FACT SHEET
DISARMAMENT AND YOUTH

“The Role of Youth in Disarmament

Today’s world is home to the largest generation in history: 1.8 billion young people, 90 percent of whom reside in developing countries. It is imperative to hear the voices of this generation and engage its members in discussions on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control issues. Young people around the world have a critical role to play in raising awareness and developing new ways to reduce threats from weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms, including their proliferation.

United Nations Secretary-General Guterres clearly articulates in his Agenda for Disarmament, Securing Our Common Future, how young people have been a tremendous force for change in the world, noting how they have “proved their power time and again in support of the cause of disarmament. Young activists have worked at the forefront of successful international campaigns to ban landmines, cluster munitions and nuclear weapons.”

Recent media reports confirm that young anti-nuclear weapons campaigners and young victims of small arms gunfire, through their determination and passion, have the ability to significantly influence policies and change the conversation at national and global levels.

The Resolution on Youth, disarmament and non-proliferation

The important and positive contribution that young people can make in sustaining peace and security was reaffirmed by the UN General Assembly through its unanimous support for a new resolution entitled, Youth, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, adopted on 12 December 2019. The resolution encourages participation of young people in discussions on disarmament and non-proliferation, calls upon countries and international organizations to consider developing relevant policies and programmes for youth engagement, and stresses the importance of education and capacity-building of young people in the area.

1 A/RES/74/64.
resolution also “requests the Secretary-General to seek specific measures to promote the meaningful and inclusive participation and empowerment of youth on disarmament and non-proliferation issues”.

**The Role of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs**

Recognizing the importance of young people to bring about change, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) launched its youth outreach initiative, “#Youth4Disarmament” to engage, educate and empower young people with the aim of facilitating their meaningful and inclusive participation in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. Imparting knowledge and skills to young people empowers them to make their contribution, as national and world citizens.

The first activity organized under this initiative in August 2019 brought together young people from across the New York area to United Nations Headquarters to join an expert-led discussion on the implications of artificial intelligence for international peace and security. Then in October, UNODA and the international NGO, Peace Boat, co-organized an event coinciding with the UN General Assembly First Committee. Seventy-five young people between the ages of 18 and 30 participated in a full-day programme entitled, Youth Champions for Securing our Common Future aimed at introducing participants to the work of the United Nations. In November, UNODA and IM Swedish Development Partner co-organized a youth event to raise awareness on how disarmament and arms control can contribute to saving lives and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development coinciding with the inauguration of items made of Humanium Metal to be displayed at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

In January 2020, UNODA engaged approximately seventy young people in a wide-ranging discussion on youth action for disarmament to mark the 74th anniversary of the first UN General Assembly resolution, which established the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. The event was organized with the support from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations. The event at UN Headquarters included the kick-off of “United Nations Youth Champions for Disarmament”, a training programme funded by the Government of Germany that will enable ten aspiring advocates to learn about disarmament on a two-week global study tour.

In April, the e-newsletter “Open Minds Project” - a collection of materials produced by UNODA to engage youth on disarmament and non-proliferation issues - was created under the #Youth4Disarmament Initiative. Those youth interested in subscribing to the e-newsletter should send an e-mail to youth4disarmament@un.org

UNODA, in close collaboration with Member States, regional organizations, civil society and academic institutions, will further promote disarmament and non-proliferation education, including through the establishment of a platform for youth engagement, education and empowerment.

---

**Useful disarmament-related websites for Youth**

- Disarmament Education Website
- UNODA’s First eLearning Module providing an Introduction to Disarmament
- Factsheets on Disarmament Issues
- Disarmament: A Basic Guide
- Action for Disarmament: 10 Things You Can Do!
- World is Over-Armed and Peace is Underfunded infographic
- History of Disarmament as Written by Nobel Peace Laureates
- How Weapons Control Fosters Development infographic

---