



**Introductory Remarks at the High-Level Panel Event for the
Commemoration of the International Day for Disarmament and
Non-Proliferation Awareness**

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Director and Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs**

As delivered



5 March 2026
New York Distinguished Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

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It gives me great pleasure to attend this High-level Panel event to commemorate the International Day for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Awareness (IDDNPA), on behalf of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu.

I thank the Permanent Missions of Kyrgyzstan and Viet Nam, as well as the Columbia University's Frontiers of Science Program, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, and the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation for sponsoring today's event.

Established by General Assembly resolution 77/51 in December 2022, the International Day for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Awareness seeks to enhance understanding and promote disarmament efforts as a means of strengthening international peace and security. The resolution recognizes the vital role of a broad range of actors – including governments, intergovernmental organizations, civil society, academia, communities, and particularly young people - in promoting disarmament awareness and education.

Yet, on this International Day, we confront a stark reality: the international security environment continues to deteriorate, driven by both ongoing and new conflicts in various regions of the world. The risk of nuclear weapons use is at its highest in decades. Global tensions are pushing military spending again to record levels, while emerging technologies introduce new risks and complexities into armed conflict.

As the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs has repeatedly stressed, this trajectory is unsustainable – and unacceptable. Disarmament and non-proliferation are not abstract ideals; they are essential to preventing catastrophes and building a safer, more peaceful world.

To meet this moment, we should remember that the disarmament toolbox is multifaceted – and education is a core instrument within it.

Disarmament education equips individuals across generations and regions with the knowledge and skills needed to prevent violence, foster change, and advance disarmament and non-proliferation goals. It empowers people, particularly young people, to come up with creative

and workable solutions. The strong interest and proactive involvement of youth is indeed especially important. (I am gratified to see many youths present here in the room today).

It is precisely in times of growing insecurity and crisis that awareness and education matter most. Today's challenges demand informed citizens, critical thinkers, and engaged policymakers and communities who understand the central role disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control play as instruments for security, risk reduction and trust-building.

Today's event offers an opportunity for participants to exchange ideas, share good practices, and ideas to strengthen partnerships to advance disarmament education as a foundation for sustainable peace and security.

For its part, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs maintains a clear vision for disarmament education - one grounded in partnership with governments, regional entities and civil society actors. Only by working together can we achieve meaningful and lasting impact.

Building on this approach, the Office for Disarmament Affairs has annually organized various creative, cost-efficient activities to mark the IDDNPA with interested partners in New York and other duty stations, including our Regional Centres.

This week alone, our Office has organized five IDDNPA-related events in Kathmandu, New York and Vienna. On 3 March at UNHQ, we hosted a hybrid event on the legacy of the Special Sessions on Disarmament. Later today, at 3 p.m., in the UN library, we will launch a publication on the role of consensus in disarmament discussions.

Through such activities, the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs strives to play its part in promoting and enhancing better education, awareness, and cooperation on a range of disarmament issues.

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In his message for this year's International Day, the United Nations Secretary-General said, "it is time to invest in the architecture of peace, not the tools of war." That means living up to

disarmament obligations; rebuilding trust; and strengthening the systems and tools that prevent the proliferation, testing and use of deadly weapons.

Together, we can and must shape a future where peace prevails.

Thank you for your attention. I look forward to a productive exchange of views at today's meeting.