

WHAT'S YOUR BETTERWORLD ISSUE? DISARMAMENT



"Controlled, universal disarmament is the imperative of our time. The demand for it by the hundreds of millions whose chief concern is the long future of themselves and their children will, I hope, become so universal and so insistent that no man, no government anywhere, can withstand it." -- Dwight D. Eisenhower

Many people believe that the world would be a more peaceful place if there were fewer weapons. An important focus of even the earliest peace movements was to advocate for disarmament -- convincing nations to keep only the weapons they need for an adequate police force. "Peace through Disarmament" is a major focus for the United Nations. The UN has made some progress towards disarmament, with treaties and conventions that create guidelines and international laws about weapons production and exportation to other countries. But the UN can only do what nations allow it to do, and unfortunately, the profits many nations make from exporting weapons has slowed progress in disarmament over the years.

Disarmament efforts focus on two basic types of weapons -- **weapons of mass destruction**, including nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, and **small arms**. Much attention has naturally been spent on working to halt the nuclear arms race because of the devastating amount of damage that these weapons can do. Progress has been made, but there are still more than 30,000-50,000 nuclear warheads - enough to destroy the entire planet many times over. WMDs may get much of the public attention, but small arms disarmament is also an important, although controversial issue, for many. There are more than 600 million guns in the world! 1 million people are injured by guns each year, and 300,000 are killed with guns.

Disarmament Week (which begins on October 24 -- the anniversary of the UN's founding) is an important occasion to raise awareness in the public and among governments, about the crucial need to recognize disarmament as a key element in creating a more peaceful, just and sustainable world.

Be A Hero For A Better World!

1. Find out more about nuclear disarmament and gun control
2. Have an event or a dialogue about nuclear disarmament and gun control
3. Support organizations working to stop the proliferation of weapons

Disarmament Links

- Abolition 2000 (abolition2000.org)
- Arms Control Association (armscontrol.org)
- Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence (stopthenra.com)
- Intl. Action Network on Small Arms (iansa.org)
- Intl. Campaign to Ban Landmines (icbl.org)
- NGO Committee on Disarmament (disarm.igc.org)
- Nuclear Age Peace Foundation (napf.org)
- Project Ploughshares (ploughshares.org)
- UN Office for Disarmament (disarmament.un.org)

For more information: www.betterworld.net/disarmament.htm

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