CIVIL SOCIETY STATEMENT ON HUMANITARIAN DISARMAMENT

First Committee on Disarmament and International Security
UN General Assembly

October 17, 2018

Thank you, President.

Many of the civil society campaigns and organizations you will hear from today operate under the larger umbrella of humanitarian disarmament. Whatever the focus of their work, these groups share the common goal of preventing and remediating arms-inflicted human suffering through the establishment of norms.

Humanitarian disarmament is a people-centered approach to disarmament, which focuses on civilian protection rather than traditional concepts of national security. It addresses adverse effects on humans, including gendered impacts, as well as damage to the environment. Humanitarian disarmament prevents harm through prohibitions or restrictions on production, trade, stockpiling, and use of weapons. It also encompasses remedial measures, or positive obligations, which include requirements to assist victims, clear contaminated areas, and implement risk reduction education programs.

Much of humanitarian disarmament’s success is attributable to the inclusiveness of its process. Civil society, a driving force behind this approach, works in close partnerships with like-minded states and international organizations. Survivors raise awareness of the harm they have experienced and inform discussions about how to deal with it.

Over the past twelve months, humanitarian disarmament has celebrated many milestones including key anniversaries of four international treaties and two Nobel Peace Prizes. Efforts to create additional norms are underway.

This confluence of achievements has spotlighted the power of a cooperative process to create new standards that can in turn save lives. It has also inspired conversations about how best to advance humanitarian disarmament’s overarching aim. Dozens of civil society advocates examined their common approach last weekend at the annual Humanitarian Disarmament Forum. Harvard Law School’s Armed Conflict and Civilian Protection Initiative recently created a new venue for humanitarian disarmament leaders to reflect on the state of the field and strategize about the way forward.

In this vein, we encourage you to heed the civil society calls you hear today. By joining us in adopting a humanitarian approach to disarmament, you can help maximize the protection of civilians from the consequences of arms and arms-related activities.

Thank you.

Statement delivered by: Alma Taslidžan Al-Osta, Humanity & Inclusion
Statement endorsed by the following:

**Global Coalitions**
- Campaign to Stop Killer Robots
- Control Arms
- International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons
- International Campaign to Ban Landmines-Cluster Munition Coalition
- International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons
- International Network on Explosive Weapons
- Toxic Remnants of War Network

**Other Organizations**
- African Council of Religious Leaders-Religions for Peace
- Armed Conflict and Civilian Protection Initiative, Harvard Law School
- Article 36
- Campaña Colombiana Contra Minas
- Center for Peace Education-Miriam College
- Human Rights Watch
- Humanity & Inclusion
- Mines Action Canada
- PAX
- Seguridad Humana en Latinoamérica y el Caribe (SEHLAC)
- Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom