

Gender & Disarmament Resource Pack

for multilateral practitioners



INTERNATIONAL
GENDER
CHAMPIONS
DISARMAMENT

About the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group

The Impact Group seeks to promote dialogue, shared knowledge and the pursuit of concrete opportunities to advance gender-responsive action within disarmament processes.

The Impact Group is co-chaired by the Ambassadors of Canada, Ireland and Namibia, and the Director of UNIDIR.

#DisarmG

January 2019

Gender & Disarmament Resource Pack

To contribute to the goal of achieving gender equality in multilateral disarmament fora, the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group developed this resource pack. It includes basic information on gender equality and its relevance to arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament, as well as practical ideas that can support diplomats in applying a gender lens to their work.

The document is structured in four parts:

1. Why gender and disarmament?

Part 1 presents key concepts and main approaches for integrating gender perspectives into arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament.

2. Progress to date

Part 2 highlights how gender perspectives have been applied to relevant arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament agreements and United Nations General Assembly resolutions.

3. Areas for action

Part 3 offers practical guidance on how to make multilateral meetings more inclusive and gender-responsive.

4. Further Resources

Part 4 provides a non-exhaustive list of statements, working papers and studies addressing gender perspectives in arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament.

Part 1. Why Gender & Disarmament?

The term gender refers to the roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate or as a 'norm' for men and women. Gender norms determine the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female, the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, and the relationships among women and among men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization, the process by which gender norms are developed, refined and learned through interaction with family, peers and other social agents. Gender norms are context- and time-specific, and changeable.

Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies, gender norms have resulted in differences and thus, inequalities between women and men in terms of their socially assigned responsibilities, roles, access to and control over resources, and decision-making opportunities.

In arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament, there are two main avenues through which gender perspectives can be addressed. The first approach involves **applying a gender analysis (or 'gender lens')**; that is, to consider how the attributes, opportunities and relationships associated with being a woman or man affect issues such as: exposure to risk; the likelihood of becoming a victim/survivor of violence; the ability to access medical attention in the aftermath of conflict; and the long-lasting biological and physiological impacts of weapons on individuals.

Gender perspectives have already informed multilateral arms control and disarmament frameworks to varying degrees, including under the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), and different United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions. The inclusion of gender-responsive provisions has shed light on the differential impacts of weapons on women, men, girls and boys, and enhanced the ability of the international community to redress gender inequality. Gender-sensitive disarmament measures are further addressed in Part 2.

The second approach focuses on **promoting gender equality and improving women's meaningful participation and agency in arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament fora**. Women are frequently underrepresented in international forums concerned with peace and security, and targeted actions to improve women's participation are required. Practical suggestions to make multilateral meetings more inclusive and gender-responsive are presented in Part 3.

From a rights-based perspective, women have the right to participate in international security decision-making. The UN Secretary General has repeatedly expressed his commitment to ensure equal participation of women and men in all decision-making processes related to disarmament and international security, as well as in all panels, boards and expert groups relevant to the field of disarmament. These goals are stated in the UN Secretary General's Agenda for Disarmament, launched in 2018. Moreover, this view is complementary to other processes supported by the United Nations such as the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, which seeks, inter alia, to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

These two approaches are interrelated as **greater participation alone is inefficient in reducing gender inequality unless women can meaningfully influence decision-making, and unless there is a general appreciation among multilateral practitioners for the ways in which the substantive issues they deal with are often gendered.** This point is made in the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda, which underlines the essential role of women in conflict prevention, management and resolution, and highlights the roles that women can assume in those situations, recognizing women not only as recipients of aid or justice but also as agents, integral to peace, stability, and security.

About UNSCR 1325 and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

On 31 October 2000, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The resolution has four pillars: prevention, participation, protection, and peacebuilding and recovery. Subsequently, the Security Council adopted other resolutions addressing and building upon those topics: 1820 (2008); 1888 (2009); 1889 (2009); 1960 (2010); 2106 (2013); 2122 (2013); 2242 (2015).

This robust set of internationally agreed norms and standards recognizes that the experiences and needs of women differ from those of men in conflict and post-conflict situations, particularly in relation to human rights violations such as sexual and gender-based violence. As such, the WPS Agenda has galvanized efforts to promote gender equality and strengthen women's participation at all levels, across the conflict cycle, from conflict prevention to post-conflict reconstruction.

Part 2. Progress to date in integrating gender perspectives in arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament efforts

Treaties, Conventions and Action Plans

Efforts to incorporate gender perspectives in multilateral arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament frameworks are increasing. The **Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM)** contains an obligation for States Parties to provide age- and gender-sensitive victim assistance, including medical care, rehabilitation and psychological support, and to ensure the social and economic inclusion of victims (Article 5).

Although the **Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC)** does not include a gender-related clause in its text, the corresponding Maputo Action Plan, adopted by States Parties in 2014 to ensure implementation of the Convention, has a number of provisions relating to gender. The Action Plan requires countries to establish age- and gender-sensitive goals, and to report on: the participation of women, girls, boys and men in the land release process; the provision of age- and gender-sensitive victim assistance and mine risk education; and the gathering and analysis of age- and gender-sensitive data.

The gender clauses in the CCM and the Maputo Action Plan are critical for people affected by those weapons because they stipulate equal access to services and resources for men and women. The call to collect sex- and age- disaggregated data can lead to a better understanding of the barriers that prevent survivors, persons with disabilities and indirect victims, among other vulnerable groups, from accessing services.

The **Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)** contains a specific provision on gender-based violence (GBV) in its legal framework (Article 7). Under the ATT it is illegal to transfer weapons if there is a risk that the weapons will be used to commit or facilitate serious acts of GBV. In practice, this means that States Parties conducting risk assessment processes for the export and import of weapons have to take into account the legislative and normative factors around GBV in the recipient countries. This ATT provision has raised awareness about the link between GBV and the availability and the misuse of small arms.

The **UN Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects (UN POA SALW)** recognizes the negative impact of the illicit trade in SALW on women. The Outcome Document of the 2018 Third Review Conference of the UN POA¹ acknowledged that eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is critical in combating gender-based violence. The document made strides in encouraging the full participation of women in decision-making and implementation of all processes related to the POA; in taking into account the differing impacts of the illicit trade of SALW on women, men, boys and girls; in encouraging gender mainstreaming in policies and programmes designed to combat the illicit trade in SALW; and in encouraging the collection of data disaggregated by gender.

Over the past five years, a discussion on the gendered impact of nuclear weapons has emerged during the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)** review process. Different studies have underlined that ionizing radiation does not affect men and women equally. While the detonation of one or more nuclear weapons would cause massive death and injury to all, scientific studies show that women are more vulnerable to the harmful health effects of ionizing radiation than men.² Over the longer term, of those who are exposed to a nuclear explosion, women and girls have a far higher risk of developing cancer than men or boys.³ The research has been highlighted by some States Parties and the gendered effects of nuclear weapons have been a topic of some national statements and working papers. The Chair's factual summary from the 2018 Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the 2020 NPT Review Conference observed that States Parties noted the disproportionate impact of ionizing radiation on women, and that this issue should be factored into the discussions in the current review cycle.⁴

In addition to gendered impacts, discussions have also highlighted the need to improve women's participation in this forum. The Chair's factual summary also observed that "States parties endorsed the fundamental importance of promoting the equal, full and effective participation and leadership of both women and men in nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy".⁵

Recent discussions on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, conducted under the auspices of a **Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)**, have brought an important topic to the attention of the disarmament community; that of the potential for bias in algorithms. A number of States and civil society representatives have expressed concern that the delegation of decision-making to machines, facilitated by algorithms designed by humans, has the potential to perpetuate or amplify existing social biases, including gender bias. As States move forward with these debates, it will be important to take into account ethical considerations and to learn from current research on ensuring fairness in algorithms.

UNGA First Committee Resolutions

UNGA First Committee resolutions have also played an instrumental role in acknowledging and addressing the gender equality and international security nexus. In 2018 for instance, the First Committee adopted important resolutions on arms control and disarmament that featured gender-related provisions: out of 69 First Committee resolutions, 17 resolutions included gender perspectives - six of them for the first time.⁶

Notably, language on women's equal participation is included more frequently in First Committee resolutions than language that considers and responds to the gendered impacts of the various weapons types in question. Of the 17 resolutions mentioned above, 15 included references to women's equal participation, while 7 addressed the gendered impact of weapons.

Many gender references take the form of preambular language rather than operational commitments in the resolutions. Selected examples of operational commitments are reproduced below:

The Arms Trade Treaty (A/RES/73/36)

OP11: "Encourages States parties and signatory States to ensure the full and equal participation of women and men in pursuing the object and purpose of the Treaty and its implementation;"

Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures (A/RES/73/53)

OP2: "Welcomes the ongoing efforts of United Nations-mandated peacekeeping missions, as appropriate and with the consent of the host State, to include practical disarmament measures aimed at addressing the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, including through weapons collection, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programmes and enhancing physical security and stockpile management practices, as well as relevant training programmes, with a view to promoting and implementing an integrated comprehensive and effective weapons management strategy that would contribute to a sustainable peacebuilding process, and, in so doing, strive to achieve the goals set out in Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000 on women and peace and security;"

Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (A/RES/73/84)

OP14: "Underlines the vital role of the full and equal participation of women in decision-making and implementation of the Convention;"

It should also be noted that every two years the General Assembly adopts a resolution specifically focused on promoting “equal opportunities for the representation of women in all decision-making processes with regard to matters related to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, in particular as it relates to the prevention and reduction of armed violence and armed conflict”. Known as **Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control**, the resolution is led by Trinidad and Tobago. It was first introduced in 2010 with the support of 36 co-sponsors, and by 2018 there were 74 co-sponsors.

Examples of resolutions containing gender language in the preamble are as follows:

Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (A/RES/73/54)

Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (A/RES/73/61)

Countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices (A/RES/73/67)

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects (A/RES/73/69)

Part 3. Areas for Action

Multilateral fora chairs and practitioners have different options available to them for addressing the gender dimensions of international security affairs. For example, they can:

- Adopt agenda item(s) that examine gender perspectives;
- Approve mandates for integrating gender perspectives into the substance of the delegates' work;
- Include gender-responsive language in resolutions;
- Organize gender briefings related to the substance of their work;
- Participate in the activities of the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group;
- Engage with the focal points of the Network of Women, Peace and Security; and
- Support side-events or hold informal meetings on gender on the margins of multilateral meetings.

Fostering an inclusive institutional culture

The International Gender Champions launched the Gender-Responsive Assembly Toolkit in 2018, a comprehensive document with practical recommendations for all actors taking part in international meetings.⁷ The following points have been drawn from the Toolkit as suggestions for heads of delegations and chairs of multilateral meetings.

Before the presidency

- Provide financial and capacity-building support to women delegates, where feasible.
- Include gender criteria in the sponsorship programme for delegations.
- During the review cycle of a given convention, ensure a gender-balanced bureau, featuring both women and men at the highest level.
- Ensure that women and men working with the presidency are equally represented in support functions, such as note-taking.
- Design a communication strategy that is gender-responsive, featuring gender issues in newsletters and other outreach communication documents.

During the presidency

- Tone matters: demonstrate strong political will from the top by setting the tone early, raising the subject of gender, encouraging increased participation of women, as well as substantive gender analyses.
- Engage in dialogue with delegations that have no or few women to support them in redressing the situation.
- Institute gender-responsive, family-friendly arrangements, avoiding the ‘crowding out’ of women in informal discussions, and avoiding negotiations running over time. If this is not possible, as is sometimes the case in endgame diplomacy, adequate warning should be given of the likelihood ahead of time.
- Promote gender-expert speakers in interviews and media.
- Collect, track and publish sex-disaggregated data and statistics on gender balance in delegations, bodies and panels.
- Track participation of women speakers and make the data available. UNODA has begun to do this for the debates taking place at UNGA First Committee. A more systematic effort by the secretariats of different conventions would be welcome.
- Institutionalize gender balance on panels and among participants by the setting of guidelines including a checklist for staff on how to achieve gender balance on panels (plan early and focus on expertise).
- Adopt resolutions that encourage higher participation of women. One good example is the biennial resolution on “Women, disarmament, nonproliferation, and arms control”, led by Trinidad and Tobago at the UNGA First Committee.

Encouraging gender-responsive communication

Whether chairing meetings, writing reports or speaking to the media, it is important to be aware of the ways in which language can either enforce or subvert gender inequalities. Below are some of the gender-responsive actions one can adopt in everyday communications.⁸

Avoiding gender stereotypes

Profession has no gender. Therefore, avoid portraying certain jobs or roles as being more appropriate for one gender. Instead, portray men and women in diverse roles that challenge gender stereotypes.

For example, while it may seem like a compliment to say women are more cooperative and men are more competitive, these are still stereotypes and can have harmful results.

Ensuring fair visibility for men and women

Fair visibility means that communication does not perpetuate gender stereotypes and allows men and women to be on an equal footing.

For example, a photo that presents men as scientists, doctors, engineers and policemen, and women as teachers, or nurses caring for victims, does not qualify as fair visibility. To ensure fair visibility, it is important to present a diversity of roles for both women and men.

Using gender responsive language

Language should be adapted to reflect inclusion. It is important to avoid using the terms 'male' and 'female' as they reduce people to their reproductive roles. A good practice to correct this is to use 'man' and 'woman', 'boy' and 'girl,' even when you need an adjective.

Generic nouns such as 'mankind', 'forefathers', and 'motherly' can be replaced with gender-neutral terms like 'humankind', 'ancestors', and 'nurturing'.

'Chairman' or 'Chairwoman' can be replaced with 'Chairperson'; instead of 'Unmanned Aerial Vehicles' use 'Uncrewed Aerial Vehicles'.

Use singular 'they' instead of masculine pronouns to express neutrality.

Avoiding victimization

Avoid the ways in which women are often portrayed:

- as victims (rather than survivors) of gender-based violence;
- grouped with children, falsely portraying their needs and abilities;
- as unable to escape poverty and conflict, reducing their perceived agency;
- as passive beneficiaries, etc.

A good practice would be to show men and women as active participants to development instead of merely passive beneficiaries.

Avoiding patronizing statements

Be mindful of cultural and socio-economic differences that can lead to patronizing statements. Some ways in which women are patronized are:

- 'Women are less interested in issues of international security' or
- 'Women need to improve their self-esteem and decide to take on leadership positions'.

A corrective practice for this would be to portray women as agents for change, despite structural gender inequalities and in spite of their gender.

Part 4. Further Resources

Examples of statements, working papers and studies addressing the interconnections between gender and disarmament include:

Expert resources

First Committee Briefing Book 2018

Reaching Critical Will, 2018.

<http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/1com/1com18/briefingbook/FCBB-2018.pdf>

Gender, development, and nuclear weapons

Study by John Borrie et. al., UNIDIR, ILPI, 2016.

<http://www.unidir.org/files/publications/pdfs/gender-development-and-nuclear-weapons-en-659.pdf>

Gender in the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Factsheet by the IGC Disarmament Impact Group and the Gender & Mine Action Programme, September 2018.

<http://www.gmap.ch/international-gender-champions-disarmament-impact-group-first-briefing-for-states-on-gender-in-mine-action/>

How to use the Arms Trade Treaty to Address Gender-Based Violence: A Practical Guide for Risk Assessment

Control Arms, 2018.

https://controlarms.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/GBV-practical-guide_ONLINE.pdf

Operational Guidance on Victim Assistance Responsive to Gender and Other Diversity Aspects

Gender and Mine Action Programme (GMAP), 2018.

http://www.gmap.ch/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/gmap_guidances_EN-web.pdf

Preventing gender-based violence through effective Arms Trade Treaty implementation

Reaching Critical Will, 2017.

Available upon request.

Sex and Drone Strikes: Gender and identity in targeting and casualty analysis

Reaching Critical Will and Article 36, 2014.

<http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Publications/sex-and-drone-strikes.pdf>

The Value of Diversity in Multilateral Disarmament Work

Study by John Borrie and Ashley Thornton, UNIDIR, 2008.

<http://unidir.org/files/publications/pdfs/the-value-of-diversity-in-multilateral-disarmament-work-344.pdf>

Statements and Working Papers

Article 7(4) and Gender Based Violence Assessment

Working Paper presented by Ireland to the Conference of State Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, on 4 September 2017.

https://thearmstradetreaty.org/hyper-images/file/Working_Paper_ATT.CSP3.2017.IRL.183.Conf.WP/Working_Paper_ATT.CSP3.2017.IRL.183.Conf.WP.pdf

The Game of Thrones effect: the interrelationship between role models and reality for women in international security

Statement delivered by Australia's Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Frances Adamson, on 24 October 2018.

<https://dfat.gov.au/news/speeches/Pages/anu-women-in-national-security-conference.aspx>

Impact and Empowerment - the role of Gender in the NPT

Working paper submitted by Ireland to the 2018 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, on 24 April 2018.

<http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom18/documents/WP38.pdf>

Joint statement by civil society on gender and disarmament

WILPF on behalf of civil society organizations, at UNGA First Committee, 2018.

http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/1com/1com18/statements/18Oct_Gender.pdf

Statement on gender and the disarmament machinery

Namibia on behalf of a group of States, thematic debate on disarmament machinery at UNGA First Committee, 2018.

http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/1com/1com18/statements/31Oct_gender.pdf

Statement on gender and the disarmament machinery

Canada on behalf of a group of States, thematic debate on disarmament machinery at UNGA First Committee, 2017.

<https://www.international.gc.ca/prmny-mponu/statements-declarations/2018/01/23a.aspx>

References

1. Outcome document of the third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, 6 July 2018.
2. A.G. Dimmen, 2014. "Gendered impacts", Vienna Conference Series, no. 5. Available at: <http://nwp.ilpi.org/?p=3638>
3. K. Ozasa et al. 2012. "Studies of the mortality of atomic bomb survivors: Report 14, 1950–2003—an overview of cancer and noncancer diseases", Radiation Research, vol. 177 no. 3.
4. Chair's factual summary (working paper), NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/WP.41, 16 May 2018, paragraph 10.
5. Chair's factual summary (working paper), NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/WP.41, 16 May 2018, paragraph 10.
6. First Committee Monitor, No. 6, 2018. Available at: <http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/1com/FCM18/FCM-2018-No6.pdf>
7. International Gender Champions, 2018. "Gender-Responsive Assemblies: An Agenda for Concrete Action". Available at: <https://genderchampions.com/>
8. These guidelines were proposed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in its 2018 publication "Let's speak gender".

