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Item 99 (ee) of the preliminary list*

General and complete disarmament

Effects of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report contains views of Member States on the effects of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium. The Secretary-General has, to date, received five reports from Governments.

* [A/77/50](#).



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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in paragraph 2 of its resolution [75/42](#), invited Member States and relevant international organizations, particularly those that have not yet done so, to communicate to the Secretary-General their views on the effects of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium, and requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the subject to the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session.
2. On 15 February, a note verbale was sent to Member States requesting them to submit their reports by 31 May 2022. The Office for Disarmament Affairs also submitted a similar request to the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Health Organization. To date, the Secretary-General has received five replies from Governments. The International Atomic Energy Agency informed the Office for Disarmament Affairs that its report of 2020 remains valid.
3. Any views received after the deadline will be posted on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs in the original language of submission. No addendum will be issued.

II. Replies received from Governments

Belgium

[Original: French]
[18 May 2022]

The Act of 11 May 2007 on the prohibition of weapons systems containing depleted uranium entered into force on 20 June 2009. Under the Act, inert munitions and armour plating containing depleted uranium or any other type of industrial uranium are classified as prohibited weapons. Such weapons may therefore not be manufactured, repaired, displayed for sale, sold, transferred, transported, stored, possessed or carried. The prohibitions set forth under the Act apply to the State, public authorities and private actors. The Act also stipulates that existing stockpiles of armaments containing depleted uranium in Belgium must be destroyed within three years of publication in the Official Gazette.

The Act was passed after parliamentary hearings in which scientific experts provided their input. Various points of view were expressed on the assessment of the risks to health and the environment posed by the use of cluster munitions.

Belgium is the first country in the world to ban armaments containing depleted uranium, guided by the principles of precaution and prudence.

Under the Act of 16 July 2009, financing the manufacture, use or possession of armaments containing uranium is also prohibited.

Belgium stands ready to provide the United Nations and its Member States with any information regarding the definitions, aims and procedures relating to the two Acts.

Belgium is in favour of stepping up scientific research into the effects on human health and the environment of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium.

Burundi

[Original: French]
[19 May 2022]

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Burundi to the United Nations has the honour to convey its views and considerations on resolution [75/42](#) on the effects of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium.

Armaments containing depleted uranium indiscriminately strike not only military targets, but also civilian ones, including civilian populations. They also cause serious and lasting damage to the natural environment and result in unsafe health conditions, jeopardizing the opportunity for populations to return to their living environment for a long time.

Considering that the purpose of the proposed legislation is to prohibit the production, use and marketing of these types of armaments and ammunitions, as was the case with anti-personnel mines, the Republic of Burundi actively supports this resolution and invites the Secretary-General to facilitate further studies and research to assess the health risks and the environmental impact of these weapons in conflict zones, while emphasizing that only through multilateralism can this issue be resolved.

Honduras

[Original: Spanish]
[11 April 2022]

With regard to the request of the Office for Disarmament Affairs to Member States concerning the implementation of resolution [75/42](#) on the effects of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium, the Government of Honduras states that the Legal and Military Audit Department, in coordination with the Directorate of Logistics of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Honduras, indicates that the Government of Honduras is required under international agreements, including in particular the Arms Trade Treaty and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, to adopt measures to control the manufacture, repair and illicit trafficking of weapons.

The Constitution of Honduras enshrines the mandate to support the Armed Forces in the fight against terrorism and arms trafficking.

The Armed Forces, in compliance with the Constitution of the Republic and the principles of international humanitarian law, in the interest of protecting the physical integrity of human beings and the environment, support the prohibition of the use of weapons, projectiles and materials that may cause superfluous harm or unnecessary suffering, on the grounds that they would be harmful to human beings and the environment.

In addition, the Government of Honduras faithfully complies with the observations issued by the World Health Organization to mitigate the dangers of exposure to depleted uranium.

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]
[30 March 2022]

Mexico is submitting these remarks pursuant to General Assembly resolution [75/42](#), entitled “Effects of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted

uranium”, in which the Assembly requested Member States to communicate their views on the effects of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium.

Mexico is traditionally a pacifist country, fully committed to preventing the humanitarian impact of indiscriminate weapons, to achieving general and complete disarmament, to applying international humanitarian law without restriction, and to building a safer and more peaceful world based on international law, cooperation and solidarity among nations.

As a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Mexico defends and recognizes the inalienable right of all States to develop nuclear energy for peaceful use. It also reiterates the obligation of States to refrain from any activity carried out for non-peaceful purposes in violation of the provisions of the Treaty, and the obligation to promote transparency and cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Mexico recognizes the usefulness of the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology in tackling major global challenges, such as food security, the treatment of diseases and the fight against climate change, by monitoring greenhouse gas emissions and changes in the biosphere, oceans and ecosystems.

Mexico recognizes in particular that the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium can have serious environmental and public health effects. Although Mexico has not directly suffered the consequences of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium, it shares the concern of the international community about the short- and long-term effects of the use of these types of armaments and ammunitions.

Mexico takes note of the results of research carried out by IAEA, in collaboration with the World Health Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme, on countries affected by radioactive waste resulting from the use of depleted uranium in armed conflict. Those studies have shown the serious harm that uranium can cause to human life and the environment, with consequences that last for generations.

Mexico therefore expresses the need to continue research work to assess the long-term health risks and environmental impact.

Mexico reiterates its full commitment to prevent the use or diversion of radioactive material in any way for non-peaceful purposes. Mexico attaches great importance to nuclear safety and security, and has thus continued its efforts to establish an effective and sustainable national system in that regard. In compliance with the safeguards agreement signed between Mexico and IAEA, the National Commission for Nuclear Safety and Safeguards therefore exercises strict control over the import and export of such materials. That includes, in particular, those used in containers for radioactive material and anything classified as radioactive waste.

As a sign of its commitment to non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, Mexico states that:

- It is stipulated in article 2 of the Act to Give Effect to Article 27 of the Constitution, concerning Nuclear Materials, that “Nuclear energy shall be used only for peaceful purposes”. This legal provision lists depleted uranium as nuclear material, and its use is therefore regulated and restricted exclusively to peaceful purposes.
- The National Commission for Nuclear Safety and Safeguards, which operates the State System of Accounting for and Control of Nuclear Material, is responsible for accounting for and monitoring depleted uranium, whether for

export to the country providing the radioactive material or for transportation to a treatment facility for radioactive waste.

- The depleted uranium found in Mexico comes entirely from abroad, especially as used for containers in the transportation of radioactive material.
- If depleted uranium is to be exported, the National Commission for Nuclear Safety and Safeguards must grant the corresponding authorization for export.
- If that uranium is to be used for the containment of radioactive waste, a licensing system is established for the facility regarding the handling and safeguarding of the material.
- In both cases, in compliance with the safeguards agreement signed between Mexico and IAEA, the National Commission for Nuclear Safety and Safeguards provides reports on the accounting of such material.
- The Mexican Armed Forces do not plan to develop and use armaments or ammunitions containing depleted uranium. That applies equally to recently acquired military equipment and to its standing arsenal.

Mexico supports and reiterates the need to redouble efforts to continue carrying out scientific research on the health and environmental effects of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium.

Syrian Arab Republic

[Original: Arabic]
[26 May 2022]

The Syrian Arab Republic voted in favour of General Assembly resolution [75/42](#), in which the General Assembly invited Member States to communicate to the Secretary-General their views on the effects of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium.

Depleted uranium is a by-product of uranium enrichment and has the same toxic properties as any uranium compound. It emits a radiation of about 60 per cent that of natural uranium.

The Syrian Arab Republic does not have any weapons or ammunition containing depleted uranium and has no intention of acquiring them in the future. Syria closely follows World Health Organization studies on the use of depleted uranium and its chemical and radiological toxic effects. Weapons and ammunition containing depleted uranium pose a threat to life and the environment.

It should be noted that depleted uranium is on the list of nuclear materials controlled by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) under its comprehensive safeguards agreements. Under article 20 of the IAEA Statute, its use falls in the category of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. It is used as a shield for medical devices used in radiotherapy and for the transport of radioactive substances. It has a high density (19.07 g/cm³) up to 1.6 times that of lead.

The Syrian Arab Republic is of the view that States that have used this type of munition in their wars must provide complete information on the amount of depleted uranium used and the areas contaminated, and must offer technical and material assistance to remove the effects of contamination resulting from the use of these types of projectiles.