U.S. Views on Promoting Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education

“Requests the Secretary-General to prepare a report reviewing the results of the implementation of the recommendations and possible new opportunities for promoting disarmament and non-proliferation education, and to submit it to the General Assembly at its seventy-ninth session”

The United States fully supports the resolution on this topic and has been pleased to co-sponsor it. We greatly appreciate Mexico’s continued leadership on this resolution and related efforts to promote disarmament and nonproliferation education, a priority we share. The United States remains committed to promoting and expanding access to disarmament and nonproliferation education to ensure the next generation of leaders have the tools and experience – as well as the opportunity to share new perspectives and innovative ideas – to strengthen global security and pursue our shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons. We are also very pleased to note that the United States co-sponsored Nigeria’s 2022 UN Disarmament Fellowship, Training and Advisory Services resolution; was the original co-sponsor of the resolution and continues to participate in and support Kyrgyzstan’s International Day for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Awareness; and has prioritized support for related efforts since then. The United States has also been a proud supporter of the UNGA Resolution on “Women, Disarmament, Arms Control, and Nonproliferation” since its first introduction at the UNGA First Committee in 2010. We will continue supporting efforts, including those related to promoting disarmament and nonproliferation education, that advance women’s participation in peace and security processes and integrate gender perspectives in foreign policy and national security decision-making.

U.S. commitment to disarmament and nonproliferation education is supported at the highest levels. For example, when the G7 leaders, including President Biden, met in Hiroshima last year, they issued the G7 Leaders’ Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament. This statement underscored the importance of disarmament and nonproliferation education and outreach, welcomed many initiatives supported by G7 members, and encouraged other leaders, youth, and people from around the world to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki to raise and sustain awareness of the realities of nuclear weapons use. In April of this year, the United States joined other G7 members in issuing the G7 Non-Proliferation
Directors Group statement, which reinforced our joint commitment to implementing long-term solutions to ensure that knowledge in the field of nonproliferation, arms control and disarmament does not get lost and that the next generation of experts is well-trained and provided with career opportunities. This statement also underscored G7 Leaders’ shared commitment to encouraging young professionals to enter the field and for mid-level professionals to further improve their skills, highlighted our collective support for global efforts to enhance education and professional development, and noted the importance of the International Day for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Awareness, to continually engaging youth globally.

The United States has also promoted national and global disarmament and nonproliferation education and professional development in many other important ways, such as regional and cross-regional, cross-discipline, and multigenerational networks (U.S.-Black Sea Nonproliferation Professionals Exchange, Center for Nonproliferation Studies Visiting Fellows, Black Sea Women in Nuclear Network (BSWN) and expanding networks in other regions). Across these and other efforts, the United States is committed to promoting the participation of under-represented groups, including women, which provide critical perspectives into addressing the most difficult security challenges.

In October 2023, the U.S. Department of State hosted the Timbie Forum, which provided an opportunity for representatives from universities, NGOs, international organizations, and the government to discuss the most pressing issues facing the disarmament and nonproliferation architectures today. This forum increased awareness of current priorities and challenges, fostered new ideas, and brought new voices into nonproliferation and disarmament discussions to reduce the threat posed by WMD and other unconventional weapons. We are planning the next iteration of this event, to sustain conversation at this important intersection of the field.

Since 2021, the United States has also been an active participant in the P5 Young Professionals’ Network. This forum for dialogue encourages new thinking on nuclear risk reduction, among other issues, by representatives of the five NPT nuclear weapon states. It is increasingly important for the next generation of P5 professionals to engage, build relationships, exchange perspectives, and develop
new ideas for addressing shared nonproliferation and disarmament challenges in the future, and we look forward to continuing to support this initiative.

U.S. government outreach on disarmament and nonproliferation to NGOs, universities, and other public institutions is another important U.S. priority and effort that we encourage all States to undertake. Over the past year alone, the Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security and other senior officials under her leadership have delivered remarks, participated in panels, and contributed in other ways to dozens of events that have supported disarmament and nonproliferation education. Earlier this year, for example, U/S of State Jenkins participated in a roundtable discussion at the Belfer Center on promoting responsible military use of artificial intelligence and autonomy; met with students from Syracuse University to discuss current U.S. priorities on NATO, nonproliferation, and disarmament; engaged with the Atlanta Council on International Relations and the Georgia Institute of Technology; and contributed to other important efforts open to the public. Other senior officials from the State Department, Department of Defense, Department of Energy, National Security Council, and other agencies also continued to lead other valuable outreach and engagement on nonproliferation and disarmament education efforts to the private sector and international community, and we look forward to continuing these and other important related efforts.

Officials from the U.S. Government also regularly meet with and provide information and mentorship to interns, university and graduate students, and early-career NGO experts. The U.S. Department of State, for example, currently hosts nearly forty interns and fellows in its Bureaus of Arms Control, Deterrence, and Stability, International Security and Nonproliferation, and Political-Military Affairs, as well as other developmental positions, working a wide range of nonproliferation and disarmament priorities. In addition to contributing to their assigned offices’ missions, these early-career professionals learn about the range of functions that contribute to nonproliferation and disarmament policy, whether by visiting the National and Nuclear Risk Reduction Center, the Daily Press Briefing, other agencies, or speaking with State Department leadership. These efforts promote important opportunities to gain valuable experience, provide critical support to advancing current priorities, and bring new and innovative ideas into strengthening efforts to address shared global nonproliferation and disarmament priorities. Other U.S. government agencies also provide important
leadership on other valuable internship and development opportunities that support these efforts.

The United States also recognizes the importance of disarmament and nonproliferation education in the context of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review process, including Action 22 from the 2010 NPT Review Conference’s Final Document. We wish to underscore that the NPT review process has also addressed the need for transparency, including through the growing practice of States submitting national reports on their NPT-related commitments, as called for in the consensus recommendations agreed to from the 2010 and 2000 NPT Review Conferences. The 2022 Review Conference set up a Working Group to consider ways to strengthen the review process, including through measures to improve transparency and accountability. Virtually all States Parties were ready to endorse a recommendation for interactive discussion of national reports as a new mechanism for transparency and accountability. We encourage this year’s Preparatory Committee to reconsider and adopt this and other recommendations from the Working Group. This recommendation will support global efforts to increase transparency, information sharing, and accountability, among other related and important priorities, and will support global nonproliferation and disarmament education efforts by making this information available to the multigenerational experts and practitioners.

The United States also greatly appreciates UNODA’s Disarmament Fellowship, which provides an opportunity for young practitioners to learn about the substance of this field and build an international network that serves as a backbone for future diplomacy. Since the program’s establishment in 1978, numerous U.S. Government leaders/experts have addressed and supported the Fellows, and fourteen American representatives have had the opportunity to benefit from the fellowship. I know that many U.S. and other participants have gone on to represent their countries in important roles relevant to this field. We thank UNODA for maintaining this key effort.

Additionally, the United States recognizes the important contribution of technical and non-governmental expertise. The U.S. Department of State promotes nuclear disarmament verification research through the Key Verification Assets Fund, commonly known as the V-Fund, which broadly supports research inside and outside of government, both policy and technical in nature, with the objective of developing new technologies in support of verification of existing and future arms
control, nonproliferation, and disarmament requirements. UNIDIR, which also benefits from U.S. support, is another example of the benefit we all gain when expertise outside of governments is brought to bear.

The United States has and will continue to highlight that issues as complex and challenging as nonproliferation and disarmament require creativity and innovation from upcoming generations to resolve. We must continue our support for activities that promote the development of critical thinking skills, help us cultivate the talent and creativity of experts outside of governments, and enable us to recruit the next generation of experts to drive the work forward. This is a priority for the United States, and we look forward to other ideas and perspectives on how we can, collectively, best support this goal.

The United States believes the Secretary-General’s report could provide insight into existing efforts to promote disarmament and nonproliferation education and identify potential new opportunities to support these efforts. We also encourage the Secretary-General's report to explore synergies related to the UNGA Resolution on “Women, Disarmament, Arms Control, and Nonproliferation” and to highlight the importance of participation of under-represented groups, including women, in global nonproliferation and disarmament education efforts. We believe this report should be balanced and inclusive of the views of all UN Member States, and we also thank the Secretary-General for posting our full-length submission online.