

Disarmament Orientation Course, August 2020: Backgrounder: UNIDIR

United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)

In 1978 the UN General Assembly in Special Session (UNSSOD-1) recognised that existing disarmament machinery would need to be strengthened to enable the UN to implement the agreed outcome of the Session, including in the research area. Later that year as a follow-up to UNSSOD-1, the General Assembly (UNGA) on the initiative of France asked the Secretary-General to report on ways of establishing an international institute for disarmament research under UN auspices. This led to a UNGA Resolution in 1980 establishing UNIDIR as an autonomous institution within the United Nations conducting independent research on disarmament and related problems particularly international security issues. (Article II, paragraph 2 of UNIDIR's [Statute](#) contains the Institute's mandate.)

UNIDIR is primarily funded by voluntary contributions from Member States. It receives a small subvention from the regular budget and is ODA-eligible. The Institute reports annually to UNGA and the First Committee formally considers UNIDIR every five years. The next quintennial resolution is expected to be considered in 2020, during the 75th session of the UNGA.

The United Nations Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters serves as UNIDIR's Board of Trustees. The Board governs the activities and operations of the Institute, including financial matters and meets twice yearly, in Geneva and New York respectively. The members of the Board are chosen by the UN Secretary-General from all regions of the world for their knowledge and serve in their personal capacity. The Secretary-General reports annually on the activities of the Board.

UNIDIR's provides information, ideas and advice and facilitate dialogues to advance multilateral arms control and disarmament. Its status within the United Nations system enables it to engage with and support Member State deliberations. By convening expert voices from the public and private sectors, UNIDIR facilitates crucial informal dialogue as well as knowledge and capacity-building. The Institute's authoritative, evidence-based research informs and guides policymakers and disarmament practitioners alike. In these challenging times, the importance of new ideas and practical policy research is ever more critical to help the international community effectively respond.

For forty years, UNIDIR has been committed to helping Member States understand and address a complex international security environment. The Institute's work integrates disarmament across the Sustainable Development Goals and supports the implementation of the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda entitled 'Securing Our Common Future'. UNIDIR's current programmes are [Weapons of Mass Destruction and Other Strategic Weapons](#), [Security and Technology](#), [Conventional Arms](#), [Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone](#) and [Gender and Disarmament](#).

The Institute produces a wide range of [publications](#). It convenes a variety of seminars, workshops and other [events](#) in Geneva and beyond. UNIDIR also supports disarmament education through the provision of the annual Geneva orientation course, subject matter exercises and policy primers and its experts deliver lectures and trainings in many parts of the world.

UNIDIR [staff](#) welcome the opportunity to discuss its work with other practitioners and those interested in relevant global security issues. The Institute is located in the Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland.

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