FACT SHEET

UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME
OF FELLOWSHIPS ON DISARMAMENT

Launched by the General Assembly in 1978 at its first special session devoted to disarmament, the Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament aims to train and build the capacity of officials from Member States to enable them to participate more effectively in international disarmament deliberating and negotiating fora.

The Fellowship Programme Itinerary and Content

Implemented by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), the Fellowship Programme is composed of three segments.

In August of each year, the first segment starts at the United Nations Office at Geneva. The Fellows are introduced to various aspects of multilateral disarmament diplomacy, in particular the work of the Conference on Disarmament and several treaty regimes, such as the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), the Mine Ban Treaty (APLC), the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). This segment includes a study visit to Berne at the invitation of the Government of Switzerland.

Throughout the month of September, the Fellows engage in the second segment of the programme comprised of study visits to several international organizations related to disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. These include the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and several export control regimes (Wassenaar Arrangement, Nuclear Suppliers Group, etc.) in Vienna as well as the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court in The Hague. During this segment, and at the invitation of various Governments, the Fellows also participate in country-specific study visits.
The third segment takes place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York during the month of October where the Fellows follow the work of the First Committee of the General Assembly and also become familiar with a variety of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control issues.

The Programme tries to balance theory with practice: on the one hand, it consists of lectures, presentations, round tables, panels and other forms of discussion with senior diplomats and officials from international organisations, representatives of the academia, think-tanks and NGOs on the disarmament machinery and key disarmament issues. On the other hand, the Fellows follow demonstrations of in-site inspections, visit weapons destruction sites, nuclear reactor and a test site, laboratories, participate in simulation and other practical exercises.

The Selection Process

Participants in the Fellowship Programme are selected by UNODA on the basis of nominations from Member States. The selection process takes into account the greater needs of developing countries and the need for geographical and gender balance.

Facts

- Since its establishment in 1978, the Programme has trained 1008 government officials from 169 States, a large number of whom are now holding positions of responsibility in the field of disarmament within their own Governments and in disarmament-related international organizations.
- The first Fellowship “class” took place in 1979. During the first years of its existence the Programme lasted 5-6 months. For financial reasons, however, it was shortened throughout the years and today it lasts about ten weeks.

For more information: http://www.unog.ch/disarmament/fellowship