



Programme

2025 Disarmament Orientation Course

About

The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the Geneva Branch of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) are pleased to host the sixth edition of the Disarmament Orientation Course.

The course is open to diplomats or officials with responsibilities for disarmament and arms control matters who recently arrived in Geneva or are to be posted to Geneva within the next six to twelve months. Its main objectives are to:

- Provide practitioners with a basic introduction to the matters that Geneva-based disarmament and arms control bodies address and seek to advance;
- Outline current challenges facing these bodies and processes in today's security context; and
- Draw attention to practical and educational resources available for practitioners.

Structure

The course is structured in six thematic modules, each encompassing in-person discussion sessions, accompanying course material and recommended readings. Cross-cutting issues, including diversity, gender, civil society, youth perspectives, development and human-centered disarmament will be discussed throughout the programme.

Module 1:	Scene-setting: context, main mechanisms, current trends and developments, institutional support, including practical tools & cross-cutting topics
Module 2:	The Conference on Disarmament and its subsidiary bodies
Module 3:	Outer Space Security
Module 4:	Biological Weapons Convention
Module 5:	Conventional Weapons
Module 6:	AI, LAWS and cyber



2025 Syllabus

Module 1: Scene-setting: context, main mechanisms, current trends and developments

Monday, 15 September, 8:00-10:00 CEST, Room VIII, Palais des Nations

Key learning objectives

- Understand the relationship and interactions between the global political and security environment, disarmament diplomacy and efforts of the Geneva based disarmament community.
- Introduce the key components of the multilateral disarmament machinery including Geneva based structure/bodies, roles, dynamics, procedures, as well as the substantive and organizational support provided by the Secretariat.

Topics

- The global security context: an overview of current and recent developments and their implications for arms control and disarmament.
- The role, history, evolution and current status of the disarmament machinery.
- Institutional, substantive and organizational support provided by both the Secretariat and UNIDIR.
- Introduction to practical tools for the benefit of Geneva-Based diplomats and cross-cutting topics

Module 2: The Conference on Disarmament and its subsidiary bodies

Thursday, 18 September, 8 :00-10 :00 CEST, Room VIII, Palais des Nations

Key learning objectives

- Understand the history, mandate, rule of procedures and functioning of the CD.
- Understand the agenda of the CD.
- Take stock of the recent work of the subsidiary bodies and implementation of continuity in the work of the Conference.

Topics

- Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament
- Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters
- Prevention of an arms race in outer space
- Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons



- New types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons; radiological weapons - Comprehensive programme of disarmament - Transparency in armaments

Module 3: Outer Space Security and Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS)

Friday, 19 September, 8:00-10:00 CEST, Room VIII, Palais des Nations

Key learning objectives

- Understand the key issues and emerging challenges for multilateral governance of outer space.
- Take stock of recent developments, ongoing processes and provide reflections for moving forward in multilateral negotiations.
- Understand the key and developing issues in outer space security governance and the status of the Open-ended working group on the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS), in all its aspects

Topics

- Prevention of an arms race in outer space: the Open-Ended Working Group on the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) in all its aspects.
- Differing approaches to space security.
- Advances in dual-use space technologies.

Module 4: Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)

Monday, 22 September, 8:00-10:00 CEST, Room VIII, Palais des Nations

Key learning objectives

- Understand the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), its history, the efforts of the Working Group to Strengthen the Convention.
- Take stock of the opportunities and challenges that scientific and technological advances present for the BWC and its States Parties.

Topics

- Introduction to the BWC and its history.
- The Working Group to strengthen the Convention.
- Opportunities and challenges of scientific and technological advances for the BWC.



Module 5: Conventional Weapons

Tuesday, 23 September, 8:00-10:00 CEST, Room VIII, Palais des Nations

Key learning objectives

- Understand the key issues and current developments relating to international conventions that prohibit or restrict the use of certain types of conventional weapons.
- Taking stock and preparing for ongoing multilateral negotiations (CCW, EWIPA, APMBC, CCM)
- Understand the key issues and current developments relating to international treaties and processes that regulate the transfer and use of conventional weapons and ammunition.

Topics

- Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)
- Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC)
- Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM)
- Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA)
- The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and other processes that regulate the transfer and use of conventional weapons and ammunition
- Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management

Module 6: AI LAWS and cyber

Thursday, 25 September, 8:00 – 10:00 CEST, Room IX, Palais des Nations

Key learning objectives

- Introduce the different processes and concepts; participants will be familiarized with the main concepts surrounding these topics, milestones and significant upcoming events.
- Take stock of recent developments, ongoing preparatory processes and provide reflections for moving forward in multilateral negotiations.
- Familiarize with the CCW Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), including the main concepts relating to LAWS, an overview of proposals made to date on LAWS governance and information on upcoming processes at the CCW and General Assembly.
- Engage in an interactive simulation of LAWS negotiations

Topics

- Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS)
- The integration of AI in the military domain beyond lethal autonomous weapon systems, including the nascent efforts at the national and international level to move towards responsible approaches and behaviours.



- Discuss the recent and successful conclusion of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on ICT Security (2021-2025) and next steps for the commencement of the new Global Mechanism in 2026.

Disclaimer: Please note that photos will be taken during the course, which may be published via UNIDIR and UNODA communication channels and materials in the future. If you have any concerns or objections, please reach out to the DOC Team.