will: http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/legal/npt/issues.html#NSA
In 1991, the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/36-L, entitled “Transparency in Armaments,” which promoted openness and transparency in the field of military matters. One consequence of the resolution was the establishment of the UN Register of Conventional Arms. The resolution also requested the CD take up the issue of transparency in armaments (TIA), and specifically asked the CD to address interrelated issues arising from the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms. No time frame was attached to the CD’s work.

The CD added TIA to its agenda in 1992, the first new agenda item in over ten years. TIA was also the CD’s first issue of transparency in the field of military matters. The TIA ad hoc committee, which began working to develop practical means for increasing openness and transparency in military matters. In 1994, the CD made little progress on this issue, and in 1995, the ad hoc committee was unable to reconvene. An experts group met in 1997 and there was agreement to promote openness and transparency in the field of military matters. One consequence of the resolution was transparency in the field of military matters. In 1991, the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/36-L, entitled “Transparency in Armaments,” which promoted openness and transparency in the field of military matters. One consequence of the resolution was the establishment of the UN Register of Conventional Arms. The resolution also requested the CD take up the issue of transparency in armaments (TIA), and specifically asked the CD to address interrelated issues arising from the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms. No time frame was attached to the CD’s work.

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There is often a resolution on TIA tabled in and adopted by the General Assembly, from which a small group of Arab states regularly abstain because the UN Register does not include weapons of mass destruction. The Register also does not require a comprehensive accounting of armament or military spending overall—which would be a potentially positive first step in meeting the Security Council’s obligations under Article 26 of the UN Charter.

More Information

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More Information

Transparency in Armaments
International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War: http://www.ipnwar.org/
Nuclear Policy Research Institute: http://www.nuclearpolicy.org/

RCW’s GUIDE TO THE CD

In 1979, the United States and Soviet Union jointly submitted to the CD major elements of a treaty banning the development, production, stockpiling, and use of radiological weapons. Conclusion of a multilateral treaty within the CD has been held up because no such weapons presently exist and because of questions about verifiability. Some states also insist that, under this agenda item, discussions be held on a treaty to ban attacks against nuclear facilities.

Radiological weapons are currently not being discussed in the CD. While there is no treaty banning radiological weapons, a Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, which entered into force in 2001, includes provisions for the management, storage, and transport of radioactive waste from civilian and military reactors. In addition, the General Assembly adopted a RW resolution for the first time at its 60th session in 2005, on “Preventing the risk of radiological terrorism.” In 2007, the General Assembly adopted resolution A/62/46 on “Preventing the acquisition by terrorists of radioactive materials and sources.”

More Information

Transparency in Armaments
International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War: http://www.ipnwar.org/
Nuclear Policy Research Institute: http://www.nuclearpolicy.org/

RCW’s GUIDE TO THE CD

Moving Forward
Going into the 2014 session of the CD, the frustration among CD member states remains stagnant—high. During the last few years, frustration has grown stronger when the CD has shown no signs of moving forward. As a consequence, CD members have raised concerns about the CD’s ability to address the security needs of the international community. The 2012 First Committee showed that many governments had finally had enough, but despite their efforts the CD could not break the deadlock in 2013. However, the two 2012 UNGA resolutions on taking multilateral disarmament negotiations forward and a treaty banning fissile materials for nuclear weapons represent clear signs that the international community is looking elsewhere for progress. Together with the GGE on transparency and confidence-building in outer space, it is clear that the CD no longer can claim monopoly on these issues.

While countries will continue to meet and incoming presidents will attempt to achieve a programme of work, few expect that it will achieve any concrete results during its 2014 session.

Instead, governments and civil society are focusing their efforts elsewhere. Some have put their energy into the Open-ended Working Group that met for 10 days during 2013. Some continue to focus on positive events outside the UN, such as the second governmental conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, organized by the Mexican Government in Nayarit on 13-14 February. Others, in particular the nuclear weapons possessors, will most likely remain comfortable with the existing status quo.

As the CD moves into its 17th consecutive year without work, whatever solution is attempted to break the deadlock around multilateral disarmament negotiations must coincide with a reform of the concept of security. By remembering who and what a state should protect, we can move towards a more comprehensive view of disarmament—one that is based on human security rather than military security. Human security cannot be brought about through nuclear weapons and military might. In order to protect the people, governments and civil society must critically analyze the practical security requirements of ordinary people, such as adequate food, shelter, clean water and air, health care, and education.

The continued stalemate and blockage of disarmament negotiations inside the UN system is unacceptable. If the existing machinery and rules of procedures cannot adequately address the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, arms trade, explosive weapons, or military spending, we must look elsewhere to make progress.

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Transparency in Armaments

In 1991, the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/36-L, entitled “Transparency in Armaments,” which promoted openness and transparency in the field of military matters. One consequence of the resolution was the establishment of the UN Register of Conventional Arms. The resolution also requested the CD take up the issue of transparency in armaments (TIA), and specifically asked the CD to address interrelated issues arising from the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms. No time frame was attached to the CD’s work.

The CD added TIA to its agenda in 1992, the first new agenda item in over ten years. TIA was also the CD’s first agenda item related to conventional arms control. Since the topic was new to the CD, member states decided to conduct a year of informal meetings as a way of introducing the CD to the subject. In 1993, the CD established the TIA ad hoc committee, which began working to develop practical means for increasing openness and transparency in military matters. In 1994, the CD made little progress on this issue, and in 1995, the ad hoc committee was unable to reconvene. An experts group met in 1997 and there was agreement to promote transparency but not to expand the reporting requirements. The ad hoc committee has not been reestablished in the years since then.

There is often a resolution on TIA tabled in and adopted by the General Assembly, from which a small group of Arab states regularly abstain because the UN Register does not include weapons of mass destruction. The Register also does not require a comprehensive accounting of armament or military spending overall—which would be a potentially positive first step in meeting the Security Council’s obligations under Article 26 of the UN Charter.

More Information

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International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War: http://www.ipnwar.org/
Nuclear Policy Research Institute: http://www.nuclearpolicy.org/

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Reaching Critical Will Resources on the Conference on Disarmament

RCW monitors and collects all statements delivered to the CD and posts them on our website at http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/disarmament-fora/cd/2014/statements

We offer a free, weekly reporting service for all those interested in the CD. These reports are available through an email subscription service, and are posted on our website at http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/disarmament-fora/cd/2014/reports

This booklet, the Reaching Critical Will Guide to the CD, can be found online at http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/cd/cdbook2014.pdf

We have also created a CD archive with each annual report and programme of work of the CD from 1979. This archive will be updated with more information during the year http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/disarmament-fora/cd/archive

Other background information on the Conference can be found at http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/disarmament-fora/cd

Governmental Contact Information for Permanent Missions in Geneva is at http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/resources/government-contacts