

**United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs' (UNODA) contribution to the United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education pursuant to A/RES/77/52**

1) Disarmament Education Strategy

The Office for Disarmament Affairs continued to build upon its work to promote disarmament and non-proliferation education, including by implementing the recommendations contained in the 2002 United Nations study on the matter. These efforts have been strengthened significantly through UNODA's Disarmament Education Strategy, launched in December 2022. The purpose of the Disarmament Education Strategy is to provide a common framework for UNODA's disarmament education efforts that aims at: 1) Strengthening the coherence and coordination of UNODA's educational initiatives through a clear articulation of the scope and focus of UNODA's work that is shared across the Office; 2) Enhancing and diversifying partnerships and target audiences to broaden the global impact of UNODA's work; and 3) Promoting greater sustainability and reach of UNODA's disarmament education work and providing a foundation for targeted resource mobilization efforts and stronger internal and external accountability. Ongoing activities under the Strategy are slated to continue through and beyond 2024 at both regional and global levels, in alignment with strategic and partnership priorities of the Office and with the expectation of developing a robust programmatic offer that is responsive to the evolving requirements and needs in disarmament and non-proliferation education.

2) Education & Outreach activities

For the forty-seventh consecutive year since 1976, the Office published the United Nations Disarmament Yearbook, providing a comprehensive and objective account of the year's developments and trends in the field of multilateral disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control (vol. 47: 2022). For the fourth time, the United Nations Disarmament Yearbook was made available on an interactive website ([yearbook.unoda.org](http://yearbook.unoda.org)), offering easy access for diplomats, technical experts, journalists and other readers. The Office, furthermore, prepared different types of written and audiovisual educational materials. For instance, the Vienna Office – in its capacity as UNODA's disarmament education hub – produced multilingual (English, German) posters, information sheets, postcards, flyers, interactive games and short informational videos on, *inter alia*, linkages between disarmament and other frameworks including the Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals, human rights and gender equality.

In the reporting period, UNODA organized a wide variety of outreach activities to foster a better understanding of the work of the Office and promote active engagement in disarmament efforts by diverse audiences. In particular, the Office facilitated the visit of high school, undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate students and civil society groups, both in-person and online, to expose them to the mandate and work of the Office. The Office extensively utilized social media campaigns to promote and amplify the reach of various education initiatives. The Office maintained a robust presence on all major platforms, with both Headquarters and regional offices and centres actively engaging while providing more localized updates. This strategic use of social media ensured that UNODA's initiatives received widespread visibility and support across diverse geographic regions, enhancing impact and engagement with various communities especially the younger audience.

The Vienna Office hosted several events under its flagship *Vienna Conversation Series* dialogue platform to raise awareness about disarmament issues, as well as to promote and

facilitate dialogue among the disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control community, other relevant stakeholders and interested audiences, including diplomats, youth, academia, civil society, the private sector and media. Between June 2022 and May 2024, a total of seven such events were organized, most in hybrid format, covering a broad range of issues, including the human cost of weapons, the Summit of the Future, and the role of networks in advancing inclusive disarmament processes. The events engaged constituencies of all genders and various age groups, with each event bringing together participants in-person and online from across all regional groups.

Several of these events have also been added to UNODA's *Disarmament Today* podcast series. The Vienna Office partnered with a variety of stakeholders in the holding of these events to ensure inclusive discussions and diversity on panels, and benefited from financial support from Austria and the Republic of Korea in hosting events in the series. These events also often placed the voices of youth leaders at the centre of disarmament discussions by providing them speaking opportunities. Furthermore, the Vienna Office promoted awareness and better understanding of disarmament issues and their cross-cutting importance among the public through interactive exhibitions. Specifically, the Office participated in local initiatives, such as the Human Rights Fair in June 2023 and the Long Night of Research in May 2024, and held thematic exhibitions to mark Disarmament Week in October 2023 and the International Day for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Awareness (IDNPA) in March 2024. Educational printed materials, short informational videos, interactive games, and opinion polls were featured at these events.

In an effort to promote disarmament in the broader context of human rights, the Vienna Office participated in an Infoscreen campaign through the use of facts and figures and quizzes displayed on buses, trams and at public transport stations in Austria. Moreover, the Office, in cooperation with the United Nations Information Service (UNIS) Vienna, was involved in two *Ciné-ONU* documentary film screenings and panel discussions: in October 2023 on the occasion of the International Day of Non-Violence, addressing the enduring impact of Mahatma Gandhi's message of non-violence; and in March 2024, marking the International Day for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Awareness (IDNPA) and raising awareness on the importance of nuclear disarmament.

As a forum for informal dialogue, in 2023 the Conference on Disarmament and Conference Support Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs introduced *the Geneva Disarmament Conversation Series*, with the financial support of Switzerland. As of May 2024, topics discussed at these informal events have included the "New Agenda for Peace", "Human-centered disarmament", "Developments in artificial intelligence", "Coordination in addressing biorisks", "Weapons and their environmental impact", "The New Agenda for Peace: disarmament and human rights", "Military expenditures: drivers, human costs and prospects for future arms control" and "Protection of the environment in armed conflict: a Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) case study".

In New York, several events were organized, especially for educators. For instance, in November 2022, a group of public high school teachers located across New York city participated in a workshop, organized by Hibakusha Stories and Youth Arts New York in partnership with UNODA, about disarmament education and nuclear disarmament. Moreover, in March 2023 and 2024, a group from Nagasaki Higashi High School met with the Office to discuss the student's Joint Peace Declaration. In April 2024, UNODA participated and provided a keynote speech to the Middlebury Institute's Critical Issues Forum, an annual event focusing on engaging, educating, and empowering high school students, who will become the leaders of tomorrow contributing toward building a peaceful nuclear weapons-free world.

The Office for Disarmament Affairs' Regional Centres delivered a number of strategic and wide-reaching activities to promote and advance ODA's disarmament education strategy and outcomes.

The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) delivered numerous national and (sub)regional webinars and roundtable discussions on different disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control topics on, *inter alia*, illicit firearms trafficking, gender mainstreaming in small arms control and armed violence prevention and reduction frameworks to representatives from different public sectors, as well as civil society organizations from the Latin American and Caribbean region. In total, 16 virtual and hybrid activities were conducted to enhance awareness and knowledge on disarmament and arms control, and which contributed to translate global commitments into laws, policies and programmes at the regional and national levels. Out of the 570 participants, 271 were women.

UNLIREC has also led outreach campaigns and produced educational videos and infographics through its social media accounts aimed at increasing knowledge and awareness of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control topics, instruments and frameworks, especially those with particular relevance to the region, such as the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap, for which such a video was produced in the lead up to the Annual Meeting of States of the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap in November 2023.

The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD) delivered a flagship activity entitled the "Disarmament Toolkit 2023" online training course, a joint initiative between the UNRCPD and the Prajnya Trust over 2023-2024. The course was delivered over six days and brought together participants from UN agencies, academia, civil society, and international organizations. The contents of the course specifically aimed to foster a gender-inclusive approach to disarmament and covered all the substantive mandate areas of the Office. Out of the 75 participants, 43 were women.

UNRCPD also conducted a number of bespoke events to promote disarmament education. For instance, on the occasion of the 2023 International Day of Peace (21 September 2023), the UNRCPD team interacted with secondary-school students at the British School in Kathmandu about the importance of sustainable peace through disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

UNRCPD also actively sought out avenues to build partnerships to increase the reach of UNODA's disarmament education outputs. In Nepal, this involved developing a partnership between the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, UNESCO's Resident Representative, and the Nepal Institute for International Cooperation and Engagement. This partnership resulted in the hosting of the first of eight joint roundtables exploring "Nepal's Chance for Peace in the New Multipolar World" in February 2024. It also involved facilitating dialogues with civil society organizations, academics, and students from countries in the region on the work of UNODA and lessons learned.

The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC) advanced disarmament education by providing continuing technical assistance to African Member States. This assistance included capacity-building workshops, webinars, training initiatives, advocacy, research, and information sharing, all aimed at enhancing disarmament and arms control awareness while highlighting the interconnections between sustainable development and security issues. To reach the widest possible audience, UNREC collaborated with various partners including the African Union, regional economic communities, intergovernmental

organizations, other United Nations entities, as well as numerous academic and research institutions and civil society organizations.

On the occasion of the International Day of Peace on 21 September 2023, UNREC organized an interactive debate with Senior students at Cours Lumiere High School in Lomé aimed at engaging students on arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament in Africa and the proactive role citizen can play to help curb the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

On 24 October 2023, UNREC organized a public information and sensitization on peace and disarmament at the second largest market of Lomé on the occasion of the United Nations Day alongside other UN entities.

### 3) E-learning & Educational resources

The Disarmament Education Dashboard, UNODA's global online learning platform providing free courses on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, continued to attract users from all over the world. As of May 2024, the Disarmament Education Dashboard has over 27,000 users, representing an increase of 16,000 users since May 2022. In terms of gender distribution of Dashboard users, as of 31 May 2024, 51.27% of users are female, 48.19% of users are male, and 0.54% identify as other. The average user's age is 30. In terms of geographical distribution, 31.96% of users are based in Asia, 25.78% are based in Europe, 22.03% in Africa, 18.58% in the Americas and 1.65% in Oceania.

The Dashboard continued to undergo upgrades, aiming to stay up to date with the latest technological developments. Improvements optimized the online training course creation and management tools to respond to the growth in use by UNODA's regional centres and substantive branches. As for users, the primary focus has been on enhancing the learning experience by increasing interactivity and active engagement with content.

Between June 2022 and May 2024, seven new public e-learning courses were added to the existing course catalogue, reaching a total of 32 self-paced courses. The new courses include, *inter alia*, "The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its Protocols", and "Gender-mainstreaming Small Arms Control Training Course" (available in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish and developed in cooperation with UNITAR). In addition to these public courses, closed courses and modules have been developed for specific audiences. Specifically, UNLIREC has developed, *inter alia*, a Specialized Course for Prosecutors on Firearms Investigations from a Gender Perspective (FIGPP). Moreover, new learning modules have been developed and existing ones have been updated and revamped in the context of the Office's new "Youth Leader Fund for a World without Nuclear Weapons" innovative learning programme, launched in December 2023 with funding from Japan. Furthermore, the Resolution 1540 (2004) training course is now available in all UN official languages, expanding its accessibility and reach.

### 4) Fellowships and Youth Programmes

Meaningful youth education and engagement remains a key priority for the Office. In the reporting period, the Office continued to implement existing youth initiatives and fellowship programmes under the flagship "Youth4Disarmament Initiative", the "Youth for Biosecurity Fellowship", and the "United Nations Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament", while introducing new initiatives and training programmes, including *inter alia*, the "Youth Leader Fund for a World without Nuclear Weapons".

Through tailored disarmament education efforts, the Office continues to equip young people with the knowledge and leadership skills to advance disarmament and non-proliferation goals. These efforts have been further reinforced through the Disarmament Education Strategy and the Office's prioritization of work on expanding efforts to engage younger audiences through broader peace education initiatives and non-formal and informal education opportunities.

Under the Youth4Disarmament initiative, from 2022 to 2024, the Office conducted annual training programmes with global cohorts of youth on the linkages between disarmament and other areas, including the Leaders4Tomorrow, Leaders2Future workshop series as well as the second edition of the United Nations Youth Champions for Disarmament Training Programme. The Office continued to advance meaningful youth participation by also providing an array of activities that used art, writing and physical activity as expressive mediums to engage young people of diverse interests and backgrounds to participate in disarmament efforts.

In 2022 and 2023, the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Programme continued to promote expertise in disarmament in Member States, particularly in developing countries, and to provide twenty-five young diplomats annually with knowledge and skills to enhance their professional competence. Through a combination of online learning, research, briefings, simulation exercises and study visits, the Fellows were introduced to the disarmament machinery, the disarmament fora based in Geneva, Vienna, the Hague and New York, and relevant inter-governmental processes and stakeholders.

Since 2019, the Youth for Biosecurity Initiative has aimed to increase youth participation in the context of the Biological Weapons Convention. Initiated as an annual workshop on biosecurity diplomacy, the program received a major upgrade in 2023 with the launch of the first edition of the Youth for Biosecurity Fellowship. In March 2024, the Office for Disarmament Affairs launched the second edition of this Fellowship, receiving a record number of applications. Having engaged over 100 young scientists since its inception, the initiative grew through strategic partnerships with key existing youth networks and harnessed youth mobilization during meetings of the Convention by creating vehicles for youth voices to be heard.

Established in 2022, the UN-Singapore Cyber Fellowship holds biannual training sessions for senior government officials in the field of ICT and international security from policy, diplomatic, legal, technical and other specialisations. Week-long training sessions feature roundtables and panels on recent ICT and international security developments, trends, risks and opportunities, as well as introductions to UN processes, cyber diplomacy, international law and other issues. Participants engage in on-site visits to universities, companies and national utility service providers. The course further includes crisis communications workshops and an interactive scenario-based exercise to put knowledge gained into practice. As of April 2024, a total of 96 fellows have participated in the programme, of which 42 were women.

The Office launched, in May 2023 and with the generous support of Japan, the "Youth Leader Fund for a World Without Nuclear Weapons", a new learning programme aimed at equipping 100 young participants from all over the world with the knowledge, skills, and network to join global efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons. Participants learn through interactive online components involving subject matter and skills trainings as well as engagement with diverse experts through live webinars, followed by a study tour to Hiroshima and Nagasaki for 50 participants. The programme will continue through 2030, with new cohorts joining every two years, including cross-cohort mentoring and regional-level activities. The first cohort in 2023 comprised of 55% females, 42% males and 3% identified as other.

The Office continued offering opportunities for young professionals to build professional experience in multilateral disarmament. Between June 2022 and May 2024, 21 JPOs and 6 Youth United Nations Volunteers joined the Office in New York, Geneva and Vienna, as well as in the Regional Centres. In addition, the Office trained 42 graduate students in New York, Geneva and Vienna as well as Regional Centres through the United Nations internship programme while also continuing to offer virtual internships, which were introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic.