

73rd SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY FIRST COMMITTEE
JOINT STATEMENT ON GENDER AND THE DISARMAMENT MACHINERY

Chairperson,

I take the floor on behalf of Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Samoa, San Marino, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Zambia and my own country Namibia.

In the last four weeks many states have stated that disarmament has fundamental gender dimensions and perspectives. These are key to our policy-making and programming, underpinning the effectiveness of disarmament work within the broader peace and security effort.

The evidence is clear, when examining security challenges and weapons-related issues, gendered impacts must be assessed: women, men, girls and boys experience different threats during and after conflict, as well as being differentially impacted by weapons and their flows in non-conflict environments.

Considering gender perspectives also allows a deeper examination of underlying assumptions about how gender shapes our own work and the dynamics of joint disarmament efforts. This was noted as early as 2006 by the Blix Commission when it recognized that “expectations about gender also shape how the machinery considers and addresses disarmament and international security”.

While we believe there is more to be done in bringing gender perspectives into the full range of disarmament and international security discussion, we are encouraged to see the high number of initiatives already taken to date, either within this Committee, or the broader disarmament machinery:

- We welcome the calls made by the Chairs of the BTWC, NPT PrepCom and the Ottawa Convention for delegations to strive for equal representation;

- We note the increase in statements and side-events where gender perspectives are applied and discussed;
- We commend the noticeable increase of gender analysis in resolutions – not least the persistent work by Trinidad and Tobago in putting forward the resolution on “Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control”;
- We welcome the establishment of the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group; and
- We welcome the 2019 Arms Trade Treaty focus area on gender and gender-based violence.

Let us build on this momentum, recognizing that we will be judged by our actions and not just our words.

Looking ahead, we believe the First Committee’s work would be enhanced by focusing on the nexus between disarmament and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, as well as the SDGs. In addition, we welcome the focus on gender in the Secretary General’s Agenda on Disarmament.

Civil society organizations have had a powerful influence on the expansion of gender perspectives throughout the disarmament machinery. They have offered ideas, knowledge, encouragement and constructive criticism of States’ efforts. We welcome their commitment and energy, and look forward to on-going partnerships and collaboration.

To conclude, the area of gender and disarmament merits the attention it is now receiving because it expands the scope of our knowledge and understanding of the challenges, and solutions, to foster greater progress in disarmament.

Thank you.