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Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament

Report of the First Committee

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I. Introduction

1. The item entitled “Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament” was included in the provisional agenda of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly in accordance with Assembly resolution [72/28](#).
2. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 21 September 2018, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include the item in its agenda and to allocate it to the First Committee.
3. At its 1st meeting, on 4 October 2018, the First Committee decided to hold a general debate on all disarmament and international security items allocated to it, namely, items 93 to 108. Also at its 1st meeting, the Committee decided, on the basis of conference room papers before it,¹ on the final composition for the exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials on the current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament. At its 2nd to 11th meetings, from 8 to 12 and from 15 to 18 October, the Committee held a general debate on the items. At its 8th meeting, on 16 October, the Committee had an exchange with the High Representative on the follow-up to resolutions and decisions adopted by the Committee at previous sessions and on reports presented to the Committee for its consideration, with a special focus on the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. At its 10th meeting, on 17 October, the Committee had an exchange with the High Representative and other high-level officials on the current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament. The Committee also held 15 meetings (11th to 25th), on 18 and 19, from 22 to 26 and from 29 to 31 October, for thematic discussions and panel exchanges with independent experts. At those meetings, as well as during the action phase, draft resolutions were introduced and

¹ [A/C.1/73/CRP.2](#) and [A/C.1/73/CRP.3](#), available at www.un.org/en/ga/first/73/documentation73.shtml.



considered. The Committee took action on all draft resolutions and decisions at its 26th to 31st meetings, on 1, 2, 5, 6 and 8 November.²

4. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the report of the Secretary-General on current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts ([A/73/177](#)).

II. Consideration of draft resolution [A/C.1/73/L.65/Rev.1](#)

5. On 30 October, the representative of India, on behalf of Austria, Bhutan, the Central African Republic, Croatia, Germany, India, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden, submitted a draft resolution entitled “Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament” ([A/C.1/73/L.65/Rev.1](#)). Subsequently, Bangladesh, Canada, Finland, Guinea, Japan, Kazakhstan, Mauritius, Montenegro, Singapore, Slovenia and Switzerland joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

6. At the 30th meeting, on 8 November, the Secretary of the Committee informed the Committee that the main sponsors of draft resolution [A/C.1/73/L.65/Rev.1](#) had revised the text by deleting the twelfth preambular paragraph.³

7. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution [A/C.1/73/L.65/Rev.1](#), as orally revised, without a vote (see para. 8).

² For an account of the Committee’s discussion of the item, see [A/C.1/73/PV.1](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.2](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.3](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.4](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.5](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.6](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.7](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.8](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.9](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.10](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.11](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.12](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.13](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.14](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.15](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.16](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.17](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.18](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.19](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.20](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.21](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.22](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.23](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.24](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.25](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.26](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.27](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.28](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.29](#), [A/C.1/73/PV.30](#) and [A/C.1/73/PV.31](#).

³ See [A/C.1/73/PV.30](#).

III. Recommendation of the First Committee

8. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament

The General Assembly,

Recognizing that scientific and technological developments can have both civilian and military applications and that progress in science and technology for civilian applications needs to be maintained and encouraged,

Underlining the keen interest of the international community to keep abreast of the latest developments in science and technology of relevance to international security and disarmament and to channel scientific and technological developments for beneficial purposes,

Mindful of the need to regulate the transfer of technologies for peaceful uses, in accordance with relevant international obligations, to address the risk of proliferation by States or non-State actors,

Acknowledging the need to continue the exchange of technologies for peaceful uses, including in accordance with relevant international obligations,

Mindful of the rights of States, reflected in relevant international agreements, regarding the development, production, transfer and use of technologies for peaceful purposes, in accordance with relevant international obligations, as well as the need for all Member States to fulfil their obligations in relation to arms control and disarmament and to prevent proliferation in all its aspects of all weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery,

Cognizant of the discussions on developments in science and technology at the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and within the meetings of experts on science and technology under the 2018–2020 intersessional programme established by the 2017 Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction,

Cognizant also of the discussions in the Conference on Disarmament in 2018 under its subsidiary body 5,

Mindful of the discussions in other forums, such as the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities and on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in the United Nations disarmament machinery,

Noting the discussions on various dimensions of emerging technologies under the framework of 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,¹ and welcoming the adoption of the report of the 2018 session of the Group of Governmental Experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems, including the section on emerging commonalities, conclusions and recommendations,

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1342, No. 22495.

Noting also the discussions within the United Nations and the specialized agencies on developments in the field of information and communications technologies, including in the context of international security,

Acknowledging that the accelerating pace of technological change necessitates a system-wide assessment of the potential impact of developments in science and technology on international security and disarmament, with due regard to avoiding duplication and complementing efforts already under way in United Nations entities and in the framework of the relevant international conventions,

Taking note of the reference in the agenda for disarmament of the Secretary-General to his report on current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts,²

Noting the discussions on current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts in the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters during its sixty-ninth and seventieth sessions, in 2018,

1. *Invites* Member States to continue efforts to apply developments in science and technology for disarmament-related purposes, including the verification of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation instruments, and to make disarmament-related technologies available to interested States;

2. *Calls upon* Member States to remain vigilant in understanding new and emerging developments in science and technology that could imperil international security, and underlines the importance of Member States engaging with experts from industry, the research community and civil society in addressing this challenge;

3. *Welcomes* the report of the Secretary-General on current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts,² in which he highlights recent developments in science and technology, including in artificial intelligence and autonomous systems, biology and chemistry, advanced missile and missile-defence technologies, space-based technologies, electromagnetic technologies and materials technologies, and takes note of the section containing submissions from Member States giving their views on the matter;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session an updated report on recent developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts, with an annex containing submissions from Member States giving their views on the matter;

5. *Encourages* the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters to continue its discussions on current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts;

6. *Requests* the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research to convene, from voluntary contributions, a one-day focused informal seminar in Geneva in 2019 on the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament, in order to facilitate dialogue among relevant stakeholders on current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts;

7. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-fourth session the item entitled "Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament".

² A/73/177.