Report of the Secretary-General of the 69th Session of the General Assembly
"Implementation of the 34 Recommendations Contained in the 2002 UN Study on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education"

Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation
Education and Training Efforts Covering the Last Two Years
(June 2020 to May 2022)

Executive Summary

1. The Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (VCDNP) was established in 2010 at the initiative of the Austrian Foreign Ministry as an international non-governmental organization. The Center serves as a dedicated non-governmental platform for independent debate, research, outreach, and education and training. Among the Center's feature programmes are its short intensive courses on non-proliferation and disarmament for diplomats, practitioners and students. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, the Center has shifted its training courses to an on-line format (ten courses in total) and has also expanded its programmes to new audiences by offering webinars and posting their recordings, making its course online module publicly available, producing an online module on gender and disarmament, and starting a videocast/podcast series. The Center also has increased its outreach to young people, in particular women, through a formal mentorship program and outreach workshops and webinars. For more information on the Center's activities please visit http://vcdnp.org.

Recommendations 13, 21 and 23

2. During the reporting period, the VCDNP continued to promote international peace and security through education and training of a wide range of professionals. To this end, the Center held ten short intensive courses. The courses held during the reporting period are covered in brief below and more information on each course can be found on the VCDNP website here: https://vcdnp.org/courses-2/

2a) **Five courses were focused on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament**, with the goal of enhancing knowledge about nuclear disarmament and arms control issues among government representatives of developing countries to strengthen their input into their countries' policies. The course programme, aimed primarily at junior to mid-career diplomats, covers different elements of the international non-proliferation regime, its scientific and technological underpinnings, disarmament efforts, and specific regional concerns. The course usually consists of a one-week in-class session, however, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all but one course were conducted online. Prior to the in-class/synchronous learning session, participants are provided with an online preparatory module. The preparatory component provides the trainees with online access to key reading materials, video lectures and presentations, organized into several

introductory topics, each followed by an online quiz. The in-class/synchronous session combines lectures by prominent experts from the VCDNP, relevant international organizations and other prominent experts with interactive discussions and group activities.

2b) **Two courses with special focus on nuclear security (January 2022) and nuclear safeguards (November 2021**) were also conducted. Both courses were aimed at training diplomats and practitioners in more detail on these two subject matters. Given the pandemic, both courses were held virtually, however, interactive elements were included in the programmes, such as the use of Mentimeter polls and in the case of the safeguards programme, a trivia game modelled on the game show *Jeopardy* was developed to test participants knowledge gained.

2c) **One course for ambassadors new to Vienna** and responsible for covering nuclear issues. The minicourse was held online from 27 to 29 January 2021 and included the participation of 25 ambassadors in Vienna. The programme provided a broad overview of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) as well as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and its review process. Nuclear safeguards, nuclear security and peaceful uses were also addressed. A networking session allowed new Ambassadors to engage with other heads of mission in Vienna.

2d) In the framework of the EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium (EUNPDC), the VCDNP held **two courses** during the reporting period aimed at engaging **students in relevant fields on the topic of arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament**. One course, held in February 2021, brought together 29 students from the biological and chemical sciences exposing them to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The course covered a broad range of topics and was designed to provide an   overview of the basics of biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons and their proliferation, existing control regimes, and potential impact of new and emerging technologies on WMD threats. The other course, held in February 2022, included 20 participants from the Engineering and IT fields to learn more about nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The programme covered the history of the spread of nuclear weapons, key treaties and regimes, export controls and challenges, as well as opportunities presented by advanced and emerging technologies. Both courses were held online due to the pandemic and included interactive elements such as the use of Mentimeter polls, facilitated discussions, group activities and a quiz game.

3. In the framework of the EUNPDC, and in collaboration with the International Affairs Institute (IAI) in Rome, Italy, the VCDNP established the **Young Women and Next Generation Initiative (YWNGI)** to encourage more young women and the next generation to enter the non-proliferation and disarmament field. The initiative was launched in February 2021 with an outstanding panel of women discussing changes in the field of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament as

well as their own career paths. The launch and three subsequent public webinars saw wide participation from various geographical regions, and were typically attended by over 300 individuals, showing a strong interest in the topic and desire to be engaged.

4. As part of the YWNGI, the VCDNP and IAI also launched a **Young Women in Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (YWNPD) Mentorship Programme**. The mentorship programme paired 19 Mentees with 19 Mentors for a year-long engagement to discuss topical matters in the field of arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament as well as seek career advice and network. It also included subsequent events to engage the group as whole, such as socials, expert lectures and a creativity workshop. The programme ended with a final in-person meeting in Rome, Italy. During the programme many of the Mentees secured internships at relevant international organizations in the field, such as the IAEA, CTBTO and UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) in Vienna. While others started jobs in the field, such as one Mentee that is now working for the Small Arms Survey. Several received outstanding recognitions on their academic work inspired by the programme and aided by their Mentors. Many have also decided to continue their academic careers and start master's or PhD programmes in the field or a relevant subject matter, e.g., cyber. [Also compliments Recommendation 19]

5. The VCDNP held one **virtual diplomatic workshop** on 10-11 June 2021 in collaboration with the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS). The workshop focused on preparations for the Tenth NPT Review Conference. The workshop sessions looked at the overall context of the review conference, assessed past commitments and looked towards potential options for an outcome document. The workshop was held via Zoom video conferencing software and brought together around 70 ambassadors and subject matter experts for a candid exchange of ideas.

6. During the reporting period the VCDNP held the final workshop (November 2020) in a three-part workshop series (series started in April 2019) on advanced nuclear and emerging technologies, assessing implications for both safeguards and export controls. The workshops looked at several technologies including but not limited to cloud computing, encryption, distributed ledger technology, additive manufacturing, advanced reactors, and accident tolerant fuels. The technologies were evaluated in the context of safeguards and export controls, especially in terms of compliance, verification, supply chains and business practices. The thee-part workshop series concluded with a recommendation paper on ways to strengthen nuclear safeguards and export controls to meet challenges posed by advanced and emerging technologies. More information on the series and access to the recommendation paper can be found at this link: https://vcdnp.org/emerging-tech-workshop-recs/

Recommendations 2, 4 and 21

7. In order to strengthen academic infrastructures for disarmament and non-proliferation education in Asia, especially among educators, the VCDNP, at the request of the UNODA in Vienna, provided inputs on the development of a four-part roundtable series and participated in the series as facilitators. The VCDNP also contributed to the online training programme for educators. The project ran from November 2020 to April 2021.

8. The VCDNP consistently updates and revises the online preparatory module for participants in its intensive short course on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The online module addresses core topics, and, for each topic, provides recommended readings, background materials, short video presentations and a quiz to test the user's knowledge. The VCDNP, decided to make the online module open to the public in order to offer resources to a wider audience. The module can be accessed via this link: https://course.vcdnp.org/online-course/

9. The VCDNP developed an eLearning module on Gender and Disarmament for the EUNPDC eLearning course. Filled with videos, photos, graphs and quizzes, the eLearning unit takes the participant on a journey to understanding the importance of gender in disarmament issues. Divided into five chapters, the eLearning unit covers key terms, historical events, the establishment of the UN Framework, featuring landmark UN Security Council resolution 1325, covers relevant treaties, conventions, action plans and initiatives, and provides information on the EU's position, strategies and key actors. In the development of the eLearning unit the UNODA Vienna Office was engaged in the process, allowing the eLearning unit to feature UNODA resources in its content, such as its Women Scholarship for Peace and Gender Perspectives on Disarmament publications. The eLearning unit is available to the public and can be accessed using this link: https://vcdnp.org/eu-elearning-unit-gender-and-disarmament/

10. The VCDNP delivers lectures to professionals and students at CNS in Monterey, California, and in Washington, DC, on nuclear arms control and disarmament matters via Zoom video conferencing software.

11. The VCDNP often provides lectures to student groups from the UN Disarmament Fellows programme, local universities, and other universities in Europe and around the world. Often these lectures are in person and the VCDNP frequently hosts student groups at the Center. However, given the pandemic, many of these visits had to be conducted online. The visits include lectures on non-proliferation and disarmament issues, as well as briefings on the work of the Center and discussion on the role of non-governmental organizations in shaping international non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament agenda. VCDNP experts are also frequently invited by academic institutions, international organizations, and civil society to deliver lectures and

participate in courses and conferences around the world. One example worth mentioning is the VCDNP's engagement in the UN Institute for Disarmament Research diplomatic courses.

12. The VCDNP is increasingly utilizing social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to disseminate information regarding publications and events to a wider range of audiences. In this regard, the VCDNP has seen a surge in its number of Twitter followers, especially since the pandemic pushed VCDNP to conduct its activities online. VCDNP now has over 5000 Twitter followers.

Recommendations 19 and 24

13. The VCDNP offers three- to six- month long paid internships to graduate level students with a policy and/or scientific background who are looking to gain practical experience in disarmament and non-proliferation. Interns conduct independent research projects on related issues, working alongside VCDNP experts and contributing to the Center's activities. During the reporting period, the VCDNP hosted eight interns.

14. The VCDNP offers fellowship opportunities to pre- and post-doctoral and sabbatical applicants. Fellowships are offered for a period of six months to a year, during which each of the fellows conduct research and publish/prepare for the publication of a significant work in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, or a related field. Fellows also contribute to the ongoing research and other activities of the VCDNP. During the reporting period, the VCDNP hosted two fellows.

Recommendation 26

15. The VCDNP in collaboration with CNS launched a monthly videocast series entitled *Machiavelli in the Ivory Tower* on arms control, non-proliferation and international security issues facing policymakers today. The series provides a bridge between scholarship and the real world. Each episode breaks down complex topics and offers different perspectives on the matter being discussed. To reach a wider audience, the videocast series is also available as a podcast on Amazon, Google, Spotify and Apple products.

16. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the VCDNP moved its seminar series online. As long as speakers agree, all of these events are recorded and made available to viewers and interested individuals to access later in different time zones. Recordings are all accessible on the VCDNP website (https://vcdnp.org/events/) as well as YouTube.