

SHORT REPORT FROM THE ICBUW LOBBYING IN GENEVA MAY 2007

VISITS

We were four: Katsumi Furitsu, Gretel Monroe, Pat Sanchez and Rae Street.

We visited states delegations from:

Cuba, Indonesia, Italy, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, South Africa, Sweden and Venezuela.

Katsumi and Gretel visited the office of the WHO (Katsumi will send a few separate notes on this) and Rae and Pat went to see Susi at WILPF.

We also met up with Colin Archer from IPB.

Firstly I would say we were impressed by the number of delegations who were sympathetic on the issue and also keen to learn more. All, except the Republic of Korea (but they had little knowledge of the issue and did take material to read), supported the Resolution. However, all said they would have to consult with the Foreign Ministries in their capitals.

Comments were made on the difficulties at the moment of disarmament initiatives partly because of other initiatives going on, for example the Cluster Munitions processes and partly because of the general stagnation and blockages at the Conference on Disarmament. However the latter could work in our favour as one delegation openly said that they would like to espouse our cause because they thought it achievable and they wanted to see concrete disarmament negotiations in this area.

Interestingly, one delegate, the Italian, would have preferred that we took the road of the CCW, even though we explained that the route had been considered and we thought it would be a 'cul de sac'. We had the impression, though could not be certain, that he felt that the Ottawa and Oslo processes weakened the UN and its major committees. Nonetheless the same delegate indicated, if his capital agreed, he would want to support **the proposed UNGA Resolution (see below)**. It is of course a matter of much public debate in Italy and the MEP, Luisa Morgantini, had already been in touch with him when we arrived.

The Swedish delegate, Magnus Hellgren, was very friendly and interested in all the new research. He emphasised that we should ask NGO's, for example Swedish WILPF, to keep lobbying the government, especially with any new material (It occurred to us that would apply also to Finland and Norway and maybe Denmark) Several of the delegates were visibly moved by the pictures from Iraq (from the Japanese pamphlet) and also interested in references to new research.

Other common themes among the visits were the importance of having the military on our side, so we all pointed to the Euromil statement; also which other states were supporting. Of course we all mentioned Costa Rica, the Belgian Parliament resolution and also the European Parliament Resolutions. **But / And ?** we referred to our earlier visits to Ireland and the Latin American countries: Argentina, Chile and Peru.

Central and South America are clearly very important to us. We therefore must thank Pat Sanchez as it enormously helpful to have her with us to carry out the meetings in Spanish, where the delegates preferred their own language. (Cuba and Venezuela).

Where appropriate we also put forward the idea of DU Weapon Free Zones, building on the earlier Nuclear Weapon Free Zone treaties. This was well received not only by Central and Latin American but also, for example, by Indonesia..

Indeed we had friendly and helpful visits to both Indonesia and Malaysia. Although they mentioned the number of disarmament initiatives in process, both were interested to support. They were also pleased to tell us about their long time support for disarmament.

We would all have liked to stay to make many more visits but it was impossible. We did establish contact with Syria, by phone and post box. They seemed happy for us to visit, but couldn't find at time. However we were all agreed that we should forward material from the ICBUW office to as many more CD states as we could.

We also want to follow up the visits we have made with a revised text of the Resolution if that is agreed

Another possibility for making links might be in August - see below.

Other states ~~[suggested]~~ that we **should try ?** to establish contact with were:
Thailand (active in Land Mines for example)

Algeria

Austria (delegates were at the Cluster Munitions meeting in Lima)

Norway

Brasil

Finland

Pakistan

And at a later date the UK, US, China and Russia

MEETING WITH WILPF

Susi Snyder from WILPF offered to hold an event the last week in August when we brought together all sympathetic states delegations' at a social/information function in the UN in Geneva. Doug and myself will work with Susi on dates as this is a bit of a tricky time for us in the main holiday time here. On the other hand when we mentioned this to the delegates, they seemed quite happy with the choice of date.

She also gave us contacts and helpful information for the meetings in New York in October for Gretel and Tara. She herself should be in New York in October.

IPB

Colin agreed general IPB support. He also told us of the importance of getting cross regional support and the importance of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the New Agenda Coalition (NAC).

URGENT

Here is the Draft Resolution as we presented it to the delegations in Geneva this time. Several suggestions/amendments were made to us. I list them below. We need to sort this out quickly as time is short we were told.

Every delegation we visited, (Cuba, Indonesia, Italy, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, South Africa, Sweden and Venezuela) except the Republic of Korea, indicated they would support the Resolution.

Two of them (maybe three if you count South Africa), Mexico and Venezuela, the latter strongly - clearly indicated that they would be prepared to lead but would first have to consult their capitals.. However South Africa indicated if they were to lead they would have to be involved in the drafting.

Draft Resolution for the UN General Assembly 62nd Session

Concerns About Weapons Containing Depleted Uranium

The General Assembly,

Concerned about the widespread existence and use of weapons containing depleted uranium,

Taking into consideration the potential harmful effects of the use of such weapons to human health and the environment,

Recalling the use of such weapons, *inter alia*, in Kuwait and southern Iraq in 1991, and in Iraq again since March 2003,

Noting that post-conflict assessments conducted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in the Balkans, in collaboration with IAEA and WHO, concluded that more research was needed on how the dust from depleted uranium weapons affects the environment,

Recalling the UN Secretary-General's speech on the occasion of the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict (Nov 6th 2002), stating that "although international conventions govern nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, new technologies, such as depleted uranium ammunition, threaten the environment",

Referring to resolutions 1996/16 and 1997/36 adopted by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities expressing the belief that continued efforts must be undertaken to sensitise public opinion to the [inhumane and indiscriminate] effects of weapons like those containing depleted uranium and to the need for their complete elimination.

1. Supports UNEP's request for an independent environmental field study of sites in Iraq targeted with weapons containing depleted uranium.

- 2 Urges States, in line with the precautionary principle, to refrain from the operational use of such weapons until it is scientifically established that such use causes no serious immediate or long-term health or environmental effects, and has no indiscriminate effects on civilians.
2. Invites States and relevant international organizations to study the Draft Convention on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of uranium weapons and on their destruction (see *Annex*), and to present reports on the issue in the frame of the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict (November 6th).
3. Requests the Secretary-General to seek the views of States and relevant international organizations on all aspects of the effects of the use of weapons containing depleted uranium and to submit a report thereon to the General Assembly at its [63rd] session.
4. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its [one of its next sessions / 63rd] session an item entitled „Concerns about weapons containing depleted uranium“.

URGENT

Several suggestions on amending the text of the Resolution were made. I have listed them below and hope I haven't missed any. *Katsumi, Gretel and Pat – let me know if I have.*

CUBA

1. They wanted to include a sentence which asked for 'an open-ended' working group

Would that fit into 4. after Secretary General ie

Requests the Secretary General to set up an open-ended working group on depleted uranium which would seek the views of States and relevant international organisations on all aspects of the effects of the use of weapons containing depleted uranium and to submit a report thereon to the General Assembly at its (63rd) session.

That makes the group responsible for the report. Manfred, would that be a correct way forward?

2. The representative did not like the **omission of 'depleted'** from the Treaty title. He had not understood that our Treaty was purposefully framed that way. To him this seemed inconsistent with a Resolution framed around **depleted uranium**.

I would suggest that we don't worry about that. But would other nations misread this?

Would some think it difficult because it might encompass more than they wished.

Remember the Belgian problem with the wording of weapons and munitions?

Cuba also added that it must be followed next year with the Resolution that definitely then requests the adoption of a treaty.

SOUTH AFRICA

The Counsellor, Johann Kellelman, did not like the use of the word 'Recalling' as he said General Assembly Resolutions does not 'recall'. He preferred 'Bearing in mind...or 'Referring...'

It was also pointed out to us that it is not the UN way to **name states**, even we understood, on where the weapons were used (we didn't name the perpetrators!). Therefore it was suggested that in the para. Beginning 'Bearing in mind the use of such weapons, in battle for the first time in 1991, again in 1998 and latterly in 2003'. What are the views of everyone on this?

It was further pointed out that it was not appropriate for this resolution to **refer to the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities** as this was a Human Rights issue. Maybe the phrase 'indiscriminate effects' could be added. Could be added after '2003' in the sentence above.

**I HOPE I HAVE MADE THE ABOVE CLEAR, BUT GET IN TOUCH IF YOU ARE DOUBTFUL.
PLEASE COULD YOU ALL, AND ESPECIALLY MANFRED, LET US HAVE YOUR RESPONSES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**

**Best wishes to all,
Rae**