



General Assembly First Committee Topic Summaries

Topic A: The Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects

The illicit flows of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) undermines security and fuels conflict, which can lead to the displacement of civilians and massive human rights violations, including the loss of life.¹ The United Nations has pursued eliminating the illicit trade of SALW for decades and in 2001 unanimously adopted the *Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in SALW in All Its Aspects* (PoA).² The PoA is the primary framework to prevent, combat, and eradicate the illicit trade of SALW and outlines many commitments needed from Member States. In addition to the PoA, the international community has adopted the *International Tracing Instrument* (ITI), which outlines how Member States can ensure that weapons are properly marked and that records are kept.³ Most recently, the General Assembly adopted *A/RES/72/57* and encouraged Member States to implement the recommendations from the Group of Governmental Experts, including working to improve cooperation in preventing, combating, and eradicating illicit brokering in SALWs.⁴

Topic B: Role of Science and Technology in the Context of International Security and Disarmament

The role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament was first on the agenda of the General Assembly First Committee in 1988, when it adopted *A/RES/43/77(A)*.⁵ At that time, increasing amounts of resources were being utilized to develop new and emerging weapon systems, which lead to uncertainty and insecurity throughout the international community.⁶ As modern technologies, such as satellites, drones, the Internet, and data analytics, including the use of big data, are actively or potentially being weaponized, discussions are occurring throughout the international community as to the feasibility of developing international standards or instruments to ensure that such technologies are contributing to peace processes and not to conflict. Emerging technologies have often played a part in confidence building, information sharing, and disarmament, but balancing its use in development and identifying how to ensure peaceful uses remains difficult.⁷ At its most recent session, the General Assembly adopted *A/RES/72/28*, which called for the Secretary-General to submit a report on the subject to its next session and invited Member States to work to ensure that advancements in science and technology are being used for the purposes of disarmament, including verification, arms control and non-proliferation.⁸

¹ <https://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/salw/>

² <https://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/salw/programme-of-action/>

³ <http://www.un-arm.org/PoAISS/InternationalTracingInstrument.aspx>

⁴ <https://undocs.org/A/RES/72/57>

⁵ <https://undocs.org/A/RES/43/77>

⁶ <https://www.un.org/disarmament/topics/scienceandtechnology/>

⁷ <http://repository.un.org/handle/11176/154089>

⁸ <http://undocs.org/a/res/72/28>