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ACTIVATING A UN SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT

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WHY DO WE NEED A FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT?

While east-west conflict has returned in full force, alongside rising confrontation between China, the US and its allies; and continuing civil and regional conflicts in the global south, often fuelled by intervention from the global north; the web of non-proliferation, arms control, disarmament, transparency and confidence building measures that helped prevent the Cold War becoming a hot war have been abandoned. On the positive side, treaties restricting and banning possession and use of certain weapon types, with the prime aim of protection of civilians rather than stability in inter-state relations continue to be adopted. Treaties such as the ATT and the TPNW show there is the will for progress amongst a majority of members of the UN General Assembly on conventional and nuclear disarmament.

Convening a Fourth Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD IV) would allow that energy and support for arms control and disarmament to be harnessed to promote security by transparency, confidence building, arms reduction and disarmament. It would also further debate on reducing harm caused by conflict while seeking to make conflicts less likely by controlling and eliminating the means used to wage them. This would be an opportunity to promote the UN aim of achieving the least diversion of resources to the military, as well as working towards the goal of general and complete disarmament.

There has not been a UNGA Special Session on Disarmament since SSOD III in 1988. There have been exploratory talks, including the 2016/17 Open Ended Working Group, but it has not proved possible, to date, to hold SSOD IV. It is needed, now more than ever, to build the profile of disarmament and arms control as tools for security building.

Existing Resolution on SSOD IV

On December 6, 2021, the UN General Assembly adopted [Resolution A/Res/76/38 Convening of the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament.](#)

The resolution simply encourages consultations between Member States on SSOD IV and decides to include the topic in debate in the 77th General Assembly in 2022.

Proposed Draft Amendment on Setting a Date to Convene UN General Assembly Fourth Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD IV).

To give effect to the clear political will for enhanced debate and progress towards disarmament, an operative paragraph to set a date for SSOD IV will be needed. Based on precedent the following is suggested as an amendment to the likely 77th UNGA resolution on SSOD IV:

Decides to set, at its seventy-eighth session, the date of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and to establish the Preparatory Committee for the fourth special session.

How can you help?

- Obtain permission from your MFA to co-sponsor and/or actively support this amendment
- Consult with colleagues from other States and ask them to support the amendment
- Discuss the amendment with civil society to aid its dissemination



DRAFT SUMMARY OF PRINCIPLES AND HYPOTHETICAL OUTCOMES

SCRAP Weapons hosted a conference on Activating a UN Special Session on Disarmament at SOAS University of London on 6th September 2022. The following hypothetical outcomes have arisen as a result of discussions and views, which were expressed in the conference, of what we might hope to see at the next Special Session on Disarmament.

We recognise the contributions of disarmament, arms control, non-proliferation, transparency and security building measures to both State and human security, as enacted successfully in the final years of the Cold War and the immediate post-Cold War decade and beyond. These achievements include:

- Increasing strategic stability and the consequent reduction of the likelihood of war, especially aggressive war; achieving this goal at global and regional levels;
- Ensuring security at lower levels of armaments and armaments expenditure;
- Reducing civilian harm from war, and enhancement of international humanitarian law;
- Enhancing achievement of Sustainable Development Goals through increasing resources for economic development, including the transformation needed in the global economy to combat the negative impacts of climate change and slow the process of global warming.

We further recognise that to be robust and irreversible, disarmament needs to proceed through core practices and principles. These include:

- Giving sufficient attention at the UN to disarmament/arms control/non-proliferation, to address the global challenges we face.
- Ensuring equal participation of States from all regions, and that diverse genders, classes and age groups are represented.

Steps to Progress Disarmament Include:

- Encouraging progress on the programme of action of the Conference on Disarmament and implementation of the Secretary General's proposals in the New Agenda for Peace and Our Common Future.
- Holding annual meetings at which Heads of State and Government announce their targets for military reductions.
- Creating an independent UN Global Open-Source Information Service to allow member states and civil society access to weapons and conflict monitoring sources.
- Agreeing a mandate to negotiate a Treaty on General and Complete Disarmament using the [Strategic Concept for the Removal of Arms and Proliferation Treaty](#) as a starting point that draws on the once operative paragraphs of the [OSCE](#), [CSBM](#), [CFE](#) and [Open Skies](#) agreements, INF, START and UNSCOM/IAEA Action Team/UNMOVIC, CTBT, BWC and CWC and TPNW.
- Establishing a "Global ZERO Option" on missiles of all kinds with ranges over 150 km (as specified in the UNSCR 687).
- Adopting global best practice on small arms and light weapons drawing on such instruments as the ECOWAS and Latin American practices, thus strengthening the Programme of Action.
- Initiating regional action facilitated by UN ODA regional offices, in regional fora, not least those provided for in the various regional Nuclear Weapon Free Zones, including on a WMD Free Zone in the Middle East.
- Providing for further individual and group actions by states.

