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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. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 17 September 2021, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its seventy-sixth session the item entitled “Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament” and to allocate it to the First Committee.

2. At its 1st meeting, on 30 September 2021, the First Committee, taking into consideration the physical distancing guidelines and constraints related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which prevented the Committee from organizing a full-fledged session, decided, on an exceptional basis and without setting a precedent, to convene in-person and virtual meetings and to conduct its work in three phases. The first phase would be a general debate on all disarmament and international security items allocated to it, namely items 92 to 107, the second phase would be dedicated to thematic discussions and the third phase would be action on all draft proposals. The Committee also decided to convene three virtual informal meetings of two hours each for interactive dialogues on specific subjects. Also at its 1st meeting, the Committee decided, on the basis of the conference room paper 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.

3. At its 2nd to 7th meetings, from 4 to 7 and on 11 and 12 October, the Committee held a general debate. On 8, 15 and 21 October, the Committee held virtual meetings for exchanges with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, civil society, independent experts, and other high-level officials nominated by the regional groups. The Committee also held five meetings (8th to 12th), on 13, 14 and 18 October, for

¹ A/C.1/76/CRP.2, available at www.un.org/en/ga/first/76/documentation76.shtml.



thematic discussions. At those meetings, as well as during the action phase, draft resolutions were introduced and considered. The Committee took action on all draft resolutions and decisions at its 13th to 18th meetings, on 27 October, from 1 to 3 and on 5 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/76/182](#)).

II. Consideration of draft resolution [A/C.1/76/L.6](#)

5. On 5 October, the delegation of India, on behalf of Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brazil, Croatia, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Finland, Germany, India, Israel, Italy, Kiribati, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Norway, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Spain, Sweden and Vanuatu, submitted a draft resolution entitled “Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament” ([A/C.1/76/L.6](#)). Subsequently, Afghanistan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Ethiopia, Hungary, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Paraguay, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Slovenia, Switzerland and Zambia joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

6. At its 17th meeting, on 3 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution [A/C.1/76/L.6](#) without a vote (see para. 7).

² For an account of the Committee’s discussion of the item, see [A/C.1/76/PV.2](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.3](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.4](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.5](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.6](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.7](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.8](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.9](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.10](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.11](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.12](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.13](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.14](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.15](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.16](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.17](#) and [A/C.1/76/PV.18](#), as well as [A/C.1/76/INF/5](#).

III. Recommendation of the First Committee

7. 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 recalling the discussions and progress made by the Group of Governmental Experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems during its sessions held from 2018 to 2021,

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,

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,

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. *Takes note* of the updated report of the Secretary-General on current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts;²

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session an updated report 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. *Encourages* Member States to organize events such as conferences, seminars, workshops and exhibitions, at the national, regional and international levels, on the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament, in order to facilitate multilateral dialogue, as well as 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-seventh session the item entitled "Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament".

² A/76/182.