

# Gender inclusivity and approaches to enhance the NPT Review Process

## PRESENTATION TO THE WORKING GROUP ON FURTHER STRENGTHENING THE REVIEW PROCESS OF THE NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY

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### **Intro**

Your excellencies,

I would like to extend my thanks to this Working Group for coming together to evaluate the processes within the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Review Conference and Preparatory Committees demonstrating dedication to improve the transparency, effectiveness and efficiency of the proceedings.<sup>i</sup>

My name is Vanessa Lanteigne. I am a Rotary Peace Fellow and currently representing Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. Before this, I was the National Coordinator for the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace.

We are facing many challenges with regards to nonproliferation, disarmament and peace. The NPT Review process would be enriched, strengthened and made more effective by elevating gender inclusivity and approaches because we could then access a full range of security approaches to our global challenges.

Gender inclusivity and approaches mean firstly that different sexes (male, female and non-determinate) are included equitably in decision-making processes and leadership positions within the security sector, and secondly, that diverse gender perspectives, issues and approaches to peace and security are meaningfully incorporated in order to utilize a more diverse, comprehensive and holistic security framework. Integrating these two principles will support Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, which, “stressed the importance of ‘equal participation and full involvement’ of women and the need to increase [women’s] role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution”.<sup>ii</sup> As well as Sustainable Development Goal 5 regarding gender equality and empowering women and girls.

There are indicators that state parties are not only aware and willing to work towards gender equity and inclusion but are actively referencing and promoting it on their own. At the 2019 PrepCom more than 20 statements were made on behalf of over 60 State Parties addressing the importance of gender perspectives to the NPT<sup>iii</sup>. Three papers were submitted directly related to nuclear issues and gender and eight working papers included references to the links.<sup>iv</sup>

### **Gender Inclusion: Equal Access to Participation and Equitable Representation**

Despite this significant showing of support for the relevance of gender in nuclear affairs, in terms of inclusion in 2019, “approximately 76% of heads of delegations were men and 24% were women, while overall attendees comprised 71% men and 29% women”.<sup>v</sup>

We recognize that this imbalance in accessibility could also be improved within the leadership positions in the Preparatory Committees and Review Conferences. Since 2000, all of the Presidents/Chairs of the NPT Prep-Coms have been male and only one President of an NPT Review Conference has been a woman.

The NPT could institute targets for State Parties such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) with rules and sanctions for imbalanced delegations.<sup>vi</sup>

We would also support the recommendation for State Parties to request that the NPT Secretariat collects gender-disaggregated data for tracking purposes to monitor the state of gender balance in delegations.<sup>vii</sup>

Reviewing policies to support equal access to participation is important because it is correlated with improved organizational efficiency and innovative capacity by including more diverse expertise resulting in creative solutions and sustainable developments<sup>viii</sup> but a gender-inclusive approach should be supplemented by gender-diverse analyses as well.

## **Gender-Inclusive Issues and Approaches to Security**

Fully realized gender equality requires that issues, views, and approaches relating to characteristics associated with masculinity and femininity are both fully represented in security frameworks.

Research reports that participants in nuclear negotiations perceive that the field has rewarded characteristics, expertise and experiences that are more commonly associated with men, such as toughness, seriousness, risk-taking and military-training.<sup>ix</sup> Such negotiations would be enhanced, and have more possibility for success, if they broadened the ‘diplomatic tool-box’ to also include ‘feminine’ approaches of flexibility, compromise, multi-faceted problem solving, compassion and human interaction (focusing on the people involved and not just the topics).

In addition, as noted by Ireland in their working paper *Gender in the Non-Proliferation Treaty: recommendations for the 2020 Review Conference* (NPT/CONF.2020/PC.III/WP.48) the NPT Review process has traditionally taken a ‘one -dimensional security approach to addressing nuclear weapons, in terms of the issues which are prioritised.<sup>x</sup> The process has emphasized ‘masculine’ issues such as national security, balance of power, deterrence and military power. A more inclusive approach, which also reflects ‘feminine’ issues, would give equivalent emphasis on human security (primarily, human rights and sustainable development) and common security (conflict resolution, international law and sustainable security for all).

An example of a gender-inclusive approach which could hold lessons for the NPT Review Process comes from the Inter-Parliamentary Union Gender Partnership Group which was instituted to ensure that gender-diverse perspectives were incorporated and that the inclusion of women was not just a numerical

representation but holistic in terms of representing security approaches more often associated with women.<sup>xi</sup>

Other examples of gender-inclusive principles and approaches can be found in the feminist foreign policies adopted by Canada, Germany, Ireland and Sweden among others. These political steps forward, though, remain at risk of being rolled back like in the case of Sweden by succeeding governments highlighting the need to institutionalize the importance of gender in international organizations and procedures.<sup>xii</sup>

We propose that the NPT establishes a subsidiary body to explore nuclear non-proliferation, risk-reduction and disarmament issues in a broader security framework of common and human security incorporating gender, peace, diplomacy, conflict resolution and international law. This broader framework of common<sup>xiii</sup> and human security will be beneficial to giving gender-diverse perspectives opportunities to participate in conflict resolution and security fields to ensure that inclusivity is fully and substantively implemented and symbolic tokenism is avoided.

## Concluding Remarks

Improving policies related to gender inclusivity and promoting gender-diverse approaches creates space for innovative solutions and a wider range of security approaches and tools. We hope the NPT Working Group will take these issues and recommendations on effectiveness, efficiency, transparency and equal participation within these nuclear policy negotiations into consideration to promote gender-diverse perspectives and expertise within a common security framework.

Thank you kindly for your attention

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<sup>i</sup> <https://vcdnp.org/previewing-the-2023-prepcom-meeting/>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://unidir.org/sites/default/files/publication/pdfs//gender-development-and-nuclear-weapons-en-659.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.iaea.org/bulletin/how-can-we-achieve-gender-break-throughs-in-nuclear-negotiations-and-technical-cooperation>

<sup>iv</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>v</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.ipu.org/about-ipu/gender-equal-ipu>

<sup>vii</sup> <https://www.iaea.org/bulletin/how-can-we-achieve-gender-break-throughs-in-nuclear-negotiations-and-technical-cooperation>

<sup>viii</sup> <https://www.wgea.gov.au/publications/gender-equality-business-case#org-performance>

<sup>ix</sup> <https://www.iaea.org/bulletin/how-can-we-achieve-gender-break-throughs-in-nuclear-negotiations-and-technical-cooperation>

<sup>x</sup> <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N19/133/49/PDF/N1913349.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>xi</sup> <https://www.ipu.org/about-ipu/gender-equal-ipu>

<sup>xii</sup> [https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/Brief-Feminist-foreign-policies-en\\_0.pdf](https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/Brief-Feminist-foreign-policies-en_0.pdf)

<sup>xiii</sup> <https://www.unfoldzero.org/common-security/>