



General Assembly

Distr.: General
2 August 2022

Original: English

Seventy-seventh session

Item 102 of the provisional agenda*

Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session

Work of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

At the request of the Secretary-General, the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters began a two-year programme of work on the topic of global military spending. Its first two meetings were held in February and June 2022.

The Board acknowledged that progress on this theme has been difficult in the past. Nonetheless, it saw its task as pertinent and timely, not least given the extremely challenging and dynamic current international security environment, where antagonistic relations, arms race-like dynamics and trust deficits among and within States risk unintended strategic consequences. Recognizing that military spending is multifaceted and multipurpose, driven by political and policy choices, the Board anticipated a continuation of the upward trend in military spending in the immediate period in view of increased geostrategic tensions and ongoing armed conflict. At the same time, countries face serious economic strains induced by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the need to invest significant resources in addressing climate change and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals. The Board consequently underscored the need for diplomacy and respect for international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Further, sophisticated approaches would be needed to foster the “transformative shift” in military spending sought by the Secretary-General, avoiding prescriptions that failed to understand the goals and interests that propelled it and the need to make distinctions among the types of military spending. This included its use in response to natural hazards and health crises or in protecting civilians at risk, consistent with the right to self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter.

Against this backdrop, the Board had in-depth discussions both with external experts and among themselves on, inter alia, (a) the historic role of the United Nations in reducing military spending and promoting transparency; (b) drivers, including supply and demand, security threats and perceptions, domestic context, political

* A/77/150.



economy and decision-making; and (c) implications at global, regional and national levels, including socioeconomic consequences of military spending, with a view to identifying areas where the United Nations and States could make a positive contribution to reducing arms expenditures in the immediate, medium and longer term.

The Board considered several potential areas for action, which it will continue to examine and refine during the next year for presentation in its 2023 report to the General Assembly. These included encouraging conflict prevention, mitigation and peacebuilding activities, including through diplomatic initiatives; refreshing available research, data and analysis that could update understandings of military spending in the twenty-first century and foster greater dialogue on policy actions; pursuing disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation efforts, including through operational transparency and confidence-building measures, so as to generate positive incentives which might limit provocative military spending; examining ways in which notions of what constitutes security should be broadened to include non-traditional transnational threats, such as those related to climate change or pandemics, and the implications for realigning financial allocations accordingly; fostering collaboration between the United Nations and regional organizations in facilitating regional seminars and workshops that promote transparency and dialogue on military spending and capabilities; and enhancing global public support for disarmament and arms control, including awareness of military spending, with a view to encouraging political action to reverse the global upward trend.

In its capacity as the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), the Board reviewed current programmes, activities and finances of UNIDIR, including ongoing efforts to strengthen its policy impact, achieve financial sustainability and further expand its global engagement. The Board was briefed on the activities and initial impact of the New York liaison office and on two initiatives that are part of the UNIDIR four-year strategic framework: (a) a workstream focusing on a future and foresight approach allowing the Institute to explore the cross-programmatic disarmament landscape in ongoing and new project areas; and (b) the UNIDIR Academy for education and training, which serves as a platform for pooling together the Institute's various ongoing and future educational and capacity-building activities. The Board approved the report of the Director on the activities of the Institute for the period from January to December 2021 and the proposed programme of work and financial plan for 2023.

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters held its seventy-seventh session in virtual format from 9 to 11 February 2022 on an adjusted schedule, as the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) global pandemic had prevented the Board from meeting in person in Geneva in January 2022 as originally planned. The Board held its seventy-eighth session at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 28 to 30 June 2022. Elissa Golberg (Canada) presided as Board Chair of both sessions in 2022.

2. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [38/183](#) (O). As the Board is only midway through a two-year programme of work, this report reflects a summary of key considerations to date. More formal recommendations will be made to the Secretary-General following the Board's eightieth session. The report of the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) was approved by the Board in its capacity as the Institute's Board of Trustees and has been submitted in document [A/77/144](#).

II. Substantive discussions

A. Context and background

3. Over the course of its seventy-seventh and seventy-eighth sessions, the Advisory Board, at the request of the Secretary-General, began a two-year programme of work, considering the topic of global military spending.

4. The request of the Secretary-General reflects his emphasis since 2018 on the need for much greater action to prevent and end armed conflicts and a pre-occupation with growing levels of military spending, which, according to latest data released by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, had surpassed \$2 trillion for the first time.¹

5. In *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*, the Secretary-General proposed that the international community rethink “unconstrained military spending”² by fostering greater dialogue and closer cooperation, building confidence on military matters and adopting a more comprehensive understanding of security, not limited to military means, that supports not just the security of States but also that of societies, communities and individual citizens.

6. The Secretary-General returned to this theme in his 2020 and 2021 reports to the Security Council on women and peace and security. In his 2021 report he identified reversing global military spending as one of five goals for the decade related to women and peace and security and recommended that the United Nations join forces with civil society organizations in innovative campaigns, using new data and evidence to advocate for people-centred policies and reductions in military spending.³

7. In *Our Common Agenda*, released in September 2021, the Secretary-General defined the need to “protect and manage the global public good of peace”, which requires “a better understanding of the underlying drivers and systems of influence

¹ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), “World military spending rises to almost \$2 trillion in 2020”, 26 April 2021. Available at www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2021/world-military-spending-rises-almost-2-trillion-2020.

² *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament* (United Nations publication, 2018). Available at www.un.org/disarmament/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/sg-disarmament-agenda-pubs-page.pdf.

³ United Nations, Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2021/827 of 27 September 2021).

that are sustaining conflict, a renewed effort to agree on more effective collective security responses and a meaningful set of steps to manage emerging risks”.⁴ With regard to achieving this, the Secretary-General emphasized the need for a new agenda for peace, which would focus, inter alia, on updating “our vision for disarmament so as to guarantee human, national and collective security”. This would include investing in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, which could involve a set of commitments including to “reduce excessive military budgets and ensure adequate social spending; tailor development assistance to address root causes of conflict and uphold human rights; and link disarmament to development opportunities”.

8. Addressing the Board at its June meeting through a statement delivered by the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, the Secretary-General gave further direction to the members of the Board in view of the change in geostrategic circumstances since he had initially asked them to consider innovative ways to address the issue of military spending. The Secretary-General suggested that the current global context was bleak, with the armed conflict in Ukraine posing one of the greatest challenges to the contemporary international order and its global peace and security architecture and serving as a stark reminder of the devastating impact of armed conflict, especially on civilians, and underscoring the relevance of the Board’s work. Recalling that the disarmament and arms control architecture has been under a heavy strain for some time, he expressed concern that military spending continued to soar, measures for transparency and confidence-building were underutilized and major arms control instruments have been abandoned. Underlining the need to seek more effective international security arrangements, with disarmament and arms control forming an integral part of those arrangements, the Secretary-General asked the Board to consider what more the United Nations could do to reimagine security, going beyond States and militaries and taking into account the security of communities, societies and individuals. He proposed the following three questions which could guide the Board’s discussions:

- What opportunities are there to reinforce transparency, confidence-building and practical dialogue as alternative measures to stockpiling weapons?
- How can we build effective and durable cooperation-based security architectures?
- How do we facilitate new and transformative thinking on military spending?

9. The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs briefed the Board at both sessions, noting that curbing military spending was a long-standing commitment of the United Nations and its Member States and that revitalizing efforts to that end were long overdue. Noting also the fraught geopolitical climate and the worrying state of the global disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control regime, she observed that the upward trend in recent decades in military modernization, procurement and spending has been both a result and a cause of increasing distrust and worsening tensions, making peaceful resolutions to conflict harder to achieve, especially in regions where confidence-building and security-related cooperation are low. She added that moving towards a more peaceful future required an honest and pragmatic assessment of current circumstances and an ability to seize positive opportunities to mitigate the likelihood that an antagonistic approach to geostrategic relations would prevail in the near term and thus a consequential increase in military spending. To change that dynamic a new, more holistic vision of security would be required, one encompassing a reduced reliance on military armaments. Consistent with the concept of strategic foresight, the High Representative challenged the Board to consider a possible future in which the world is safer and more secure and where due regard is

⁴ *Our Common Agenda* (United Nations publication, 2021), Available at www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common_Agenda_Report_English.pdf, pp. 59–60.

given to peace and development and there is greater shared prosperity and to identify the actions necessary to get there, focusing on those areas where the United Nations can add the most value.

B. Expert presentations and discussions

10. At both meetings, the Board benefited from a series of expert presentations and question-and-answer sessions with diverse external speakers from various geographies and disciplines, including conflict management, defence economics, arms control, sustainable development, human security and gender equality.

11. The Board's first meeting served as an initial scoping exercise, with a view to defining its future programme of work. Offering perspectives from their research with respect to global military spending, Nan Tian, Senior Researcher, Military Expenditure and Arms Production Programme, at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, and Sam Perlo-Freeman, Research Coordinator at Campaign Against Arms Trade, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, provided briefings on the political, economic and social drivers that have pushed military spending upward in the last two decades, looking at national, regional and global spending figures and their evolution over time. Madeleine Rees and Ray Acheson of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom offered a civil society perspective on long-standing efforts to reduce military expenditures and promote transparency, the efficacy of current global peace and security architecture, and ways in which military spending undermines human rights, well-being and environmental sustainability.

12. The Board's discussions at its second meeting were organized to focus on drivers, including considering questions of supply and demand, security threats and perceptions, domestic context and political economy decision-making, and implications at global, regional and national levels of military spending, including socioeconomic consequences. To that end, two panels of experts offered their perspectives and recommendations.

13. Speakers on the first panel offered a geostrategic and defence economics perspective. Richard Gowan, UN Director at the International Crisis Group, provided a tour d'horizon of major global hotspots as a means of clarifying existing threat perceptions and trust deficits. Fenella McGerty, Senior Fellow for Defence Economics at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, spoke to regional "supply and demand" dynamics and trends, in addition to offering insights on ways in which technological developments, for example, in artificial intelligence and cyberspace, influence military spending. Wuyi Omitoogun, Senior Political Adviser at the African Union Liaison Office in the Sudan, provided an overview of the drivers that underlie military spending and budgeting and decision-making in Africa, highlighting that the underlying causes were often socioeconomic in nature, suggesting a mismatch in investments. Tong Zhao, Senior Fellow for Nuclear Policy at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, reflected on drivers of increased spending on military and weapons capabilities in the Asia-Pacific region and opportunities to mitigate arms racing, build confidence and create opportunities for disarmament and arms control efforts.

14. Speakers on the second panel considered the question of military spending through a lens of sustainable and inclusive development. Jennifer Blanke, currently non-executive Director at the African Risk Capacity Group, provided a political economy analysis of current global development and environmental trends and their relationship to arms control and disarmament. She proposed greater interaction between security and development experts to nurture a holistic understanding of joint

challenges and solutions. Ruth Carlitz, Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Amsterdam, shared the results of a recent study of military spending vis-à-vis human security spending, highlighting some of the opportunity costs of the former, notably in conflict-affected countries. Adem Yavuz Elveren, Associate Professor of Economics, History and Political Science at Fitchburg State University, spoke to a clear link between militarization and gender inequality in both wartime and peacetime and suggested that higher levels of democracy and stronger economic development are key mitigating factors. Anthony Clayton, Professor of Caribbean Sustainable Development at the University of the West Indies, advocated for more accurate diagnoses of the causes of insecurity when determining military expenditures and for enhanced positioning of pressing non-traditional security problems which were socioeconomic and environmental in nature and did not necessarily lend themselves to military responses and how they could be resourced.

15. Finally, the Board discussed past initiatives of the United Nations and Member States in this field and their benefits and shortcomings. Michael Spies, Political Affairs Officer at the Office for Disarmament Affairs, provided a historical survey of efforts within the United Nations to reduce military spending, including parallel efforts to develop means for sharing information and for comparing military spending of States with that of other States. He recommended several possible measures including updating of research and improving the accessibility and comparability of official data on military spending in the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures (UNMilEx).

16. A more comprehensive summary of the experts' key points and recommendations is available in annex I to the present report.

C. Board discussions and possible pathways forward

17. Mindful of its timely and strategic importance, due not least to a fraught geopolitical environment, the Board welcomed the opportunity to reflect in a sustained manner on the topic of rising military spending in the hope of offering a fresh perspective and recommendations in support of the Secretary-General. The Board recognized that it was faced with a daunting task given the complex and interdisciplinary nature of the subjects and the wide range of existing viewpoints. It was also mindful that previous work in this area had yielded limited outcomes and that the Security Council had not met its obligations under Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations. The Board felt strongly that any approach should reaffirm and promote the tools of diplomacy and cooperation as well as those of disarmament and arms control as critical elements of conflict prevention, mitigation and resolution, designed to secure our common future.

18. Reflecting on the remarks of the Secretary-General that "States are seeking security in weapons rather than dialogue", the Board underlined that peace is among the most important global public goods and recalled the vital role of the United Nations as an institution that must help States to achieve this. In this context, the Board reiterated its concern at the frequent paralysis of the Security Council in respect of fulfilling its international peace and security responsibilities and at the erosion in recent years of fundamental principles underpinning the contemporary international peace and security architecture, including those enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and other sources of international law, and emphasized that those principles must be reinforced. The Board underscored that the world faced significant challenges, notably climate change, inequality and the many brutal armed conflicts across the globe such as those in Ethiopia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine and Yemen which cause death and human suffering, and that there is an urgent need to invest in diplomacy and a readiness to seek cooperative responses to resolve all of these issues.

19. In this regard, it would be necessary, as the Secretary-General had suggested, to reframe the global understanding of security so that it better accounts for the security of communities, societies and individuals as well as the environment.

20. The Board emphasized that the international community must urgently focus on strengthening the foundations, operation and accountability of the multilateral system and its institutions. Board members agreed that the world is at a critical inflection point where there must be a coming together to collaborate on addressing joint problems rather than a splitting further apart. In this context, the Board saw mutually reinforcing relationships among the strained and in some instances crumbling disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation regimes, the increased investment that has been made in modernization and development of specific types of new and old armaments and the current fraught international environment. Preserving, where appropriate, and fortifying the existing non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament regimes, including by fostering trust and confidence-building and advancing bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral diplomacy, were seen as essential foundations for recrafting pertinent strategies for addressing the realities, challenges and dynamics of today's world.

21. Over the course of its two meetings, the Board engaged in in-depth discussions both with experts and among themselves in which they reflected on areas where the United Nations and its Member States could make a positive contribution to reducing arms expenditures in the immediate, medium and longer term. Several members also provided contributions in writing to inform Board deliberations.

Classifications and data availability

22. The Board's initial discussions focused on clarifying and defining the scope of the issue of military spending and assessing some of the available data. It agreed that there are various angles from which to approach military spending and that absolute numbers reveal only part of the picture. The Board noted the need to understand the overall context in which military spending in particular cases is situated and to recognize that there may not be a one size fits all formula to explain military spending today or in the past.

23. The Board emphasized the need to adopt a sophisticated approach to the issue, one that avoids prescriptions that fail to distinguish among the types of military spending or to acknowledge that not all military spending has been unnecessary or problematic. Several Board members noted, for example, that certain technological advances in the military domain have produced positive, albeit not intentionally deliberate, spillover effects in civilian and social sectors, while also appreciating that investment in civilian capacities to undertake such activities has at times been insufficient. The Board recalled that the Charter of the United Nations provides for the right to self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a State Member of the United Nations and that certain types of military activities, aid or operations could contribute to enhancing peace and security, as has been stressed by the Security Council and the General Assembly in recent years.

24. The Board discussed whether, rather than expressly focus on reducing absolute numbers of military spending, it may be more impactful to address the factors underlying and driving military spending, notably with regard to regional or global security concerns. The Board debated whether if by gaining a better understanding of and addressing the underlying factors that drive certain kinds of significant and potentially provocative military spending and providing incentives for States to look beyond military solutions, money might be diverted to other urgent priority areas such as climate action and inequality.

25. In discussing the impact of reduced military spending, the Board acknowledged that sizing down military budgets would not automatically result in a reallocation of funds elsewhere internally or externally such as for social safety nets or sustainable development. How to support transitions in budget lines so that resources may be effectively invested elsewhere is a question that would require further consideration and could be further explored, for example, through case studies. Additionally, the economic implications and effects of converting the military industry and personnel must be practically considered and adequately addressed.

26. Throughout its discussions, the Board noted several data gaps and methodological limitations in research approaches which obscure a full comprehension of the scale and implications of military spending. First, while quantitative spending figures offer valuable insights, information about States' resulting qualitative capabilities, including with respect to nuclear weapons, cybercapabilities and fully autonomous weapons systems, is only available sparingly, if at all. Second, there is no or limited (comparable) information on procurement or research and development (R&D), which were considered important contributors to (perceived) security threats and trigger reactive boosting of military spending by others. Third, the use of geographical and spatial categories does not reflect the aggregate of military spending of military defence alliances that cut across such geographical classifications. The Board was of the view that research into (a number of) these areas might contribute to updating understanding of military spending in the twenty-first century and point to possible pathways forward for dialogue and diplomatic actions.

Global, regional, and national trends, drivers, implications and socioeconomic consequences

27. The Board sought to understand the political, military and socioeconomic factors, perceptions and institutional structures that underpin and compel military spending. To that end, the Board spent time discussing supply and demand dynamics, the impact of threats and threat perceptions, the importance of conflict avoidance and conflict resolution efforts, the role of arms procurement in diplomatic relations and the influence both of institutionalized political economies within States and of military defence alliances between (groups of) countries. The issue of military spending by non-State actors and the availability of weapons to such groups because of spending of States or criminal organizations and because of military and political strategies was also briefly explored.

28. The Board made several initial observations. First, it acknowledged that military spending does not exist in a vacuum, that it is multifaceted and multipurpose, driven by political and policy choices. Members did not dispute the need for investments in military and defensive capabilities but debated whether current expenditures adequately reflected the actual and emerging threat environment and whether such investments may further contribute to instability. Second, it spent some time discussing how the composition of military budgets and military spending is influenced by the ways in which armed forces are constituted. In this connection, it debated to what extent the need to continuously develop improved versions of weapons systems in order to maintain a development and production capacity was a factor for rising military spending. In this regard, the Board noted a connection often made with employment and arms export decisions and a potential to prompt rising military spending for both exporting and importing States. Third, it considered the use and development of emerging technologies for warfare and the extent to which those technologies will influence future military procurement and spending. Concern was expressed that this could contribute to destabilizing arms race-like dynamics, increasingly blurred lines between offensive and defensive capabilities and the propensity to spend more on new capabilities even if they do not reflect an assessment

of the actual threat environment. Finally, when discussing relations and existing trust deficits between and among States and their role in driving decisions on military spending, the Board agreed there is clear scope and pressing need for diplomatic engagement and dialogue as well as pursuit of strengthened disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation efforts, including through operational transparency and confidence-building measures centred on the notion of cooperative security. The Board will further examine opportunities for pursuing such efforts, with a view to reversing these trends and creating positive incentives.

Transparency and confidence-building

29. The Board spent time considering the Secretary-General's request to identify opportunities to reinforce transparency, confidence-building and practical dialogue as alternatives to stockpiling weapons and war planning. While acknowledging that transparency does not automatically guarantee increased security or trust between States, the Board nonetheless noted that enhanced transparency can serve as a tool for reducing uncertainties which contribute to increased competition among certain countries and is in turn driving military spending. The Board suggested that such measures can serve to enable accountability and can be part of an effort to promote serious re-engagement within and between States regarding their security concerns. In this regard, the Board noted the utility and potential of the United Nations military expenditures database and the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as well as of other unilateral, bilateral, regional and multilateral transparency and confidence-building measures which can reduce the possibility of hostilities, help avert escalation and address perceptions and misunderstandings arising from military actions and policies, of which military spending forms an integral part. Noting that each country is in a unique and ever-changing strategic environment subject to domestic and political considerations, the Board observed scope to investigate whether and how transparency and confidence-building measures may be best leveraged and expanded on as tailored entry points for regional, subregional or bilateral security dialogues and to potentially lay the basis for more ambitious cooperative action on security concerns, transforming ideas about national requirements for security and contributing to progress with respect to the socioeconomic conditions of citizens. At the multilateral level, the Board touched briefly on the need to focus on fostering transparency and confidence-building measures in emerging fields such as outer space, where information exchange measures on national space security policies and on military expenditures could meaningfully contribute to the closing of gaps in existing practice.

30. While acknowledging the transnational and cross-boundary drivers and implications of military spending, postures and alliances, the Board spent some time discussing the potential of regional approaches. It noted the strategic role that regional organizations have played in establishing and implementing security and socioeconomic objectives and frameworks, making regional forums a viable venue for discussion and rethinking of military spending by States. Such forums have the benefit of taking into account specific concerns involving neighbouring States and could contribute to an improved security climate and fresh thinking and approaches to tackling non-military security threats. Here, the Board saw potential for strengthened exchanges and new initiatives to be established between the United Nations and regional organizations on ways to facilitate regional seminars and workshops that promote transparency and dialogue. The Board will continue to explore potential pathways in this connection at its future sessions.

31. The Board discussed the Military Staff Committee under the Security Council, which has not been fulfilling its obligations under Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations. It deliberated on whether there is scope for military-to-military discussions in a multilateral setting, whether by revitalizing and expanding on

existing mechanisms (such as the Military Staff Committee) or creating new ones, such as a military staff committee under the General Assembly or a group of experts. In this context, the Board noted that there could be further enhancement of structural military exchanges at the bilateral level between States, notably those in possession of nuclear weapons, and that those exchanges might address a range of questions including those related to doctrine.

32. Recognizing the intersectional nature and diverse implications of the topic, including the myriad ways in which military spending can affect States, citizens, climate and the environment, and gender equality, the Board reflected on whether future work may be able to identify actions that would result in broadening notions and narratives of what constitutes security.

33. In this connection, the Board spent considerable time reflecting on how the international community faced both conventional security threats (for example, threats of force and violence by State and non-State actors) and non-traditional transnational ones, such as those related to climate change and pandemics. It noted that military means are not intended to address those non-traditional threats and that no State can mitigate their impacts alone. The Board noted that climate change could render parts of the globe uninhabitable, with catastrophic impacts on people, available resources and livelihoods, and all too easily conjured up a foreseeable future of increased conflict. While urgently combating this challenge should therefore be seen as a conflict prevention measure, the Board noted that climate change and other socioeconomic challenges that can potentially drive conflict are sometimes dismissed as grave threats to the well-being, safety and security of citizens and consequently of States. The Board resolved to further explore possible pathways that would lead towards a broader, more comprehensive notion of security and security spending targeted to twenty-first century threats and risks.

Research, analyses and data

34. As it sought to respond to the Secretary-General's call for it to explore ways to facilitate new and transformative thinking on military spending, the Board discussed how new areas of specialized research could offer contemporary and contextual assessments which could inform and enhance domestic and international discussions. Studies mandated by the General Assembly could significantly contribute to the availability of high-quality analyses of the interlinkages between disarmament and development and a more current understanding of the political, economic, social and environmental consequences of military expenditures. The Board noted that the last such analysis had been undertaken some three decades previously and did not include the real and expected impacts of the wars planned for and made possible by military spending. A refreshed analysis should account for contemporary priorities, including in relation to climate change, political institutions and gender. Beyond seeing the intrinsic value of new research, the Board viewed academic and policy-oriented research as a tool for increasing readily available expertise and capacity on military spending, thereby serving as a powerful driver with respect to bringing greater prominence to the issue.

35. Additional areas for possible research or case studies proposed during the discussion included, inter alia, (a) positive drivers and preconditions for reducing military spending, including examples of successful military conversions; (b) scenarios that examine the implications of reduced military spending; (c) spending patterns, including underlying domestic, structural and political causes, of specific countries, groups of countries and defence alliances; (d) States' qualitative capabilities; (e) geopolitical instability and fragility; (f) weapon systems that had been developed and procured but were either not used or used minimally which could give an indication of what factors contribute to overall military spending; (g) linkages between military aid and debt levels; (h) a deep-dive assessment and comparison of

the benefits of military spending and its negative social, political, cultural and environmental/ecological externalities in the short and long term and the military activities in both peacetime and (preparations for) war enabled by this spending; (i) costs and consequences of war, including nuclear war; and (j) a detailed breakdown of military spending which would enable a systematic analysis of budget lines, especially with respect to procurement and research and development. It was suggested that such research could provide a basis for conducting more informed needs as well as cost-benefit analysis of military spending choices, while possibly opening up routes to redirecting wasteful and unnecessary spending elsewhere.

36. The Board also discussed potential opportunities for the United Nations to enhance data collection and analytics, including through better leveraging of the potential of the United Nations military expenditures database, which remains valid but underutilized. Here, it saw scope for positioning the United Nations as a relevant, neutral and accessible hub for data and information, including through providing comparable breakdowns that are unique to the United Nations military expenditures database such as breakdowns according to research and development, for policy experts, disarmament practitioners and the general public alike. In this context, recent efforts of the Office for Disarmament Affairs to implement a data strategy were acknowledged and greater progress was encouraged.

Outreach and advocacy

37. The Board noted the indispensable efforts, both past and present, of United Nations entities and civil society groups to raise awareness and mobilize support around important global issues. It noted, for instance, that the world's youth have collectively rallied around the issue of climate change, advocating for the urgent political leadership, systemic shifts and decisive action required to stave off worst-case scenarios and to enable a better, safer and more secure future for all. The Board suggested that similar support for disarmament and arms control, including as centred on military spending, had the potential to heighten public awareness, with a view to leveraging it for political action. Noting the importance of adopting a gender perspective and the role of education, public outreach, and compelling and diverse narratives in this regard, the Board resolved to continue thinking about ways to initiate or strengthen such efforts.

38. Furthermore, the Board saw scope for the Secretary-General and the United Nations Secretariat and relevant entities, funds and programmes to expand on their advocacy efforts, including through a global and dedicated disarmament campaign, and more deliberately leverage their convening powers. In this context, it was underscored that a participatory and inclusive approach is vital, bringing in voices, experiences and perspectives that do not always find space or footing in international security discussions.

III. Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

39. The Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, acting in its role as the Board of Trustees of UNIDIR, met formally twice in 2022, on 8 February and 27 June. The first meeting was conducted virtually within a compressed time frame owing to the pandemic. The second was a hybrid meeting which was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York. In both instances, the Board was briefed by the Director of UNIDIR, Robin Geiss, and select UNIDIR staff on the implementation of the Institute's activities and on budgetary and human resource-related matters. The June meeting also featured presentations on the activities of the New York Liaison Office;

the Weapons of Mass Destruction and Space Security programmes (by James Reville); and the Gender and Disarmament Programme (by Renata Dalaqua). An interim informal meeting was held in April 2022 with available Board members. At the meeting, supplemental discussions were held with individual programme leads to review evolving areas of research.

40. During its February 2022 meeting, the Board recognized the continued resilience and agility of UNIDIR in 2021 and noted that, despite the continuing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of important milestones had been achieved. In an outcome attributed to the new and modest pilot presence of UNIDIR in New York, the year 2021 had seen the UNIDIR Director invited for the first time to formally brief the Security Council. The Director will report on the impact of the New York liaison presence at the meeting of the Board in June 2023. Finally, in 2021, the General Assembly approved the long-standing recommendation of the Board of Trustees to increase the regular budget subvention for UNIDIR. This will help foster institutional stability of UNIDIR and enhance its capacity to convene deliberations related to disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation and facilitate the informed participation of all Member States in those deliberations.

41. Trustees took note of the benefits, as outlined by the Director and the Deputy Director, of consolidating the UNIDIR research programme structure, establishing new multi-year interdisciplinary research strategies for all UNIDIR research programmes (in the period 2022–2025), and seeking to diversify the Institute's sources of funding.

42. In Board discussions with the Director, it was noted that continuous growth was unlikely to be sustained at the previous level (in the period 2018–2021) and that his continued emphasis on consolidation, prioritization and partnership would remain important. It was also noted that some donors have reduced their contributions owing to the uncertainties arising from the pandemic, while certain others were constrained by requirements to fund only official development assistance-eligible activities. While the latter requirements had resulted in a shortfall, the Director noted that this was offset mostly by a few larger-than-expected contributions from other donors. As a result, total income in 2021 amounted to 6.5 million United States dollars, a reduction of only 0.3 million dollars when compared with the figure for 2020. In 2021, expenditure grew by 0.6 million dollars to a total of 6.7 million dollars. The difference between income and expenditure was absorbed by a carry-forward of accumulated funds.

43. The Board took note of the alternative budget scenarios of UNIDIR for 2022: a conservative, scalable plan of 6.9 million dollars and an aspirational cost plan of 8.5 million dollars. It also took note of the renewed efforts of UNIDIR to effectively monitor and strengthen its financial and other key administrative data, enabling enhanced managerial oversight and decision-making.

44. The Board was briefed on the Institute's revamped resource mobilization strategy, which was timely, given that most of the large multi-year funding agreements of UNIDIR had ended in calendar year 2021 and inasmuch as a high level of the voluntary contributions it receives (more than 85 per cent) are earmarked. The Board commended the continuing efforts of UNIDIR to diversify its donor base and form new partnerships, including through an outreach to foundations, the private sector and individuals. Trustees took note of the ability of UNIDIR to secure funding from a philanthropic entity vetted through the United Nations Foundation and offered, individually and through the Board Chair, to champion the Institute's cause and strategically support its resource mobilization efforts.

45. The Board was briefed on two initiatives that are part of the UNIDIR four-year strategic framework: a workstream focusing on a future and foresight approach

allowing the Institute to explore the cross-programmatic disarmament landscape in ongoing and new project areas and the UNIDIR Academy for education and training, which serves as a platform for pooling together the Institute's various ongoing and future educational and capacity-building activities. The Board was encouraged by the expansion and enhancement of UNIDIR youth engagement to harness the power of next generation voices, which it had remarked on previously, and took note of plans to assess UNIDIR partnerships and research networks to fully maximize their impact and plans to further leverage and diversify its global expertise and research pool.

46. Trustees took note of the advanced discussions of UNIDIR with the United Nations University on the transition of a project entitled "Managing exits from armed conflict" which aligns with the UNIDIR mandate and its workplan in the area of conventional arms and ammunition. Trustees asked for a briefing at their June session on how UNIDIR partnerships are evolving and where there may be gaps and future opportunities. Trustees also discussed how UNIDIR could best demonstrate its impact, notably by tracking and showcasing its policy influence.

47. The Board acknowledged the consolidation of the UNIDIR programme structure and the scaling up of its outer space security-related work as a self-standing programme as of 2022. Trustees encouraged the Institute to continue supporting the international community in identifying pathways to reinvigorating multilateral arms control and disarmament in the face of a challenging international political and security environment. Given the breadth and complexity of the multilateral disarmament agenda, the Board stressed the need to remain focused on priorities and encouraged strategic partnerships.

48. On 28 April 2022, an informal intersessional board meeting was held in a virtual format, with heads of programmes providing Board members with an overview of new and priority areas of research and analysis. The discussion provided new members of the Board of Trustees in particular with an opportunity to engage with the UNIDIR leadership team and to benefit from an overview of the Institute's strategic orientation, programmes and workstreams. It was suggested that such briefings be integrated as part of onboarding for new members in future.

49. At its 27 June 2022 meeting, the Board considered and approved the 2023 proposed programme of work and financial plan. In this context, the Board took note of comments and recommendations on the draft Director's report from the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, areas of which the Board had already been seized. The Board and Director discussed his annual report and it was emphasized that in the current geopolitical environment, the role of UNIDIR as a provider of impartial research and a convener and enabler of discussions on delicate topics among States and its support for transparency-building measures are more crucial than ever.

50. The Board noted the addition of a new country donor in May 2022 which brings the total number from all continents to 27. In the context of a discussion on parameters for private sector engagement, the Board noted its interest in a presentation at a future meeting of the Board of Trustees on this topic.

51. The Director outlined his intention to prepare two budgets for UNIDIR operations: one would capture principal planned activities of UNIDIR, reflecting estimates of expected revenues; and the other, an aspirational budget, would include additional activities which the Institute would be keen to pursue should resources become available. The two budgets will enable UNIDIR to integrate fundraising into its outreach planning throughout the year and adjust its outputs to match resources received.

52. Trustees commended the efforts of UNIDIR to expand its outreach activities by holding an executive briefing in collaboration with the United Nations Office at

Geneva and a Discovery Day in collaboration with the United Nations library. The Board was also briefed on UNIDIR youth-focused activities, including successful implementation of its Graduate Professional Programme (GPP), Model UN and essay competition. Trustees expressed the need to focus continued attention on accessibility for GPP candidates so that a wider geographical pool of candidates could be given such an opportunity, which would have longer-term knock-on benefits for building wider regional capacity and interest in disarmament and arms control matters. The Institute's newly established peer-review process was also considered. The Board welcomed the new approach and in particular the upfront emphasis on how publications will be showcased.

53. Trustees were briefed on the evolving nature of the Institute's various collaborations and partnerships, which currently number just over 90 across six continents, although they are still heavily concentrated in Europe and Northern America. Board members noted with interest plans of UNIDIR to establish a global disarmament research network and, as management further defines its parameters, encouraged clear goals and priorities for research. The Board encouraged UNIDIR to leverage this modality to enhance diversity in research expertise. UNIDIR was asked to share a more comprehensive overview of its collaborations grouped by the Institute's priority areas of research and action. The Board discussed the need for clear parameters which would allow for a common two-way understanding of partnerships and collaborations.

54. The Board was briefed on the activities and initial impact of the New York Liaison Office. In its first year of operation, the position has helped to establish new avenues for cooperation with Member States and other parts of the United Nations system. The Board encouraged UNIDIR to continue this progress and to consider ways in which its current substantive briefings and orientation sessions can be made available to New York-based delegations. The Director noted that cost savings had been achieved by no longer renting office space (the officer is using a workspace at home). As the bulk of the work in New York is related to the Conventional Arms and Ammunition Programme, some 80 per cent of salary and operations are paid for by that element of the UNIDIR budget line. The remaining 20 per cent is covered by other programme and institutional funds.

55. Trustees were provided with detailed presentations on the UNIDIR space security programme and the disarmament, deterrence and arms control dialogue convened by the UNIDIR weapons of mass destruction programme. They acknowledged the planned growth in future research opportunities in both areas. Trustees encouraged UNIDIR to seek to continue and expand the disarmament, deterrence and arms control dialogue subject to funding as a valuable and practical format. The transversal nature of the UNIDIR Gender and Disarmament Programme was also reviewed, with a particular focus on current and future activities carried out with the Institute's Weapons of Mass Destruction, Space Security, Conventional Arms and Ammunition, and Security and Technology programmes, as well as with the Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone Project. Board members were encouraged by the progress being made by UNIDIR and emphasized the importance of continuing to track impacts.

56. Finally, the Director shared with Board members an initial draft vision for identifying, capturing and reporting on specific impacts and beneficiaries of the work of UNIDIR. Members of the Board of Trustees offered their reactions and encouraged further refinement of the framework. It was noted, recognizing that such a change would take time, that this will continue to be a focus area for UNIDIR in the near term. The Board will be provided with regular updates on progress.

IV. Future work and other matters

57. The Board will continue the programme of work in 2023, benefiting from the views of experts reflecting diversity in terms of backgrounds, expertise, nationalities, age and gender. The Board will present recommendations on the above-mentioned matters in the 2023 report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters to be presented at the eightieth session of the General Assembly.

Annex I**Summary of expert presentations at the seventy-seventh and seventy-eighth meetings of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters***Seventy-seventh meeting*

1. In his presentation to the Board at its seventy-seventh session, Nan Tian, Senior Researcher, Military Expenditure and Arms Production Programme at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, provided a quantitative overview of evolving spending trends. He noted that despite an initial drop at the end of the cold war, military spending has been steadily on the rise since the late 1990s and was estimated at 2 trillion United States dollars in 2020, with the top 15 biggest spenders representing over 80 per cent of the worldwide figure. Despite the overall economic downturn induced by the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Tian continued, military spending as part of gross domestic product (GDP), the so-called military burden, has increased to a global average of 2.4 per cent (up from 2.2 per cent), reflecting States' political desire to modernize and develop new weapons enabled by new technologies, inter alia, in response to perceived security threats. Mr. Tian emphasized that current data offered only a partial picture and reflected an underestimate of military spending owing to a lack of transparency and off-budget spending by some States.

2. Mr. Tian argued that to reverse the current upward trend and to provide incentives for States to look beyond military solutions, more should be done to counter the narrative that sustains an upward trend in military spending, including through evidence-based research into opportunity costs and identification of convincing arguments pointing to the benefits of redirecting spending to other policy areas such as sustainable development and climate action which enhance "human security".

3. Sam Perlo-Freeman, Research Coordinator at Campaign Against Arms Trade, United Kingdom, and Fellow at the World Peace Foundation, also addressed trend lines. Like Mr. Tian, Mr. Perlo-Freeman spoke to the drivers propelling State-based military spending, including perceived enhanced security threats, political positioning and growing economic capacities, notably in regions where commodity prices had enabled growth. He argued that there are perverse incentives and risks associated with military spending, including corruption where weak oversight and governance structures were prevalent, and mentioned the role of the "military-industrial complex" in this regard. Even where corruption was not an issue, Mr. Perlo-Freeman proposed that close ties between Governments and defence firms had often resulted in procurement decisions that might benefit industry but did not reflect actual needs. As a result, he said, rising military spending may exacerbate insecurity rather than mitigate it and stimulate an overreliance on military responses. Mr. Perlo-Freeman also stressed the detrimental impact of military activities on the environment and climate, including militaries' large carbon footprint.

4. Madeleine Rees, Secretary-General of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), and Ray Acheson of WILPF and Reaching Critical Will emphasized that there are strong interlinkages between military spending, militarization and climate change. They argued that military activities were important contributors to climate change and expressed their hope that efforts necessary to significantly reduce carbon emissions would inevitably lead to reductions in such activities. Stressing that the most significant security threat today is the destruction of the planet due to climate change, they argued that mobilization for urgent action was needed, with all policies – including military and security policies – reframed accordingly. In their view, old paradigms, institutions and structures had not delivered results.

5. Recalling the long-standing role of the women's movement in promoting social justice and gender equality as antidotes to militarism, Ms. Rees and Ms. Acheson

argued that a new narrative was needed, including application of feminist perspectives that sought to tackle systemic inequalities and violence. This included, in their view, recognizing that existing bodies such as the Security Council had not demonstrated a capacity to adapt to these threats (and should be abolished) and that the United Nations needed to pursue innovative and holistic strategies addressed by the “de-growth” movement, especially demilitarization, decarbonization, decolonization and disarmament. They argued that the United Nations should become more actively involved in, inter alia, researching the link between climate change and militarization, promoting divestment from structures that sustain violence and inequality and fostering greater collaboration across United Nations entities dealing with climate action, human rights, economics, disarmament and humanitarian action. They also suggested that the General Assembly was a viable alternative forum with respect to follow up on Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Seventy-eighth meeting

Panel 1: Threats and perceptions – the geostrategic landscape

6. Richard Gowan, UN Director at the International Crisis Group, provided a tour d’horizon of major global hotspots and shared his organization’s perspective on the current geopolitical context, including trust deficits. He argued that while there appears to be no direct linear relationship between military spending and levels of conflict (citing Africa as an example in this regard, he noted that military spending in that region has been relatively low at 2 per cent but that half of all active conflicts are located there, with the number having increased by 50 per cent over the last five years), the issue nonetheless raises significant concerns, not least because such spending appears to divert attention from non-military solutions to dispute resolution and displaces resources from sustainable development. Mr. Gowan noted that large military expenditure is further reinforcing strategic competition, and referring to East Asia, he observed that apparent spending increases by China and the United States of America are contributing to arms race-like dynamics in the region.

7. Mr. Gowan recommended placing emphasis on investments that tackle some of the underlying root issues that drive military spending, including in establishing or revitalizing military-to-military dialogue and confidence-building measures, with a view to rebooting conversations about various (regional) security architectures and transparency. He advised that countries need to consider the tools and assets being deployed to address security challenges, noting, for example, that internal domestic insurgencies may not be best addressed through robust deployment of military assets or at least not without their being accompanied by mediation and peacebuilding efforts that favour dialogue and investment in addressing local grievances. The same considerations are relevant for addressing the issue of local affiliates to transnational terrorist entities.

8. Fenella McGerty, Senior Fellow for Defence Economics at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, expanded on the broad regional dynamics and trends in military spending “supply and demand” and defence economics. She proposed use of three categories to forecast drivers and brakes, noting that they differ across regions and over time: (a) economic conditions, including inflation, fiscal policies, and desire of countries to bolster domestic defence industries; (b) strategic factors, including regional threats, desire to develop new technologies and maintaining a credible military force; and (c) political factors, including membership in alliances, national governance and public sentiment regarding military spending.

9. Ms. McGerty cautioned that rapid increases in military spending do not automatically lead to greater military capability (or security). Increased investment without a comprehensive plan that accounts for specific objectives and required capabilities risks wastage and inability of the military and the defence industry to absorb such investments. She believed that while at present it will be politically

challenging to advocate for reductions in military spending, the United Nations could play a role in stimulating greater transparency, encouraging the accompaniment of any increases by coherent plans, and facilitating confidence-building measures and dialogue with a view to addressing some of the strategic factors that may drive ill-considered military spending.

10. Wuyi Omitoogun, Senior Political Adviser at the African Union Liaison Office in the Sudan, shared his expertise on military spending and budgeting in Africa. He noted that while spending of Africa in absolute terms is small in comparison with that of other regions, in relative terms the figures are high. Trends and drivers underlying military spending in the continent included rising armed conflicts, regional rivalry, domestic insurgencies, constitutional changes in Governments and a perceived need for modernization of programmes.

11. Mr. Omitoogun argued that despite increases in military spending, the region has not become safer and that it is experiencing a resurgence of anti-government movements and growth in terrorist attacks. Part of the problem, he believed, is that the causes underlying violence and conflict, including social and economic needs, social exclusion and lack of basic education, are often left unaddressed. He recommended a complementary two-track approach, focused explicitly on enabling practices and principles of good governance for the adequate and effective management of resources and facilitating a process of reconceptualization of security and realignment of military spending in such a way as to tackle underlying drivers and systems of conflict and violence successfully.

12. Tong Zhao, Senior Fellow for Nuclear Policy at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, reflected on drivers of increased spending on military and weapons capabilities in the Asia-Pacific region and opportunities to mitigate arms racing, build confidence and create opportunities for disarmament and arms control efforts. More broadly, he noted that military spending alone does not tell a complete story, as countries face different economic, strategic and regional concerns and considerations which are continuously evolving.

13. Mr. Zhao identified three key areas of consideration for the region:

(a) The need to address the root causes exerting an influence on an increase in military spending, noting that information and perception gaps existing between States often underlie threat perceptions. As a result, the public, including government officials and policy experts, have increasingly divergent views on a wide range of basic factual issues, making it increasingly difficult for them to understand and talk to each other. This contributes to deep strategic distrust, which in turn contributes to upward levels of military spending;

(b) The lack of transparency, checks and balances, democratic accountability and public discussion as a contributing factor to a predominant narrative according to which national security is to be reached only through building greater military power;

(c) The adoption of hedging strategies and development of indigenous defence industries by many regional actors, as relations between certain States become more competitive and less predictable, with spending consequently increasing in the near to medium term. Technology-driven military competition, including with respect to hypersonic missiles, cyber offensive capabilities, space and counter-space technologies, artificial intelligence and lethal autonomous weapons systems, constitutes another driver. Mr. Zhao concluded that often, this means that the risks for increasing misunderstanding, incidents and inadvertent conflict escalation are overlooked.

14. Mr. Zhao proposed several mitigating measures that United Nations entities could take (a) studying prevailing information and perception gaps with a view to making this an issue to be addressed and discussed at global high-level official dialogues; (b) promoting arms control and disarmament measures through training

and education programmes with a view to building countries' capacities and increase public awareness; and (c) organizing official and expert-level dialogues and studies on regional arms control regimes and options, including on technical and policy feasibility of concrete arms control and confidence-building proposals.

Panel 2: (Re)framing security threats and solutions

15. Jennifer Blanke, currently non-executive Director at the African Risk Capacity Group, provided a political economy analysis of current development and environmental trends and their relationship to arms control and disarmament. She recalled that the blueprint States have agreed on tackling the negative externalities of the world's exponential, albeit unevenly distributed, economic growth, in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. While Sustainable Development Goal 16 deals with peace and security, the Goals do not directly reflect the link between military spending and development, which she believed should be looked at in a mutually reinforcing way, asserting that there can be little prosperity without security and little security without prosperity. Thought of in these terms, investment in sustainable development is also security spending, she said. In this regard, she noted the potentially positive effects of military research and development on spurring (technological) innovation or productivity enhancements, which in turn can have positive spillover effects on development.

16. Ms. Blanke emphasized that investments in sustainable development through spending on education, health, infrastructure, and sustainable energy reinforce human security. She saw a leading role for the United Nations in fostering a better understanding of these linkages, including by enabling exchanges and collaboration between experts in the security and development fields with a view to nurturing a holistic and coherent understanding of joint challenges and solutions.

17. Ruth Carlitz, Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Amsterdam, shared the findings presented in her recent paper prepared for the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), which analyses military spending vis-à-vis human security spending, paying specific attention to policies designed to benefit women and girls and trends in conflict-affected countries. She concluded that countries classified as fragile and conflict-affected have tended to spend relatively more on defence than on social protection and gender-responsive policies, with the portion being more than twice the portion spent on health and education, in contrast with countries not so classified. She noted that during the budget implementation phase, spending on defence tends to rise relative to other sectors, with low-income countries overspending their defence budgets by 5 per cent, while being prone to underspending for sectors such as health and education.

18. Ms. Carlitz believed that a lack of transparency in many countries constitutes a significant obstacle to adequately assessing military spending, with reliance on aggregate data potentially leading to perverse consequences (notably if donors condition aid to reduced levels of military spending, which previously has led some Governments to adjust their budgeting processes). Moreover, current data rely heavily on Governments and their discretion in respect of what is classified and reported as military spending. She believed that various steps could be taken to improve transparency and the availability of data, including encouraging States to report into the military expenditures database, exploring ways to integrate military spending into the framework of Sustainable Development Goals-related reporting (pointing to a forthcoming Stockholm International Peace Research Institute-United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (SIPRI-UNSCAR) pilot), enhancing public demands for transparency and justifications for off-budget spending and encouraging a greater level of research into budgetary decision-making, paying specific attention to trade-offs, decision makers and influence, including ways in which women's participation impacts budget outcomes.

19. Adem Yavuz Elveren, Associate Professor of Economics, History and Political Science at Fitchburg State University, presented the key findings of his recent research for UN-Women on the correlation between militarization and gender equality. He noted that, overall, literature shows that military spending crowds out social spending, increases income inequality, and that increasing the representation of women parliamentarians often leads to more spending on social issues, including health. His own research demonstrated that there is a clear link between militarization and gender inequality in both wartime and peacetime and that higher levels of democracy and stronger economic development are key mitigating factors. He consequently argued that reducing military spending is likely to reduce gender inequality; democratic governance models should be improved as a means of mitigating the negative impacts of military spending; and attention should be paid in academic and (economic) policy discourse to applying a so-called gender lens to military spending, which demonstrates that higher levels of spending have a negative impact on gender equality which further down the line inevitably negatively impacts economic growth.

20. Anthony Clayton, Professor of Caribbean Sustainable Development at the University of the West Indies, emphasized the need to convince policymakers to reconsider current definitions of security, which had failed to adequately address current and future threats that were socioeconomic and environmental in nature and did not necessarily lend themselves to military responses. Noting that global military expenditures had increased every year since 2015 and had reached an all-time high of 2 trillion United States dollars in 2021, Mr. Clayton argued that such investments were not well positioned to address climate-induced risks such as resource-based disputes and forced migration. Mr. Clayton advocated for conversations that focus on accurately diagnosing and positioning the broad range of pressing non-traditional security problems. Such an approach, he believed, could provide an equally useful lens through which to examine military spending and how it fits into the broader debate on reducing security risks, emphasizing more cost-effective approaches that focus on adaptation (adopting innovative approaches to meeting food, energy and infrastructure stresses) rather than defence (closing borders, securing supplies). He argued that such efforts could be resourced, for example, by repurposing existing military spending, tackling tax havens and eliminating fossil fuel subsidies and fast fashion.

Panel 3: Understanding what has been done by the United Nations previously

21. Michael Spies, Political Affairs Officer at the Office for Disarmament Affairs, provided a historical survey of efforts within the United Nations to reduce military spending, including parallel efforts to develop means for sharing information and comparing military spending between States. The United Nations Report on Military Expenditures was discussed as a vehicle for promoting greater transparency on military matters which was underutilized with Member States sharing information neither uniformly nor consistently. Mr. Spies also noted shortcomings in the United Nations data-collection and analytics capacity in this context, although efforts were under way to remedy this situation. Mr. Spies recommended several steps that could be taken at various levels to rethink military spending, including through commissioning a study (or series of studies) that would update the existing political, economic, social and environmental consequences of military expenditures, in furtherance of work undertaken at the request of the General Assembly in the mid-1980s (which would account for new issues such as private military companies, climate change and gender inequality). Such an exercise, alongside work by the Office for Disarmament Affairs to improve the accessibility and comparability of official data on military spending, including through seeking, on a pilot basis, to render those data comparable between States and over time, could generate an audience for the issue. Mr. Spies also suggested that reconsideration could be given to developing methodologies for quantifying the amount of financial savings that can be realized from the implementation of disarmament agreements which could ultimately result in an international funding facility for releasing saved resources for sustainable development purposes.

Annex II**Members of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters 2022**

Leena Al-Hadid

Ambassador

Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations and other international organizations in Vienna

Nabeela Abdulla Al-Mulla

Distinguished lecturer at the American University of Kuwait and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Kuwait College of Science and Technology

Kuwait City

Lewis Dunn

Former United States Ambassador to the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Elissa Golberg (Chair)

Ambassador of Canada to the Republic of Italy, Ambassador designate to Albania, San Marino and Malta, and Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations agencies based in Rome

Jean-Marie Guéhenno

Inaugural Kent visiting professor in conflict resolution at the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University

New York

Mary Kaldor

Emeritus Professor of Global Governance and Director of the Conflict Research Programme in LSE IDEAS at the London School of Economics and Political Science
London

Marina Kaljurand

Member of the European Parliament

Brussels

Anton Khlopkov

Director of the Center for Energy and Security Studies

Moscow

Li Chijiang

Vice-President and Secretary-General of the China Arms Control and Disarmament Association

Beijing

Zia Mian

Senior Research Scholar and Co-Director

Program in Science and Global Security at the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs of Princeton University

Princeton, New Jersey

Amina Mohamed

Cabinet Secretary for Sports, Culture and Heritage of Kenya

Nairobi

Marty Natalegawa

Former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia

Eghosa Osaghae
Director General of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs
Lagos

Shorna-Kay Richards
Ambassador of Jamaica to Japan
Tokyo

Margot Wallström
Former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden

Robin Geiss (ex officio member)
Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
Geneva
