



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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Disarmament, public health, and pandemics:

Parliamentary action on disarmament to support public health, peace and economic sustainability in relation to pandemic prevention, management and mitigation

Webinar co-organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND) and the World Future Council

Second international parliamentary event in follow-up to the publication of *Assuring our Common Future*

9 November 2021, Session A: Timed for Asia/Pacific: 7:00-8:30 CET

10 November 2021, Session B: Timed for the Americas/Europe/Africa: 16.00 – 17:30 CET

Disarmament is usually considered to be a security issue. However, it is equally relevant as a health issue. Weapons testing, trade and use impact considerably people's lives and wellbeing, killing or severely injuring hundreds of thousands of people annually. In addition, the high levels of human and economic resources invested in weapons deprive health and social systems of the resources needed for resilience and universality. The COVID-19 pandemic has showcased and accentuated this reality.

As the pandemic began spreading around the world in early 2020, it became increasingly clear that societies in armed conflict, and those that had prioritised investment in military security, were less able to contain and address the pandemic than societies experiencing peace and social cohesion, and that had given priority to measures of human security and sustainable development, such as public health and education.

In March 2020, the UN Secretary general launched a global ceasefire initiative with additional support for UN special envoys to reinforce diplomatic action, help create conditions for the delivery of lifesaving aid, and bring support to populations that are among the most vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic. The IPU supported this initiative, including through a statement released in April 2020, stressing the need for peace efforts and a reprioritization of human security in the context of the pandemic.

The joint publication "[Assuring our Common Future](#)" discusses further the negative correlations between high military expenditure, unrestricted arms flows and armed conflict on the one hand with resilient social and health systems required to adequately address pandemic prevention, management and mitigation. See *Assuring our Common Future*: Chapter 6: Pandemics and disarmament, public health, and sustainability.

Objectives of the event

1. Increase awareness of the connections between disarmament, peace, public health and pandemic management;
2. Identify challenges and opportunities that could help parliaments play a more active role in public health-oriented disarmament, especially to address pandemic and post-pandemic public health needs;
3. Share 'good parliamentary practices' and effective policies on disarmament for public health, including measures that help advance disarmament during and after the COVID-19 pandemic and to build back better from the pandemic.

Language: The event will take place as an online webinar. Session 1 in English and Session 2 in English, French, and Spanish via simultaneous translation.

Registration:

For Sitting A: **9 November 2021** - 7:00 – 8:30 CET - Timed to suit participants Asia and the Pacific/Oceania – Event in English only - Delegates can register online at the following link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_esyFLwmZSj-3_qzBO2uDFg

For Sitting B: **10 November 2021** - 16.00 – 17:30 CET - Timed to suit participants from the Americas, Africa and Europe – Event in English, French and Spanish - Delegates can register online at the following link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_gJICL7yORTKOGLEQ2StV-A