Preparing for the 2013 session of the First Committee

Reaching Critical Will

The United Nations General Assembly’s First Committee is often used as a forum for member states to express stale and repeated positions on every topic related to disarmament and international security and to table resolutions that change little in substance or in result from year to year.

To most civil society actors, the month of October could be used more efficiently. Therefore, Reaching Critical Will has produced this briefing book to highlight a number of current disarmament issues and suggest ways forward.

This briefing book will give the reader a quick overview of the state of play on some of the most pressing issues that will be addressed at this year’s First Committee. In addition, it will also provide recommendations for governments from some of the main civil society coalitions working on these topics.

The non-governmental groups that have contributed to this book work on many different issues and weapon systems from a variety of perspectives, but they all share one thing in common: the desire to increase human security by reducing the impact of weapons through the development of international norms.

The UN is a place where governments of the world are supposed to come together to solve collective challenges and make progress on the pressing issues of our time. Unfortunately, UN member states often fail to achieve these goals due to outdated concepts of security. In terms of disarmament in particular, governments seem to be constrained by antiquated methods of work and traditional approaches to security issues that do not reflect the realities of the 21st century.

But people all over the world, and indeed many delegations at the UN, seek true progress and the enhancement of human security. We hope that this briefing book will provide inspiration and alternatives as we engage in the important work ahead.