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Agenda item 99

General and complete disarmament

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 4 December 2023

[on the report of the First Committee (A/78/409, para. 89)]

78/51. Radiological weapons

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions related to a prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of radiological weapons, including resolutions 2602 C (XXIV) of 16 December 1969, 34/87 A of 11 December 1979, 35/156 G of 12 December 1980, 36/97 B of 9 December 1981, 37/99 C of 13 December 1982, 38/188 D of 20 December 1983, 39/151 J of 17 December 1984, 40/94 D of 12 December 1985, 41/59 I of 3 December 1986, 42/38 F of 30 November 1987, 43/75 J of 7 December 1988, 44/116 T of 15 November 1989, 45/58 F of 4 December 1990, 46/36 E of 6 December 1991 and 47/52 B of 9 December 1992,

Reaffirming that the Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community, has the primary role in substantive negotiations on priority questions of disarmament,

Welcoming the work, in 1980, of the ad hoc committees of the Conference on Disarmament established with a view to reaching an agreement on a convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of radiological weapons¹ and the work of the related ad hoc committees undertaken as recently as 1992 in this regard, and welcoming also the extensive work done in the years following on this topic at the Conference under the long-standing agenda item entitled “New types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons; radiological weapons”,

Bearing in mind the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, the first special session devoted to disarmament, which was adopted by consensus, and wherein it was noted that progress towards the goal of general and complete disarmament can be achieved through the implementation of a programme

¹ CD/133.



of action on disarmament, and included in that programme of action was a measure that a convention should be concluded prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling, and use of radiological weapons,² and expressing interest in taking steps towards this end,

Seriously concerned that the use of radiological weapons could have significant health and economic impacts on civilian populations,

Noting the extensive existing frameworks to address radiological threats with a focus on non-State actors,³ including, among other instruments, the International Atomic Energy Agency Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources, its supplementary Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources and its supplementary Guidance on the Management of Disused Radioactive Sources, and wishing to complement, rather than duplicate, these existing measures,

Seeking to add to the landmark agreements that States have successfully concluded on nuclear, chemical and biological weapons through renewed efforts to address radiological weapons as a means to enhance international peace and security,

Reaffirming the need to ensure the equal, full and meaningful participation of underrepresented groups and reflect gender perspectives and diverse participant perspectives in the negotiation process,

1. *Calls upon* all States not to use radiological weapons;
2. *Also calls upon* all States not to develop, produce or stockpile devices or materials for use as radiological weapons, while desiring to avoid interfering with the legitimate uses of radioactive materials;
3. *Emphasizes* that radiological weapons are a unique category of weapons distinct and separate from nuclear, chemical and biological weapons;
4. *Urges* the Conference on Disarmament to adopt, in 2024, a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that includes the commencement of negotiations to conclude, as an initial step on this issue, a legally binding multilateral prohibition of the use of radiological weapons by States.

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² Resolution S-10/2.

³ For the purposes of the present resolution, the General Assembly understands “non-State actor” to mean an individual or entity not acting under the lawful authority of any State in conducting activities that come within the scope of the present resolution.