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## UNITED NATIONS (UN)

### OFFICE FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS (ODA)

The [Office for Disarmament Affairs](#) provides substantive and organizational support to Member States in the area of disarmament through the work of the General Assembly and its First Committee, the Disarmament Commission, the Conference on Disarmament, and other bodies. It fosters preventive disarmament measures, such as dialogue, transparency, and confidence-building on military matters, and encourages regional disarmament efforts. It also provides information on UN disarmament efforts. The ODA supports the development and implementation of practical disarmament measures after a conflict, such as disarming and demobilizing former combatants and helping them to reintegrate into civil society.

The ODA promotes the goals of nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation and the strengthening of disarmament regimes with respect to other WMD. It also promotes disarmament efforts in the area of conventional weapons, especially landmines and small arms, the weapons of choice in contemporary conflicts.

The ODA was originally established as the Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA) in 1982—upon the recommendation of the General Assembly's second special session on disarmament (SSOD II)—and continued until 1992. It was re-established in January 1998 by General Assembly Resolution 52/12.

In early 2007, newly elected Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, proposed a reorganization of the DDA from an independent department to an office under the Department of Political Affairs. He reasoned that this would allow greater proximity and involvement of the Secretary General in disarmament matters, which he aimed to make a high priority of his tenure. This proposal, however, was met with swift and strong opposition from many in the disarmament community in both government and civil society who viewed such an adjustment as a US effort to significantly downgrade the importance of disarmament within the UN. In the end, a compromise was reached: the Department for Disarmament Affairs was renamed the Office for Disarmament Affairs

while its staff, organizational structure, and mandate remained intact. The position of Undersecretary General for Disarmament Affairs was renamed High Representative for Disarmament. Ambassador Sergio Duarte of Brazil was appointed as High Representative in July 2007.

The ODA works on a budget of just over \$10 million per year, which covers operations and offices in New York, Geneva, Lome, Lima, and Kathmandu. At the beginning of 2009, 108 staff members were assigned as follows: New York – 57 (plus 10 working for the 1540 Committee); Geneva – 14; Lome – 10; Lima – 14; Kathmandu – 3.

#### **The Weapons of Mass Destruction Branch (New York):**

The WMD Branch provides substantive support for the WMD disarmament activities of the UN. It follows closely all developments and trends with regard to all aspects of WMD in order to keep the secretary-general fully informed and to provide information to Member States and the international community. It supports and participates in multilateral efforts to strengthen the nonproliferation of WMD and cooperates with the relevant intergovernmental organizations and specialized agencies of the UN system, in particular the IAEA, the OPCW, and the CTBTO PrepCom. It also provides substantive and secretariat support to the States Parties to the NPT.

#### **Conventional Arms Branch (New York):**

The Conventional Arms Branch provides substantive support for UN efforts to prevent the proliferation of conventional weapons. This branch monitors trends, identifies emerging issues and challenges, analyzes their implications, and makes recommendations on possible strategies for the UN to maintain conventional weapons control and practical disarmament. It also serves as a focal point within the Department and the Secretariat for the implementation of mandates pertaining to the disarmament components of peace operations undertaken by, or in conjunction with the UN. Additionally, the branch is the lead

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agency of the Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) mechanism, which was established by the secretary-general in 1998 to harmonize policy and coordinate action by the various UN agencies working in this field.

To enhance the level of transparency in military matters, and contribute to confidence-building and security among States, the branch operates two transparency measures—the UN Register of Conventional Weapons and the Standard Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures. It also provides secretariat services to the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, which was established by the General Assembly to promote arms restraint, disarmament, and confidence-building measures, in the central African sub-region. The branch supports the implementation of practical disarmament measures after a conflict, such as disarmament and demobilization of former combatants and helping them to reintegrate into civil society.

#### **Regional Disarmament Branch (New York):**

The Regional Disarmament Branch carries out the DDA's responsibilities on the regional level and from a regional perspective. Its field of expertise comprises arms control and disarmament initiatives at regional and sub-regional levels, cross-fertilization of disarmament ideas and initiatives across regions, consolidation and cooperation with regional groupings, landmines and explosive remnants of war, as well as gender-related aspects of disarmament.

This branch also oversees and coordinates the activities of the three Regional Centers for Peace and Disarmament located in Asia (Katmandu, Nepal), Africa (Lomé, Togo), and Latin America (Lima, Peru). The centers were established to promote regional cooperation in order to contribute to the implementation and coordination of regional activities under the UN Disarmament Information Program, and to facilitate the development of effective measures of confidence-building, arms limitation, and disarmament.

#### **Information and Outreach Branch (New York):**

IOB organizes a wide variety of special events and programs in the field of disarmament, produces UNODA publications (such as the Disarmament Yearbook and ODA Occasional Papers), updates content and design of the UNODA website, and maintains databases for specialized areas (Status and Texts of Disarmament Treaties, General Assembly Resolutions and Decisions and UNODA Documents Library).

#### **Conference on Disarmament Secretariat & Conference Support Branch (Geneva):**

The main activities of the Geneva Branch of the ODA include providing secretariat, administrative, and substantive support to the Conference on Disarmament; maintaining a reference library of documentation relating to disarmament and international security; providing secretariat, administrative, and substantive support to conferences and meetings on multilateral disarmament agreements held in Europe; and overseeing the implementation of the UN disarmament fellowship, training, and advisory services program.

#### **Developments:**

**2009:** On 18 February, the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ambassador Sergio Duarte, gave [opening remarks](#) at the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters at UN Headquarters. He announced that the two principal items on the Board's agenda for 2009 would be "1) cyber warfare and its effect on international security; and 2) ways to strengthen verification, including the role of the United Nations."

In March, the Occasional papers series, sponsored by the UNODA, published ["Developing a Biological Incident Database."](#)

On 14 March, the High Representative made a statement entitled ["Response to Remarks made by Chairman Boniface G. Chidyausiku."](#) at the Meeting on Prospects for the 2009 NPT PrepCom, held in Annecy, France. He spoke out against "dire predictions" of the "pending doom of the NPT regime," saying that these concerns were only due to "nuclear activities in a tiny number of states." At the same time, he called on the NPT states parties to make "sustained, parallel progress in implementing all parts of the treaty."

On 18 March, the UN Headquarters hosted an event to encourage the early entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM).

On 30 March, the High Representative gave [opening remarks](#) at the International Symposium on Nuclear Security held by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna, Austria. He highlighted the importance of nuclear security as a "global public good," while stressing that it needed to be achieved through the "rule of law."

On 3 April, the High Representative gave opening remarks at a special briefing and strategy session entitled, ["Contributions of the United Nations System in Advancing the Entry Into Force of the Compre-](#)

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[hensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.](#)” He urged the United States Senate to ratify the CTBT, asserting that this would help cause a “‘cascade’ of states to follow suit,” which would work towards the ultimate goal of “de-legitimizing nuclear weapons.”

The UNODA hosted a United Nations Workshop on Implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) on 8-11 March in Qatar and another in Vanuatu 29 April to 1 May.

On 1 May at the Brookings Institutions in Washington, D.C., the High Representative gave “[An Update on the Disarmament Cascade](#)” at the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission’s final meeting. He spoke about the twin challenges of non-compliant states that threatened the NPT regime and the ultimate goal of general disarmament. He urged states not to focus solely on one of these issues but rather to work towards achieving both goals simultaneously.

**2008:** The UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ambassador Sergio Duarte, traveled to Washington, DC on 7 February and gave a presentation to the Organization of American States (OAS) on “The Consolidation of the Regime Established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco and to Promote the Full Force and Effect of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)”.

On 28 April, Ambassador Duarte addressed the Second Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review in Geneva. He urged countries to work together “to achieve the Treaty’s three primary goals with the highest possible levels of accountability and transparency.”

UNODA announced the launch of its new [website](#), designed to provide easy access to disarmament resources and research tools including the status and texts of treaties, UNGA resolutions and decisions, UNODA publications, and disarmament education.

**2007:** In his first month in office, Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon proposed reorganizing the Department of Disarmament Affairs to come under the Department of Political Affairs. Moon insisted this move was to allow for closer involvement and leadership on disarmament issues. This proposal received substantial opposition, especially from members of the non-aligned movement (NAM) who saw the reorganization as a downgrade in the importance of the ODA and a dramatic increase in the influence of the United States. The proposal was eventually dropped.

In December, the ODA launched a website to provide the public with current and informative content on the work of the 1540 Committee.

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