



Webinar Organized by UNODA and UNIDIR:

**“Integrating gender perspectives into the NPT review process:
towards an equal and secure future”**

**Opening Remarks by Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu
High Representative for Disarmament Affairs**

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Virtual Event
6 April 2021

Distinguished panelists,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I could not be happier to open this event. The increasing focus on gender perspectives in the NPT context is one of the more optimistic developments in nuclear disarmament. At a time when international security trends, including those related to this Treaty, are divisive and destabilizing, it is good to be able to engage on an issue in disarmament where there is a groundswell for inclusivity and incorporating the views of often marginalized voices to achieve lasting results.

I hope that today's event highlights recent efforts – including the excellent working papers from States Parties – and serve as a platform to work towards gender being not only a focus at the NPT Review Conference but to establishing a truly gender-responsive approach to the implementation of the Treaty.

Good progress has been made, but there is clearly much work to be done.

No weapon or conflict is gender blind. Our disarmament and non-proliferation processes cannot be either. Without applying a gender lens and ensuring that diverse perspectives are addressed, our efforts risk to fail.

Nuclear and, indeed, all weapons feed into the norms and power relationships that enable and foster gender inequality. As has been recognized in their summaries by successive Preparatory Committee chairs, women are biologically more vulnerable to the effects of ionizing radiation than men. Based on the experiences of the hibakusha and test survivors, women are also often the ones most affected by psychological health issues, displacement, social stigma and discrimination.

A gender-responsive NPT is part of a global shift towards a more inclusive and people-centered approach to security. It helps us to address the fundamental question of whose

security is protected by weapons that, if used, would result in a human catastrophe, with disproportionate impact on women and girls.

The importance of gendered dynamics is increasingly recognized across the disarmament field. Secretary-General Guterres' Agenda for Disarmament encourages Member States to incorporate gender perspectives in disarmament as a contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals.

To design disarmament policies and programmes that are fit for purpose, we need systematic investment in gender analysis and disaggregated data. Such data illuminates the different experiences, realities and needs of women and men in relations to all weapons. If we furthermore take an intersectional approach to gender, looking at how age, race, disability and other aspects factor in, we stand to further deepen our insight and effectiveness. I urge States Parties to take a leading role in this pursuit.

I also wholeheartedly concur with what the President-designate has consistently said – an inclusive Review Conference will increase the odds of success. We need to ensure that a diverse and gender balanced range of voices and perspectives are represented. It is only through the full and effective participation of women that we can attain sustainable peace and security, as affirmed by UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

Regrettably, at the 2019 PrepCom, only one in four heads of delegations were women. This is clearly not acceptable. States parties should pledge gender balance targets for their delegations to the Review Conference.

More broadly, the NPT should be a part of efforts to transform the forces and systems that drive the systematic exclusion of women and other voices, by creating inclusive cultures, enabling working environments and efforts for removing biases and other obstacles to women's full and effective participation.

As High Representative for Disarmament and also in my personal capacity as an International Gender Champion, I remain committed to promoting gender-responsive and inclusive disarmament. My Office is working to support and raise awareness on strategies for gender equality throughout disarmament.

I look forward to working side by side with States Parties, civil society and other stakeholders as we strive to make the NPT more inclusive and responsive and, thereby, more effective.

I thank very much you for your attention and I am looking forward for the discussions today.