



General Assembly

Distr.: General
26 June 2024

Original: English

Seventy-ninth session

Item 99 (a) of the preliminary list*

Review and implementation of the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly: United Nations disarmament fellowship, training and advisory services

United Nations Disarmament Fellowship, Training and Advisory Services Programme

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In 2023, 24 fellows (11 women and 13 men) completed the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Programme. In 2024, 25 fellows (14 women and 11 men) are taking part in the Programme.

Established at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Programme has run since 1979 and has trained more than 1,100 officials from 172 Member States. The Programme aims to promote expertise in disarmament in States Members of the United Nations, in particular in developing countries, and to provide participants with added knowledge and professional competence to increase their ability to fulfil their duties in the field of disarmament and international security upon their return to positions in their respective Governments. The Programme addresses theory and practice through a combination of lectures, study visits, simulations and other practical exercises.

The Secretary-General is pleased to note the contribution of the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Programme to greater awareness of the importance of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. He expresses his appreciation to all the Member States, international organizations and other entities that have supported the Programme over the years, thereby contributing to its success.

* [A/79/50](#).



I. Introduction

1. In its resolution [77/81](#), entitled “United Nations disarmament fellowship, training and advisory services”, the General Assembly, inter alia, commended the Secretary-General for the diligence with which the Programme had continued to be carried out and requested him to continue to implement annually the Programme within existing resources and to report thereon to the Assembly at its seventy-ninth session. The present report is submitted pursuant to that mandate.

II. Programme of fellowships on disarmament

A. Fellowships in 2023

2. A total of 24 fellowships were awarded in 2023 (11 women and 13 men). Efforts were made to ensure geographical balance, as well as equal, full and effective participation of women and men.¹

B. Programme of studies in 2023

3. The Programme continued to cover a broad selection of substantive topics in multilateral disarmament, arms control, non-proliferation and emerging technologies. It included lectures, presentations, round tables, panel discussions and other forms of interactive group discussion with senior diplomats, senior officials from international organizations and representatives of academic institutions, civil society and think tanks. It also included field visits, demonstrations of on-site inspections, visits to nuclear test sites, nuclear reactors and scientific laboratories, simulations of multilateral negotiations, case studies and other practical exercises. The activities of the Programme in 2023 are summarized below.

4. The 2023 Programme had virtual and in-person segments. The virtual segment consisted of online self-paced e-learning courses available on the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs dashboard, which were offered to increase the fellows’ knowledge and understanding of the multilateral disarmament architecture and introduce major thematic subject matters. The second segment comprised study visits to several intergovernmental organizations and institutions in Geneva, Vienna and the Hague, Kingdom of the Netherlands, as well as country visits at the invitation not only of the Governments of Argentina, Brazil, China, Germany, Japan, Kazakhstan and the Republic of Korea, but also of the European Union.

Introduction to the United Nations machinery and norms

5. The study visits started at the United Nations Office at Geneva, where the fellows were welcomed by the Director-General of the Office and were introduced to the disarmament machinery, conference diplomacy and international humanitarian

¹ Davit Muradyan (Armenia), Tural Ismayilzada (Azerbaijan), Antonio Victor Butler Jr (Bahamas), Aalya Ali Mohamed Ali Alkoohjeji (Bahrain), Daniela Ester Briones Riveros (Chile), Ziyan Xu (China), Nahango Kone (Côte d’Ivoire), Tereza Janáková (Czechia), Gemima Mutala Mayuto (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Paul Ferdinand Kaiser (Germany), Jun Saito (Japan), Niphaphone Songkham (Lao People’s Democratic Republic), Florencia Chimwemwe Mtingwi (Malawi), Aishath Shahula (Maldives), Manuel Flores Troche (Mexico), Hicham Bayar (Morocco), Jimson Rundali Rai (Nepal), Veton Kiki (North Macedonia), Carlos Jimenez Romero Mazariegos (Peru), Jan Michael B. Gomez (Philippines), Bianca-Bogdana Biris (Romania), Candy Sizakele Moyo (South Africa), Aldaw Abdalla Grdood Koko (Sudan), Laura Cristina Müller (Switzerland).

law, including the possible engagement of non-State armed groups in respect of international humanitarian law. In Geneva, the fellows were also exposed to recent developments, current challenges and future threats associated with weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons and new technologies applied to the military domain. They also experienced various aspects of multilateral work on disarmament, through the work of the Conference on Disarmament, treaty regimes and multilateral disarmament structures, including the Ninth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty and the fourth session of the open-ended working group on reducing space threats. The fellows also discussed the operation and status of the Geneva-based disarmament treaty bodies,² learned about the work of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and participated in practical exercises (case studies) on weapons law. Representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, the Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator and civil society also met with the fellows to discuss key issues on the international disarmament and arms control agenda.

Practical disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control: national and intergovernmental site visits

6. In Vienna, the fellows visited the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

7. The visit to IAEA included a welcome by the Director -General, briefings on the international legal framework and the implementation of the Agency's safeguards system, the safety and security of nuclear materials and radioactive sources and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The fellows also learned about the IAEA technical cooperation programme, participated in an interactive exercise (International School on Nuclear and Radiological Leadership for Safety), visited the Incident and Emergency Centre, the safeguards equipment laboratory, as well as the IAEA laboratories in Seibersdorf, Austria. During the visit to the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, in Bruckneudorf, Austria, the fellows were welcomed by the Executive Secretary and received comprehensive briefings on the origins, provisions, verification regime and status of the Treaty, as well as efforts towards its universalization and entry into force. The fellows also observed the functioning of the International Monitoring System, visited the Organization's operations centre, international data centre and an International Monitoring System seismic/acoustic site, and learned about on-site inspection directed exercises. While in Vienna, the fellows also visited the Wassenaar Arrangement and learned about its work. At the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the fellows were given a presentation on the Office's work on illicit arms transfers and arms control, counterterrorism and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risks, as well as cybercrime. At the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, the fellows were given a presentation on the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. The fellows also participated in the Vienna Conversation Series event entitled "Bridging the divide: The role of networks

² The Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques, the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and its annexed protocols, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Arms Trade Treaty.

in advancing inclusive disarmament processes”, organized by the Vienna Office of the Office for Disarmament Affairs. At the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, the fellows received a briefing on strategic arms talks, nuclear safeguards and naval nuclear propulsion.

8. During their stay in the Hague, the fellows visited the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and had planned to visit the International Criminal Court.³ At OPCW, the fellows were welcomed by Deputy Director-General and learned about the origins, key provisions, operation and status of the Convention, and its implementation at the national level. They also received a briefing on the Organisation’s priorities and challenges relating to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and its implementation. They learned about the Organisation’s verification regime; its international cooperation, assistance and protection programmes; and its activities related to the Syrian Arab Republic. Also included in the programme was a visit to the OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology.

9. In Switzerland, the fellows visited the Swiss Federal Institute for Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Protection in Spiez, organized by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, where they received a briefing on nuclear, biological and chemical threats and learned about the OPCW-designated laboratory and the biosafety level 4 containment laboratory. During the visit to the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in Bern, senior officials of the Government of Switzerland met with the fellows and offered information on Swiss policy in the fields of arms control and cybersecurity, export controls, mine action, small arms and light weapons, and ammunition management.

10. In Berlin, the fellows were welcomed by the Deputy Federal Government Commissioner for Disarmament and Arms Control and received a briefing at the Federal Foreign Office on topics related to nuclear, biological, chemical and conventional weapons, including conventional arms control in Europe. They also took part in a round-table discussion at the International Institute for Strategic Studies on the proliferation of ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, drones and loitering munitions and visited bunkers and other Cold War infrastructure.

11. During the study visits to Brussels, the fellows were introduced to the European Union’s disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control priorities and policies. The fellows also received a briefing on the Council of the European Union Working Party on Non-Proliferation and Working Party on Arms Export Control, including dual-use materials and exports control, outer space, new technologies, artificial intelligence and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The fellows were also introduced to the European Union Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium and received briefings from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Carnegie Europe and the European Space Policy Institute. They also visited the Council of the European Union, the European External Action Service and the Parliamentarium.

12. In Kazakhstan, the fellows were welcomed in Astana by senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Foreign Policy Research Institute. They then travelled to Kurchatov to visit the National Nuclear Centre and its laboratories and facilities, the former Semipalatinsk Test Site and the tokamak nuclear fusion reactor.

13. The visit to Beijing included a round table with senior officials from the Arms Control Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as visits to the Centre of Excellence on Nuclear Security and the China Arms Control and Disarmament

³ The visit to the International Criminal Court was cancelled owing to a cyberattack.

Association, where the fellows participated in round tables with experts on arms control and disarmament.

14. In Seoul, the fellows were exposed to issues pertaining to regional security and practical disarmament, including a seminar at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and visits to the demilitarized zone, the War Memorial and other sites related to the Korean War.

15. In Japan, in Tokyo, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the fellows learned about the aftermath of the devastating effects of nuclear weapons, enhanced their understanding of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, their existential threat to humankind, and the importance of their total elimination. The fellows were welcomed by a Parliamentary Vice-Minister and visited the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, the Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims and the Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Park. They also visited the Nagasaki National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims, the Nagasaki Peace Memorial Park and Atomic Bomb Museum, the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation in Tokyo, as well as the Daigo Fukuryu-Maru Exhibition Hall. The fellows also laid wreaths at the Hiroshima Victims Memorial Cenotaph, held a discussion with an atomic bomb survivor (*hibakusha*) and received lectures at the Radiation Effects Research Foundation and the Research Centre for Nuclear Weapons Abolition.

16. During the visit to the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and Buenos Aires, the fellows were welcomed by the Secretary of the Agency and received briefings by senior officials from the respective foreign offices and the Agency on the history, challenges, establishment, structure and safeguard activities of the organization. The fellows also visited the nuclear fuel fabrication plant of the Brazilian nuclear industry, and the Ezeiza Atomic Centre in Buenos Aires. In Argentina, the fellows also visited the national repository of controlled materials and received briefings on the country's national legislation and policy for the prevention of armed violence.

Familiarization with multilateral diplomatic efforts at Headquarters

17. The final stop of the study visit of the Programme took place at United Nations Headquarters and aimed at further familiarizing the fellows with the disarmament architecture through the work of the First Committee of the General Assembly, the Disarmament Commission, the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters and the Office for Disarmament Affairs. A highlight of this segment of the Programme was a panel on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The fellows were welcomed by the Chair of the First Committee and attended briefings by senior United Nations staff, Permanent Representatives and representatives of civil society and academic institutions, including on the following: the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and its review process; the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction; transparency in armaments (United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and United Nations Report on Military Expenditures); the Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons; Security Council resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#); the Programme of Action on Small Arms; the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management; and the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme; as well as outreach and liaison with the media, young people and civil society. The fellows also received a briefing on regional disarmament activities and were introduced to the work of the Office for Disarmament Affairs regional centres.

18. While in New York, the fellows also participated in a simulation exercise and drafted a mandate for the Group of Governmental Experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects.

19. During the New York segment, the fellows finalized their research on a topic of their choosing in disarmament, arms control, non-proliferation and international security, and presented it to the Group. At the end of the Programme, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and the Chair of the First Committee awarded the fellows with certificates of participation.

C. Preparations for the 2024 Programme

20. A comprehensive review was launched in 2023, resulting in progressive improvements to the Programme, which will have a slightly different structure, cover a six-month period and be composed of four main components. The Programme will continue to include a combination of initial online learning, study and research, and visits to relevant international organizations and to specific countries upon invitation. Thanks to the invitation of the Government of Algeria, in 2024, the fellows will visit Africa for the first time in the history of the Programme.

21. The four components of the 2024 edition will be as follows:

- Component I, introductory self-paced e-learning courses
- Component II, study visits divided into two segments (30 May–30 June) and (October–November)
- Component III (July–September), study and research work
- Component IV, initial mapping of alumni since 1979 and conceptualization of an alumni network to be further developed in 2025

22. At the time of writing, 25 fellows (14 women and 11 men)⁴ had been selected to participate in the 2024 edition of the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Programme. All fellows had completed the eight mandatory introductory self-paced e-learning courses on the basis of a comprehensive list of training resources offered by the Office for Disarmament Affairs that includes e-modules from the Office's education dashboard and e-trainings from other international organizations.

23. The first part of component II (study visits) was under way, and the fellows had completed the visit to the United Nations Office at Geneva, which was shorter than in previous years owing to the financial restrictions faced by the United Nations.

24. The Geneva visit started with a meeting with Fellowship alumni and briefings on the New Agenda for Peace and the Pact of the Future. The fellows also received briefings on the disarmament machinery, the Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention,

⁴ Mouloud Benbala (Algeria), Isobel Patricia English (Australia), Kesang Yangkey (Bhutan), Nametso Pheto (Botswana), Desislava Ognyanova Siderova (Bulgaria), Chanmalis Keo (Cambodia), Cédric Harold Enyime (Cameroon), Eileen Alina Cañas Vargas (Costa Rica), Iltireh Ibrahim Farah (Djibouti), Karla Estefania Hurtado Montero (Ecuador), Mustafa Gamal Khalil Isak (Egypt), Lamessa Hatau Kicha (Ethiopia), Ms. Judit Czikó (Hungary), Hamed Alinejad (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mohammed Ridha Raad Hasan Al Haidari (Iraq), Gulden Kaskarbayeva (Kazakhstan), Lukas Kazimieras Kisielius (Lithuania), Nandrianina Fankasitrhana Randriamampianina (Madagascar), Klarissa Low (Malaysia), Tayyaba Islam Chaudhari (Pakistan), Abel Antonio Vigil Puga (Panama), Viviana Rocío Sanabria Duarte (Paraguay), Carmen Municipio Díaz (Spain), Hoai Son Trinh (Viet Nam), Malingose Grace Banda (Zambia).

the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the issue of explosive weapons in populated areas and international humanitarian law, including its environmental provisions. They also participated in a practical exercise to draft a working characterization of lethal autonomous weapons systems and received briefings on humanitarian demining and the International Mine Action Standards, including IMAS 7.13 on environmental management and climate change in mine action. One full day was devoted to nuclear weapons-related issues, including negative security assurances, the fissile material cut-off treaty, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, nuclear disarmament verification and artificial intelligence in the nuclear realm. The fellows also participated in the simulation of a negotiation of provisions of a treaty on negative security assurances and attended a plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament on the theme “Building capacity in disarmament through education and research”, under the presidency of Abdul-Karim Hashim Mostafa of Iraq. Similarly, one full day was dedicated to the Biological Weapons Convention, including its functioning, current efforts to strengthen the Convention and opportunities for international cooperation and assistance. The programme included lectures and panel discussions involving also the participation of Geneva-based delegations. The fellows also received a briefing on gender and ammunition management, as well as on the interlinkages between disarmament and human rights. In addition to lectures covering new and emerging technologies, including outer space, the fellows participated in a practical exercise organized by the Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator with a focus on science anticipation and security related to quantum computing. Representatives from UNIDIR, ICRC, the Fondation suisse de déminage, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, the Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator and the World Health Organization supported the Programme through lectures and practical exercises.

25. In Switzerland, the fellows were given presentations by senior officials of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in Bern on the country’s policies on disarmament, arms control, cybersecurity, mine action, small arms and light weapons, explosive weapons in populated areas and ammunition management. This year, the fellows also visited the Swiss Drone and Robotics Centre of armasuisse Science and Technology, where they discussed autonomy with residence scientists; were introduced to a diverse set of drones, some of which are used for mapping unexploded ordnance and landmines; and observed the functioning of a legged robot with a high degree of autonomy.

III. Conclusion

26. The United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Programme was established at the first special session of the General Assembly, devoted to disarmament. It has run since 1979 and has trained more than 1,100 officials from 172 Member States. Today, many alumni hold positions of responsibility in the field of disarmament, including senior positions within their own Governments and in relevant international organizations. The broad support for the biennial resolution on the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Programme and the large number of nominations received are testimony to the interest of Member States in the Programme and its quality.

27. The Secretary-General notes with satisfaction the number of women nominated for participation in the Programme during the reporting period. He reiterates his gratitude to all States and organizations that have supported the Programme over the years, thereby contributing to its success.