31 May 2024

REPORT TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

With reference to United Nations General Assembly resolution 77/52 entitled 'United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education', adopted on 7 December 2022 and the request by the UN General Assembly, as per operative paragraph 3. Paragraph 3 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.

Please find below, the Verification Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC) submission regarding implementation of the recommendations to civil society and non-governmental organizations covering the period June 2022 until May 2024 to be submitted to the General Assembly at its seventy-ninth session.

Executive Summary

The Verification Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC) is a non-profit organisation devoted to verification, implementation, and compliance of international agreements, with a focus on agreements concerning the non-proliferation and disarmament of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and the security of related materials. VERTIC provides education and training through the sharing of information and raising awareness during in-person and online workshops, seminars and other meetings, as well as through the development of educational tools and course curricular. VERTIC works with relevant national stakeholders from various countries as well as international bodies to help build capacity and expertise.

Further information and material is available on VERTIC’s [Website](#), [YouTube](#) and on [X](#) (formerly Twitter).

Full report

VERTIC’s Verification and Monitoring (VM) programme has decades-long experience in delivering training and capacity-building on various aspects verification and monitoring of international instruments promoting non-proliferation and disarmament of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, in particular on the African and Asian continents. Staff deliver lectures and perform outreach activities on inter alia, IAEA safeguards, nuclear security, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as other areas that impact on such agreements, including emerging technologies (e.g. AI) and conceptual and practical measures for verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament.

VM has provided legislative assistance as well as legal research and analysis on the national implementation of IAEA safeguards. In particular, it contributed case studies on how states can strengthen their legal frameworks for the implementation of safeguards to both the 2023 IAEA Webinar Series on Safeguards and to the Lao People’s Democratic Republic in 2024.

Currently and since 2018, VERTIC has implemented a project to enhance the involvement of the Global South in nuclear disarmament verification activities and to develop support mechanisms for
long term capacity-building and education that would assist to foster a new generation of nuclear experts who could contribute to nuclear disarmament verification nationally, regionally and internationally. Working with regional NGOs and universities, this project has sought to establish three nuclear disarmament research and innovation hubs in Africa, Central Asia and Latin America.

Activities have included educational outreach; the commissioning of research by emerging experts alongside seasoned diplomats and practitioners; and, the hosting of informational webinars and professional development courses with context specific curricula on NDV.

The project has also sought to support the work of the UN in terms of General Assembly Resolutions A/RES/71/67 and A/RES/74/50.

In addition, in response to a Working Paper issued by the UK and Norway to the 10th Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, titled ‘Irreversibility in the context of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons’, VM has undertaken collaborative research and dialogue on the practical considerations of irreversibility of nuclear disarmament. This work featured significant partnerships with educational institutions including King’s College London, the University of York, and the University of the Western Cape. VERTIC commissioned research and held events that involved academics as well as PhD students.

The VM Programme also performed outreach on the impact of quantum computing on global security; ran workshops in partnership with UNODA to provide interview training for qualified experts on the UNSGM roster; and, launched an interactive report on North Korea’s nuclear fuel cycle (available on VERTIC’s website). This report shows how fuel cycle modelling and open source information can be combined to explore different scenarios and is illustrative of the use of such sources to assess WMD capabilities. The VM Programme also facilitated the exchange of information and experiences of IAEA Member States in seeking and receiving assistance on IAEA Safeguards.

VERTIC’s National Implementation Measures (NIM) programme provides legislative assistance as well as legal research and analysis on national implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004), the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions, and the international instruments for nuclear security. NIM raises awareness of the obligations contained in these instruments, analyses legislation for their implementation, and provides assistance in drafting domestic legislation and regulations. The programme also develops associated tools and publications in various languages that are freely available on VERTIC’s website. Examples of recently developed materials include the ‘VERTIC: Model Law for National Implementation of the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and Related Requirements of UN Security Council Resolution 1540’ and the report on ‘Addressing misconceptions about biological and chemical weapons and related legal frameworks’—both published in 2023.

Between June 2022 and May 2024, the NIM Team has continued to participate in activities to raise awareness on the implementation of both the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions, including during their relevant international treaty meetings. NIM has further partnered with the United Nations Disarmament Research Institute (UNIDIR), in developing a Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) National Implementation Measures Database. The database was officially launched on 15 August 2023.

Specific training and educational activities (such as legislative drafting workshops) have taken place in countries such as Brunei Darussalam, Kenya and Sierra Leone. In addition, the NIM team delivered in May 2023 a ‘Course on non-proliferation and disarmament law’ for attendees from Members,
Associate Members and Observers in RACVIAC – Centre for Security Cooperation. Relevant partners for the NIM programme’s activities include: UNIDIR, Civilian Research and Development Foundation (CRDF) Global, UNODA and the BWC Implementation Support Unit (ISU).

VERTIC’s Compliance Mechanisms and Measures Programme (CMM) has provided, and continues to provide, training to States and other relevant maritime stakeholders on UN Security Council maritime sanctions, including education, awareness-raising and capacity-building through in-country workshops and online meetings, and the development of modular online training courses and publications. Training covers the resolutions as legal instruments, stakeholder obligations, and approaches to national implementation. Operating as part of a NGO/academic consortium, the CMM team has developed information and training materials on sanctions pertaining to sanctions implementation and enforcement, as well as sanctions enforcement in ship registry operations. In addition, the CMM team has compiled a resource of best practices of effective national implementation of maritime sanctions. CMM staff have also given talks at universities and to civil society groups, and served on NGO governance boards and a government advisory group. In this period, the Team has worked with a range of partners, including the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS), the Asia-Pacific Leadership Network (APLN), the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP) Study Group on Nonproliferation and Disarmament in the Asia-Pacific, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the University of Canterbury, New Zealand and the Disarmament and Security Centre, New Zealand.