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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

A total of 25 fellowships on disarmament were awarded in 2019, with 20 fellowships in 2020. In 2019, the programme lasted from 19 August to 25 October. The 2020 programme was cancelled owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The programme is aimed at strengthening fellows' expertise and professional training in negotiation techniques and multilateral diplomacy, critical thinking and understanding of factors that either foster or undermine disarmament efforts, the ability to bridge political, regional and technological divides by bringing together ideas and attitudes that promote tolerance, dialogue and concerted international efforts towards disarmament. In preparing the fellows for their future roles in the field of disarmament and arms control, the programme addresses theory and practice and combines first-hand impressions and knowledge of weapons and their effects with direct interaction and networking with key representatives of the disarmament community. To date, the programme has trained 1,033 officials from 170 States, a large number of whom hold positions of responsibility in the field of disarmament and international security within their own governments.

The Secretary-General is pleased to note the contribution of the programme of fellowships on disarmament to a greater awareness of the importance of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. The Secretary-General expresses his appreciation to all the Member States and international organizations that have supported the programme throughout the years, thereby contributing to its success.

* A/75/50.



I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 73/73, 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-fifth session. The present report is submitted pursuant to that mandate.

II. Programme of fellowships on disarmament

A. Fellowships for 2019 and 2020

2. A total of 25 fellowships were awarded in 2019 to the following officials:

Argentina	Luciano Javier Liendo
Armenia	Marina Mesropyan
Bahrain	Shaikha Jawaher Abdulla Mohamed Alkhalifa
Benin	Mahoussi Florence Lokossou
Burundi	Anitha Congera
Cambodia	Hamizanne Math
Cameroon	Loïc Mbida
Dominican Republic	Salvador Humberto Martínez Santamaria
Egypt	Fouad Fouad Fouad Hetta
France	Lisa Catherine Jane Ranger
Gabon	Idlège Anouchka Mvou Louba
Germany	Julia Freese
India	Nidhi Tewari
Iraq	Suha Abdulkareem Zamil Gharrawi
Panama	Grisselle Del Carmen Rodríguez Ramírez
Republic of Korea	Seunghee Shin
Romania	Bogdan Moldoveanu
Serbia	Dorde Zakula
South Africa	Natasha Patricia Carvalho Carvalho-Malekane
Sri Lanka	Fathuma Mafusa Mohamed Lafir
State of Palestine	Riham I.M. Barghouthi
Switzerland	Moritz Alexander Christian Glatthard
Timor-Leste	Ivens Manuel Francisco Gusmão De Sousa
Trinidad and Tobago	Kristan Nadia Jhagroo
United Republic of Tanzania	Prisca Oscar Mwanjesa

3. Owing to the cash liquidity crisis faced by the United Nations in 2020, the total number of fellowships for the year was reduced from the usual 25 to 20. The 20 fellowships were awarded to the following officials:

Bangladesh	Shah Md Ashraful Alam Mohon
Brazil	Luis Henrique Sacchi Guadagnin
Bulgaria	Aleksandra Aleksandrova Atanasova
Canada	Josée-Anne Roussel
Chad	Saleh Mahamat Nour
Cuba	Aixa Paumier López
Equatorial Guinea	Maria Estrella Mikue Owono
Georgia	Shota Mchedlishvili
Kazakhstan	Abylaikhan Bogenbaiuly
Kenya	Abdirahman Abdullahi Abdi
Kyrgyz Republic	Aidyn Seidakhmatov
Lebanon	Michelle Al Asmar
Lithuania	Gabija Luksaite
Madagascar	Elodie Lydia Moana Raseta
Malaysia	Nizhan Faraz Bin Rizal
Mali	Gabdo Togo
Mexico	Ana Alicia Kubli Sobrino
Saudi Arabia	Bandar Mahdi S. Alnahdi
Syrian Arab Republic	Abdul Kareem Al Mekdad
Zambia	Choolwe Mulenga Chikolwa

4. The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has a direct impact on the viability and implementation of the 2020 programme. In particular, a thorough analysis of the current status, expected developments and possible options that could reasonably substitute for formal in-person study visits by the fellows without compromising the programme's quality, objectives and comprehensive character was carried out by the Office for Disarmament Affairs in cooperation with all relevant partners. The analysis concluded that the lack of clarity, the risks associated with moving ahead with the organization of the 2020 programme in the prevailing circumstances and the limitations of available e-learning tools rendered impossible the holding of a reasonably meaningful disarmament fellowship programme that meets the objectives and expected results established by the tenth special session of the General Assembly, and the 2020 programme was cancelled. The 2020 fellows will be considered as pre-selected for the 2021 programme.

5. Over the years, the efforts made by the United Nations to promote gender equality have resulted in a steady ratio in the number of women who have been recipients of the fellowship. In 2019 and 2020, a total of 26 out of 45 fellowships were granted to women.

B. Programme of studies

6. The United Nations programme of fellowships on disarmament is implemented by the Office for Disarmament Affairs. In 2019, the programme lasted from 19 August to 25 October. As indicated, the 2020 programme was cancelled. The programme of studies is structured in three segments: (a) activities at the United Nations Office at Geneva and at the invitation of the Government of Switzerland; (b) study visits to other Member States, at their invitation, and intergovernmental organizations of relevance in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control; and (c) activities at Headquarters.

7. The programme addresses both the theory and the practice of disarmament. On the one hand, it consists of lectures, presentations, round tables, panels and other forms of interactive group discussion with senior diplomats and officials from international organizations and representatives of academic institutions, civil society and think tanks on the functioning of the disarmament machinery and key disarmament issues. On the other hand, it comprises field visits, demonstrations of on-site inspections, visits to weapons destruction facilities, nuclear test sites, nuclear reactors and scientific laboratories, research projects, simulations of multilateral negotiations and other practical exercises. The activities of the 2019 programme are summarized below. The 2020 programme was to generally follow the 2019 syllabus, with updates to reflect recent developments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

First segment

8. The first segment of the 2019 programme was held at the United Nations Office at Geneva and at other locations in Switzerland. In addition to receiving a general introduction to the disarmament machinery and international humanitarian law, the fellows were exposed to various aspects of multilateral work on disarmament, including potential negotiations, through the work of the Conference on Disarmament, some Geneva-based treaty regimes¹ and research institutions dealing with disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

9. The fellows received briefings and lectures by senior representatives of various Member States, the office-holders elected by the Conference on Disarmament and other treaty regimes, representatives of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, the Geneva branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, the Geneva Centre for Security Policy and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of the Armed Forces, as well as by representatives of civil society organizations (the Geneva Disarmament Platform, Geneva Call and the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots).

10. The fellows attended the plenary meetings of the Conference on Disarmament and were briefed on a wide range of issues, including the key topics of the agenda, history, achievements and current challenges faced by the Conference. They also attended expert meetings of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use

¹ The 1976 Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques, the 1980 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 1972 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions and the 2013 Arms Trade Treaty.

of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and were briefed on the content, status and operation of the Geneva-based disarmament and arms control treaties, the work of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, the latest development in such fields as, inter alia, the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, improvised explosive devices, the impact of science and technology on the means and methods of warfare, including lethal autonomous weapons systems and cyberwarfare, engaging armed non-State actors and the role of non-governmental organizations in the multilateral disarmament process.

11. In addition, the fellows took part in a one-day visit to Bern and Spiez, Switzerland, organized by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, during which they were briefed on Swiss foreign and security policy, with a focus on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, mine action, small arms and light weapons, ammunition management and confidence-building in a challenging security environment. The fellows visited the laboratory in Spiez and were briefed on scenarios and risk assessments in relation to nuclear, biological and chemical threats and the laboratory's technical contribution in support of arms control.

12. While in Geneva, the fellows also took part in practical exercises on applying weapons law and the rules of procedure of the Conference on Disarmament. They were also required to initiate research on a topic of their choice relating to disarmament, arms control, non-proliferation and international security.

Second segment

13. The second segment of the 2019 programme comprised study visits to several intergovernmental organizations: the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court in The Hague and the Preparatory Commission of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Vienna. This segment of the programme also included country study visits to Member States, at their invitation.

14. At OPCW, the fellows were briefed on the origins, operation, status and implementation at the national level of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, on various aspects of the work of OPCW and its contributions to disarmament and non-proliferation efforts and to promoting international cooperation and assistance. They heard an update on the OPCW activities related to the Syrian Arab Republic. In addition, the programme included a visit to the OPCW Situation Centre and the OPCW laboratory and equipment store in Rijswijk, the Netherlands, as well as a demonstration of equipment for an on-site inspection.

15. The study visits to the International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court exposed the fellows to the origins and the functioning of the two courts. They were briefed on the procedures and jurisdiction of the two judicial institutions, including on the International Court of Justice cases relating to nuclear weapons and its advisory opinion on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons.

16. The study visit to IAEA comprised briefings on the international legal framework and the implementation of the Agency safeguards system, the safety and security of nuclear materials and radioactive sources, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as well as the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Visits to the IAEA laboratories in Seibersdorf, Austria, the Incident and Emergency Centre and the safeguards equipment laboratory at the Vienna International Centre were also included.

17. During the visit to the Preparatory Commission of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, the fellows received comprehensive briefings on the origins and status of the Treaty, the functioning of the verification regime and its civil and scientific applications, the continuing efforts towards universalization and the entry into force of the Treaty, the work of the Preparatory Commission and the structure of the international monitoring system. They had a tour of the Organization's Operations Centre, the International Data Centre and an international monitoring system facility and participated in a group quiz.

18. While in Vienna, the fellows were briefed on the functioning of export control regimes, in particular the Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies and the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and visited the OSCE secretariat, where they were introduced to OSCE politico-military dimension and received updates on the involvement of OSCE in arms control and maintaining security and cooperation in Europe and beyond.

19. The fellows also visited the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-proliferation and heard presentations on the nuclear-weapons-free zones and on arms control agreements between the United States of America and the Russian Federation.

20. In 2019, the Governments of Brazil, China, Germany, Japan, Kazakhstan and the Republic of Korea, as well as the European Union, continued the established practice of inviting participants in the fellowship programme to visit their national institutions and to attend lectures on national policies and priorities in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. In 2020, the Governments of Argentina, China, Germany, Japan and the Republic of Korea, as well as the European Union, have extended similar invitations.

21. The study visit to Germany in 2019 included briefings by representatives of the Federal Foreign Office, the International Security Division of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs and the Robert Koch Institute on a range of disarmament and non-proliferation issues. The fellows also visited Spreewerk Lübben, a munitions disposal company, were briefed on safe disposal processes for conventional weapons, ammunition and explosive products, observed the destruction of cluster munitions and viewed the incineration plant and arsenal of deactivated items.

22. The study visit to the European Union included, inter alia, briefings on the European Union Non-Proliferation Consortium, European Union policy on weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the European Union role in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the work of the European Union's Joint Research Centre in supporting non-proliferation and disarmament, visits to the European Parliament and the European External Action Service, as well as a briefing by the European Union Council president.

23. The study visit to Kazakhstan included visits to the former nuclear weapons test site (Opytnoye Pole), the thermonuclear fusion reactor (tokamak), the National Nuclear Centre and the Semipalatinsk test site museum in the city of Kurchatov. The fellows also received briefings by senior officials from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Nur-Sultan on the policy and initiatives of Kazakhstan in the fields of disarmament, in particular on nuclear disarmament issues.

24. The study visit to China included briefings by officials of the Department of Arms Control of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and by representatives of the China Arms Control and Disarmament Association on key disarmament and non-proliferation issues, as well as visit to the Qihoo 360 company. The fellows

visited Harbin and its museum at the site of Unit 731 of the Japanese Imperial Army, as well as historical and cultural sites in Beijing.

25. The study visit to the Republic of Korea included participation in a seminar on the country's disarmament and non-proliferation policy and the security perspective on the Korean Peninsula, with the participation of senior officials from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea and the Korean National Diplomatic Academy. The fellows also visited the demilitarized zone and historical and cultural sites in Seoul.

26. The study visit to Japan was organized by the Government of Japan and the municipalities of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In Nagasaki, the fellows laid flowers at the Atomic Bomb Hypocenter and visited the Atomic Bomb Museum, the National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims, the Nagasaki Peace Park, the Nagai Tashika Memorial Museum, and atomic bombing monuments. They also held discussions with hibakusha (survivors of the bombing) and met with officials of the Research Center for Nuclear Weapons Abolition. In Hiroshima, the fellows visited the Peace Memorial Museum and the Atomic Bomb Dome and laid flowers at the Memorial Monument for Hiroshima. They were briefed by representatives of Hiroshima city and the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation, had discussions with hibakusha, attended A-bomb memoir reading sessions and visited the Radiation Effects Research Foundation. In Tokyo, the fellows heard presentations on Japanese efforts on nuclear disarmament by senior officials from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

27. The first-ever visit to Brazil was organized by the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials and included an introduction and briefings by senior officials from the Ministries for Foreign Affairs of Brazil and Argentina, as well as from the Agency on the establishment and consolidation of the safeguard activities of the Agency for the control and verification of nuclear facilities and materials in Brazil and Argentina. The fellows also visited the Agency's technical unit and the nuclear fuel production plant for the Brazilian nuclear industry in the city of Resende. A similar visit was scheduled for 2020 in Argentina.

Third segment

28. The third segment of the programme is held at Headquarters and is intended to further familiarize the fellows with other key disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation issues, as well as with the work of the First Committee of the General Assembly and the mandate and activities of the Office for Disarmament Affairs. In 2019, this segment of the programme included a panel on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, in which five representatives of Member States participated, and briefings and lectures by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and senior staff of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, senior diplomats and representatives of civil society and academic institutions on a range of subjects, including nuclear doctrines and approaches, the functioning of the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission, the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and its review process, the responsibilities and activities of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, items included on the agenda of the First Committee and multilateral diplomacy and decision-making within the United Nations. The fellows had the opportunity to attend meetings of the First Committee.

29. While in New York, the fellows took part in a simulated negotiation exercise on a General Assembly resolution, jointly organized with the Center for Global Affairs of New York University. The exercise included the coordination of group positions, introduction, negotiations and action on a resolution on lethal autonomous weapons

systems. The fellows also had a round table on opportunities and challenges for advancing nuclear disarmament with the Program on Science and Global Security at Princeton University.

30. During the segment, the fellows finalized their research work on a topic of their choice relating to disarmament, arms control, non-proliferation and international security and made presentations on the key findings. At the end of the programme, the fellows were awarded certificates of participation by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and the Chair of the First Committee.

III. Conclusion

31. The year 2019 marked the fortieth anniversary of the very first fellowship “class” established under the decision taken by the General Assembly at its tenth special session, in 1978, to launch a United Nations programme of fellowships on disarmament with the view to promote expertise in disarmament in Member States, especially in developing countries. To mark this anniversary, the Office for Disarmament Affairs is preparing for publication a paper which captures the thoughts and experience of several generations of disarmament fellows.

32. During its more than 40 years of operation, the programme has trained 1,033 officials from 170 States. The role of the programme in enhancing the capabilities of young diplomats for participation in disarmament deliberations and negotiations is well recognized and appreciated. 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, training and advisory services and the large number of nominations for the programme received every year by the Office for Disarmament Affairs is testimony to the undiminished interest of the Member States in the programme. The Secretary-General is particularly satisfied with the high number of women nominated for participation in the programme during the reporting period.

33. The Secretary-General is pleased to note the contribution of the programme of fellowships on disarmament towards a greater awareness of the importance of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control in the context of international security. The programme continues to play a decisive role in promoting multilateralism and facilitating a better understanding of the functioning of the United Nations disarmament machinery and of other institutions working in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control at the global and regional level, as well as of international security. Against this background, the Secretary-General is confident that the programme of fellowships on disarmament will practically contribute to the implementation of his *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*.

34. The Secretary-General expresses his gratitude to all States and organizations that have supported the programme throughout the years, thereby contributing to its success. He extends his particular appreciation to the Governments of Brazil, China, Germany, Japan, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Korea and Switzerland, as well as to the European Union, for their continued support for the programme. The Secretary-General also extends his grateful recognition to IAEA, the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court, OPCW, OSCE and the Preparatory Commission of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty Organization for their support for and contribution to the programme.