

**Joint Statement on the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Program**

**80th session of the UN General Assembly First Committee**

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On behalf of Bulgaria, Cape Verde, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Guatemala, Hungary, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, Portugal, Senegal, South Africa, The Maldives, Uruguay, and my own country Brazil, I would like to deliver a joint statement on the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Program.

The Program is a foundational initiative that fosters international peace and security by equipping young diplomats from around the world, particularly those from developing countries, with an in-depth understanding of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. By emphasizing experiential learning and engagement with experts from different regions, the programme ensures that participants return home with technical knowledge and a renewed commitment to advancing global disarmament objectives. We therefore commend the ODA's ongoing efforts to implement the programme.

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the only time in history that nuclear weapons have been used, against the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However, many young people today are growing up without fully understanding the grave dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction. Furthermore, new threats have emerged, including the illicit trafficking of small arms, advances in technology, and international terrorism. In this context, education is becoming increasingly vital, and initiatives such as the Disarmament Fellowship Program must be given stronger support.

The Program was established by SSOD-I, and the General Assembly later mandated its continuation in recognition of the positive outcomes achieved since its inception. The Program's contributions are also acknowledged in the Secretary-General's report on disarmament and non-proliferation education, and in the biennial resolution on the "United Nations Disarmament Fellowship, Training, and Advisory Services," adopted without a vote.

The UN Disarmament Fellowship Program holds particular significance for developing countries. It allows future leaders to experience international best

practices and diplomatic engagement firsthand. It also broadens the Fellows' perspectives on the disarmament and non-proliferation regime by presenting institutions from developing countries and thus providing examples of successful diverse models. This was the case with the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC), which had been included in the Fellow's itinerary since 2019 but was not part of the current year's Program.

In light of ongoing efforts to reform the UN system, we emphasize that the program's strength lies in its experiential learning focus. This approach fosters dialogue and a nuanced understanding that cannot be fully replicated through virtual platforms. Study visits, especially those diversified across different continents, enhance the capability of Fellows to navigate complex security challenges in their regions. A purely virtual experience would deprive new generations of the program's main objective of promoting international peace and security and would not contribute to improving the effectiveness of the UN system.

I thank you.