



## The ABCs of Initiatives for Disarmament & Non-Proliferation Education by Masako Toki & William C. Potter

**E**ducation and training are among the most important but underutilized tools for promoting disarmament and non-proliferation. Although few national governments or international organizations have invested significantly in such training programs, there is a growing recognition among States of the need to rectify this situation. This positive development is reflected in the broad support for recommendations of a UN study on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education and in related initiatives within the review process of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

In view of the forthcoming 2005 NPT Review Conference, it is useful to take stock of the implementation of the UN study's recommendations. In particular, it is important to observe the progress that has been made within the context of the NPT review process, as well as the obstacles that must be overcome if the full potential for disarmament and non-proliferation education is to be realized.

### The UN Study: How to Think About Issues

The UN study was commissioned by Secretary-General Kofi Annan under a General Assembly resolution in 2000 that was sponsored by Mexico and eleven other nations. In August 2002, the convened group of experts from Egypt, Hungary, India, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Poland, Senegal, and Sweden reported the study, presenting Secretary-General Annan with a consensus document that included 34 practical recommendations. The General Assembly endorsed the study in November 2002 and conveyed its recommendations for implementation by Member States, the UN and other international organizations, civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the media.

Space does not permit an enumeration—much less an analysis—of the study's 34 recommendations. All are informed, however, by the premise that contemporary disarmament and non-proliferation education must strive to teach “how to think” rather than “what to think” about peace and security issues. The key educational objective, in other words, is developing critical thinking skills. This objective may be facilitated, for example, by promoting participatory learning, introducing disarmament and non-proliferation at all levels of formal and informal education, utilizing new information and communication technologies, providing on-the-job training opportunities as a supplement to classroom education, and improving liaison among relevant UN bodies.

### Implementing the Recommendations

In November 2004, UN Secretary-General Annan reported to the General Assembly on the implementation of the study's recommendations. The study—as well as a new General Assembly resolution adopted on the subject—illustrate both the promise of disarmament and non-proliferation education and the difficulty of moving from agreement about broad principles to implementation of concrete and practical measures.

The Secretary-General's report conveyed useful responses from Hungary, Mexico, New Zealand, the Russian Federation, Sweden, and Venezuela on steps they have taken with respect to implementing the UN study. New Zealand's commentary is especially detailed and could serve as model for future reports by other States. The report by the Russian Federation also is significant for its rich content and the fact that it represents the first formal engagement by a nuclear-weapons State in the reporting process. In addition, informative reports were provided by the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs, the UN Department of Public Information, the UN Institute

for Disarmament Research, the International Atomic Energy Agency, UN University, and the University for Peace, as well as five NGOs.

Less encouraging is the very small number of UN Member States that have provided reports to date. Particularly surprising and discouraging is the failure of even half of the Member States that participated on the Group of Experts to submit their responses in a timely fashion. To some extent, the low reporting rate is probably a function of the newness of the reporting mechanism, the lack of obvious points of contact in some government entities, and the fact that many States were unaware of the reporting deadlines.

A more positive sign is the significant increase in the number of sponsors for the latest UN General Assembly resolution in 2004 addressing disarmament and non-proliferation education. Thirty-one States co-sponsored the resolution – including all States that participated in the UN study, as well as two States with demonstrated nuclear-weapons capabilities (France and India). The resolution, among other things, places “Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education” on the provisional agenda for the 61st session of the General Assembly—an indication of the UN body’s recognition of the need to consider the topic on a regular basis.

## The NPT Review Process

The education issue was initially raised in the NPT review process in April 2002 at the first session of the Preparatory Committee (Prep Com) for the 2005 NPT Review Conference. Japan, Kyrgyzstan, New Zealand, and Sweden were among NPT States that made reference to the issue, and the importance of education for “strengthening disarmament and non-proliferation for future generations” was noted in the Chairman’s Factual Summary of the Prep Com. At the 2003 NPT Prep Com many more States spoke positively about the role of education as a disarmament and non-proliferation tool, and Japan, on behalf of itself and seven other States, submitted a working paper. In addition, the Prep Com Chairman’s Factual Summary noted that States welcomed the report of the UN Experts Group and were encouraged to include in their education and training programs information about the Treaty, its Review Conferences, and the work of States to implement the Treaty. An even larger number of States, including three of those possessing nuclear weapons, supported the concept of disarmament and non-proliferation education at the 2004 NPT Prep Com. Despite widespread support for the issue, including a new working paper introduced by Japan on behalf of itself and seven other states, the 2004 Prep Com was unable to agree on any recommendations (on education or any other issues) to the 2005 Review Conference.

## Next Steps

It has proved relatively easy in the NPT context to gain near consensus among NPT States for support of the general

concept of disarmament and non-proliferation education. The more difficult but important task now is to translate that support in principle into meaningful action that promotes the NPT objectives and furthers its full and effective implementation.

Because of its recent origin, there is not yet a precedent for where the education issue belongs on the agenda for the NPT Review Conference. Although the topic tended to be discussed primarily with reference to the cluster of disarmament issues in the 2002, 2003, and 2004 Prep Coms, an argument can be made that disarmament and non-proliferation education is equally relevant to the issues of non-proliferation, safeguards, compliance, peaceful use of nuclear energy, export controls, nuclear weapon-free zones, and regional issues.

For example, one might seek support from the NPT States Parties at the 2005 Review conference for the following measures.

*Non-proliferation:* NPT States should be encouraged to allocate additional financial resources to develop, enhance, and support non-proliferation education activities, including the provision of fellowships to graduate students for advanced, multi-disciplinary training in non-proliferation. States should be encouraged to establish internship programs within relevant governmental agencies, and international organizations with responsibilities for non-proliferation should provide graduate students with on-the-job training. Relevant governmental agencies, in cooperation with NGOs, should be encouraged to develop and disseminate user-friendly non-proliferation educational materials to audiences at all educational levels.

*Safeguards:* NPT States should be encouraged to hold regional seminars in cooperation with the IAEA to facilitate the conclusion of and enhanced adherence to safeguards agreements and the additional protocol. The IAEA should be encouraged to develop more user-friendly and interactive on-line information materials, and to serve as the information clearinghouse on all issues associated with international safeguards.

*Compliance:* NPT States should be encouraged to develop educational materials addressing the importance of compliance with all NPT provisions, as well as the consequences on proliferation. States should cooperate with academic and research institutes to organize seminars with a view to promoting full compliance with all NPT provisions.

*Peaceful Uses:* The nuclear industry and academic institutes should be encouraged to partner with NPT States and relevant international organizations to identify, assess, and disseminate information about new approaches—both technical and political—for promoting peaceful nuclear energy that minimize its potential abuse for military purposes.

*Export Controls:* NPT States, in cooperation with regional and international organizations, should be encouraged to increase

their support for training courses on non-proliferation export controls for governmental officials and law enforcement officers. Government agencies dealing with export controls should be encouraged to disseminate more public information about export control mechanisms and their contribution to non-proliferation. Academic institutes and non-governmental organizations should be encouraged to organize training courses and seminars with a view to facilitating the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

*Disarmament:* NPT States should be encouraged to cooperate with academic institutions to develop model university curricula on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. States should be encouraged to increase their support for the disarmament and non-proliferation activities of the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs, UNIDIR, and other international organizations in pursuit of their implementation of the recommendations of the UN study.

*Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZs), and Regional Issues:* NPT States and regional organizations such as the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) should be encouraged to disseminate more information to the general public on the contributions of NWFZs to disarmament, non-proliferation, and regional security. Academic institutes and NGOs should be encouraged to analyze the lessons learned from extant NWFZs with an eye to making recommendations about means to accelerate the entry into force of NWFZs already negotiated and the conclusion of additional NWFZs on the basis of agreements freely arrived at by States in the region.

### Forging Active Partnerships

Major strides have been taken in a relatively short period of time to regularize the consideration of disarmament and non-proliferation education at major fora such as the First Committee of the UN General Assembly and the NPT review process. Much more, however, needs to be done if the potential of the practical steps recommended by the UN Group of Experts is to be realized.

Among the obstacles that will have to be overcome are limited finances, bureaucratic inertia, competing priorities, and questionable political will on the part of many national governments. These constraints, however, are always present and should not be insurmountable given the compelling logic of the UN study's recommendations and as long as the natural constituencies for disarmament and non-proliferation education are mobilized.

More than anything, successful implementation of the steps called for by the UN study will require an active partnership among national governments, international organizations, educational institutions, and civil society. Hopefully, such an education-oriented coalition will find expression at the 2005

## Resources on the Web

Resources on disarmament and non-proliferation education are increasingly available on the Internet. The UN Department for Disarmament Affairs has launched new features on its web site that include links to academic institutes, governmental centers, NGOs and other bodies engaged in educational efforts. Check the pages at <http://disarmament2.un.org/DNPE.nsf>

As part of its mission to combat the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) by training the next generation of nonproliferation specialists and raising global public awareness on WMD issues, the Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS) has developed a series of tutorials for non-proliferation and disarmament education. Among these tutorials, the NPT Tutorial has been designed to educate and provide useful material about the treaty through interactive text and enriched multimedia segments, including timelines, maps, and numerous links to relevant resources. The tutorial is a self-paced learning environment accessible through the web to everyone. In addition to the NPT tutorial, which was created in 2002 and recently updated in response to recent changes in the non-proliferation environment, CNS has developed a Chemical Warfare Tutorial, a Biological Warfare Tutorial and a Radiological Terrorism Tutorial. Please see these tutorials at: [http://www.nti.org/h\\_learnmore/h3\\_tutorial.html](http://www.nti.org/h_learnmore/h3_tutorial.html).

Among other resources are teaching guides developed by the Monterey Institute's Center for Nonproliferation Studies through its Critical Issues Forum (CIF). The Forum seeks to increase awareness of disarmament and non-proliferation issues and to engage and recruit the next generation of specialists. CIF is designed to involve high school students and teachers in issues of proliferation and control of weapons of mass destruction. Check the pages at [www.criticalissuesforum.org](http://www.criticalissuesforum.org).

More information on the UN Study (UN document A/57/124) and General Assembly resolutions (GA 57/60, Nov. 2002 and GA 59/93, Nov. 2004) on disarmament and non-proliferation education is available on the web pages of the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs at <http://disarmament2.un.org/education>.

NPT Review Conference, which will be an opportunity to demonstrate that even diplomats are susceptible to learning about disarmament and non-proliferation.

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