

# **UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS GENDER MAINSTREAMING ACTION PLAN**

**UPDATE 2016<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> The following document is the second update of the 2003 Department for Disarmament Affairs Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan. The first update was completed in 2014.

## **I. Introduction**

Promotion of the role of women in international peace and security, especially in political decision-making and peace processes, has been embedded in Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). Women's participation and empowerment are crucial components of the maintenance of international peace and security and have been actively sought by the Office for Disarmament Affairs (ODA). ODA also seeks to encourage a better understanding of how gender mainstreaming can promote disarmament goals.

The following document seeks to outline a pragmatic and strategic Action Plan for mainstreaming gender into the work of ODA. Working in-line with the goals of the UN System-Wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) for Implementation of the Chief Executive Board Policy for gender equality and the empowerment women, as well as the Strategic Results Framework on Women, Peace and Security, ODA aims to ensure that a gender perspective is reflected in all departmental practices, policies and programmes.

Taking into consideration and building upon the 2013 update of the Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan for ODA, this second update serves to provide both realistic and useful suggestions for gender-sensitive programmes, initiatives, and policies as well as for promoting the full and equal participation of men and women in all disarmament processes and relevant fora.

### *Women, Peace and Security Framework*

Ever since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and the genesis of the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda, the world has witnessed an outpouring of efforts to effectively incorporate women in all disarmament and arms control processes. This positive trend has been advanced, in particular, by both involving those women directly affected by armed violence as well as initiating women-led policy initiatives.

There is wide recognition that the equal full and effective participation of both men and women in the creation and maintenance of a reliable security sector is vital to broader objectives of international peace and security. The further development of the WPS agenda has supported the whole of the UN system to better integrate women as 'agents of change' in all peace and security processes.

In this regard, the WPS agenda provides the umbrella framework for gender mainstreaming in disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. The women, peace and security framework has grown substantially since adoption of resolution 1325 in 2000. Subsequent resolutions adopted by the Security Council under this theme have reached a total of eight—1325 (2000); 1820 (2008); 1888 (2009); 1889 (2009); 1960 (2010); 2106 (2013); 2122 (2013); 2242 (2015).

Some of these resolutions specifically address the issue of sexual violence in conflict. A brief summary of these resolutions is below:

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| <b>Resolution 1325 (2000)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established the “women, peace and security” agenda item in the Security Council</li> <li>• Acknowledges the role of women in conflict prevention and peacekeeping</li> <li>• Urges a gender component to all peacekeeping operations</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Resolution 1820 (2008)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizes conflict-related sexual violence as detrimental to peace processes</li> <li>• Stresses that sexual violence impedes international peace and security</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Resolution 1888 (2009)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizes the promotion and empowerment of women and support for women’s organizations and networks as essential in the consolidation of peace</li> <li>• Calls on the Secretary-General to rapidly deploy a team of experts to situations of particular concern regarding sexual violence</li> </ul>                             |
| <b>Resolution 1889 (2009)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requests the Secretary-General to appoint gender advisors to United Nations missions</li> <li>• Requests the Secretary-General to ensure that United Nations bodies collect gender-disaggregated data in post-conflict situations</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Resolution 1960 (2010)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calls upon conflicting parties to make, implement and enforce specific and time-bound commitments to address sexual violence, including through investigations</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Resolution 2106 (2013)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affirms the centrality of gender equality and women’s political, social and economic empowerment to efforts to prevent sexual violence in armed conflict and post-conflict situations</li> <li>• Requests the Secretary-General and relevant United Nations entities to assist national authorities, with the effective</li> </ul> |

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|                               | participation of women, in addressing sexual violence concerns explicitly in, inter alia, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes   |
| <b>Resolution 2122 (2013)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Puts in place a roadmap for more systematic implementation of commitments on women, peace and security, including improved access to timely information and analysis on the impact of conflict on women and women’s participation in conflict resolution in reports and briefings to the Council; and strengthened commitments to consult as well as include women directly in peace talks.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Resolution 2242 (2015)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draws substantive links between women’s participation and sustainable peace and security</li> <li>• Establishes a commitment to integrate gender analysis on the drivers and impacts of violent extremism</li> </ul>   |

In 2015, an independent “Global Study” on the implementation of SCR 1325<sup>2</sup>, commissioned by the Secretary-General, was conducted. The study found that, despite a number of successes, many obstacles and challenges still persist in the full implementation of the WPS agenda. Of particular interest from a disarmament and arms control perspective was the study’s finding that the international community, in relying too heavily on the use of force as a means to resolve conflict, had failed to realise a core goal of resolution 1325 (2000) and the United Nations more broadly: to decrease war and make greater investments in human welfare rather than armaments.

Further to the recommendations of the study, ODA continues to pursue both gender equality and the empowerment of women in disarmament and arms control efforts.

### *Gender and disarmament*

The relationship between gender and disarmament was first addressed by the General Assembly in 2010 through resolution 65/69 (2010). The Assembly recognized the contributions of women to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and encouraged women’s participation in all decision-making processes. The sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly adopted an updated version of the resolution (67/48) requesting that the Secretary-General seek the views of Member States on promoting the role of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

<sup>2</sup> “Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice and Security Peace”, 2015. Available at: <http://wps.unwomen.org/~media/files/un%20women/wps/highlights/unw-global-study-1325-2015.pdf>

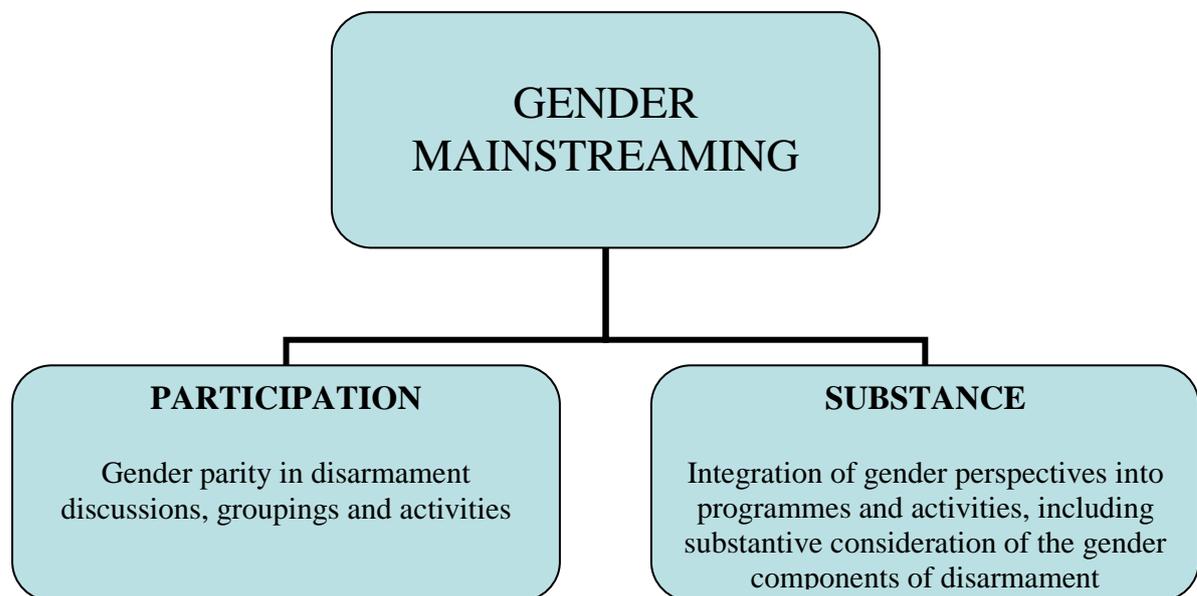
Subsequently, the sixty-eighth (68/33) and sixty-ninth sessions of the Assembly adopted this resolution with further updates and expansions. With 183 States voting in favour, resolution 69/61 built on previous versions to reflect recent progress in gender and disarmament, including the adoption of a gender-based violence criterion in the Arms Trade Treaty.

### *Departmental commitment*

By setting out a departmental Action Plan, ODA seeks to provide all staff members at Headquarters as well as the Regional Centres with well-formulated suggestions and guidelines for potential programmes and initiatives with gender considerations in mind. Assessment of gender-mainstreaming will be conducted under the auspices of the Strategic Results Framework on Women, Peace and Security.

An ODA-specific system has already been devised through a directive issued from the Office of the Director mandating periodic collection of information on gender mainstreaming in the programmes and activities of the branches as well as the three regional centres. This directive, originally issued in 2013, was updated and disseminated to staff in May 2016. It requires the submission of regular data on gender mainstreaming across ODA’s Branches and Regional Centres twice a year.

ODA pursues dual goals with regards to gender mainstreaming—gender parity in all disarmament-related discussions, events and groupings, as well as the integration of gender perspectives in all programmes and activities.



## **II. Definitions**

### *Gender*

Discussions on gender issues are often confused by competing interpretations or uses of the term ‘gender’, translation difficulties, varying cultural starting points and different expectations. According to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment Women (UN-Women), gender refers to “the social attributes

and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/ 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 there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context. Other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis include class, race, poverty level, ethnic group and age.”<sup>3</sup>

### *Gender balance*

‘Gender balance,’ on the other hand, refers to the numbers of women and men in various positions through the UN Secretariat or a specific institution. The term refers to both quantitative aspects (the number of women and men in various positions) and qualitative aspects (the extent to which women and men have equal career opportunities to serve not only at all levels, for example, through promotion, appointment, training and mentoring, but also in all occupations for which they are qualified). Attention to gender balance prompts consideration of male/female staffing ratios at all levels of an organization.

### *Gender mainstreaming*

‘Gender mainstreaming’ requires that attention is given to gender perspectives as an integral part of all activities across all programmes rather than a division of programmes between men and women. This involves making gender perspectives – what women and men do and the resources and decision-making processes they have access to – more central to all policy development, research, advocacy, development, implementation and monitoring of norms and standards, and planning, implementation and monitoring of projects.<sup>4</sup>

## **III. Action Plan Goals**

The **Overall Goal** for the Action Plan is to **facilitate progress on disarmament**. ODA will strengthen disarmament dialogue and action through the incorporation of a gender perspective in its day-to-day work. A primary assumption is that disarmament – both generally and in specific initiatives – can be strengthened through the integration of gender insights into disarmament debates, decision-making and actions, and through more equitable participation by women in decision-making. Thus a crucial element of ODA work in this area is to identify potential synergies and opportunities to simultaneously support effective disarmament and greater gender equality.

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<sup>3</sup> See “Concepts and Definitions” from the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)  
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Derived from “Important Concepts Underlying Gender Mainstreaming” from Women’s Watch. Available at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/factsheet2.pdf>

The sub-goals for the Action Plan are:

- **Sub-Goal 1: Explore the linkages between the promotion of greater gender equality and disarmament.** ODA will contribute to an improved understanding of how and where equality between women and men and disarmament are inter-related. The series of notes “Gender Perspectives on Disarmament” marked an important step in this process. Updates to these notes and additional papers and notes can be undertaken to continue to explore these linkages, as appropriate and feasible.
  - **Suggested actions:**
    - Further research and analysis of gendered, disaggregated data with a view towards international standards on incorporation of gender into arms control/non-proliferation policies and initiatives;
    - Elaboration on issues of convergence between disarmament and gender perspectives, including but not limited to, weapons of mass destruction, disarmament demobilization and reintegration (DDR), small arms and light weapons (SALWs), landmines, regional disarmament initiatives, development, and education (through possible updated Briefing Notes, Occasional Papers, a High Representative Op-Ed and additional publications);
  
- **Sub-Goal 2: Strengthen ODA’s internal capacity to ensure the ongoing incorporation of gender perspectives into its work.** ODA will strengthen its own capacity to work consistently towards the full consideration of gender perspectives in disarmament discussions and actions. The gender focal point and alternate focal point will help ensure that all staff members receive relevant documentation, resolutions, Secretary-General Bulletins, Information Announcements, and papers outlining UN and ODA gender policies in order that all staff members can adequately incorporate gender perspectives into their respective programmes and projects.
  - Development and dissemination of mandatory, online gender training for all staff (in-process)
  
- **Sub-Goal 3: Undertake outreach and advocacy on the importance of including gender perspectives in disarmament discussions.** In its work with Member States, other UN Departments and Offices, civil society organizations and other international organizations, ODA will continue to be an advocate for the incorporation of gender perspectives in disarmament discussions. In its inter-actions with the disarmament community, ODA will demonstrate the utility of this approach and maximize opportunities to explore the disarmament/gender equality inter-linkages. ODA has the potential to play a leadership role in advocating the inclusion of gender perspectives in disarmament dialogues and decision-making.
  - **Suggested actions:**
    - Identification of and engagement with UN-sponsored processes, inter alia, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee meetings, the

Sustainable Development Goals implementation process and the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, through which a gendered understanding of security can be underscored;

- As requested, support to Member States in addressing this linkage in the General Assembly's First Committee as well as support to Member States in exploring avenues of promoting gender-sensitive disarmament initiatives;
  - Interaction with UN agencies, offices, and programmes that address both gender issues and international peace and security, including through the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality and the UN Standing Committee on Women, Peace and Security;
  - Collaboration with local and regional civil society organizations on relevant gender-focused projects and initiatives.
  - Incorporate gender considerations into remarks and interventions made by senior-level ODA staff
- **Sub-Goal 4: Support equitable participation in disarmament discussions.** Most especially through forums to which ODA serves as a Secretariat or administrative hub, ODA will continue to support gender parity in all relevant groups and programmes.
    - **Suggested actions:**
      - Gender parity sought in the formulation of the Disarmament Fellowship Programme, Internship Programme, Groups of Governmental Experts, and Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters.

Track gender parity in disarmament-related discussions and groupings and actively engage Member States with a view to garnering more female nominations

## IV. Suggested plans, activities, and check-lists

Figure 1

| Overall Goal   | <b>ODA SUGGESTED GUIDELINES TO FACILITATE PROGRESS ON DISARMAMENT THROUGH THE INCORPORATION OF GENDER PERSPECTIVES</b>  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| <i>Sub-Goals</i>   | 1. Explore the linkages between the promotion of greater gender equality and disarmament  | 2. Strengthen ODA’s internal capacity to ensure the ongoing incorporation of gender perspectives into its work through adequate resourcing of staff members   | 3. Undertake outreach and advocacy on the importance of including gender perspectives in disarmament discussions  | 4. Support equitable participation in disarmament discussions (with an emphasis on bringing in new constituencies and involving gender equality advocates in disarmament discussions)   |
| <i>Suggested activities, as appropriate and dependent on availability of financial and human resources</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support events and activities with an explicit focus on gender dimensions of weapons of mass destruction, small arms, etc.</li> <li>• Engage in dialogue with researchers and gender equality advocates who are working on disarmament issues.</li> <li>• Support discussion and research of gender/ disarmament linkages</li> <li>• Expand the pool of resources on the substantive linkages between gender equality and disarmament</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage staff attendance at panels and other discussions that offer opportunities to explore gender/disarmament linkages</li> <li>• Ensure that the gender focal points continuously assess ODA’s implementation of the Action Plan’s goals and adequately resource all ODA staff members</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As appropriate, incorporate gender perspectives in regular briefings to Member States and consult on relevant First Committee resolutions</li> <li>• Update ODA’s website section on ‘Gender’ to underscore disarmament linkages and research on gender perspectives in disarmament</li> <li>• Engage with UN-sponsored processes and mechanisms, such as CSW, CEDAW Committee meetings, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Women, Peace and Security, and the post-2015 process, through which a gendered understanding of disarmament and arms control can be underscored</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring disarmament issues to gender equality advocates.</li> <li>• Develop rosters of female experts and aim for 50 percent female representation in all relevant disarmament fora, including the Fellowship Programme, Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, Groups of Governmental Experts, 1540 activities, and trainings conducted by the regional centres.</li> <li>• Over the longer-term, strengthen the capacity of women to participate in disarmament discussions through targeted trainings.</li> </ul> |

**Figure 2**

| <b>Organizing a Panel</b>  |  |
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| <b>What to ask?</b>  | <b>Why ask this question?</b>  |
| What is the gender balance of the panel participants (how many men and how many women?)?   | Is it possible to identify female experts in this area?<br>Although female panellists may be harder to find, they may bring a slightly different perspective that can enrich the discussion.   |
| Is there a way that gender issues can be brought into the substance of the panel discussion? Is there a linkage between gender issues and the issues under discussion? | In some discussions, there is no clear gender dimension and this question may not be relevant.<br>In other discussions, it may be fruitful to see whether or not this perspective could be part of the discussion. There could be a researcher who has specifically focused on this element in his/her work or an organization that has been active (i.e. in a discussion on small arms, there may be a regional women's organization which has sought to bring women into the small arms discussion). |
| Who is invited to attend the panel? What is the target group? Is it possible to reach out to women's organizations?  | One common concern is that there is a shortage of qualified women and/or women's organizations with capacity to participate in disarmament dialogues. An invitation to attend panels and discussions is a way of building their awareness of these issues and their capacities.  |
| Who is the target group for panel follow-up?   | In the distribution of panel reports, a particular effort to reach women's organizations could also assist in building their capacities.   |
| Is the panel a venue to distribute ODA publications on gender and disarmament?   | Could the ODA Gender and Disarmament Briefing Notes be distributed? This could be an opportunity to have this material reach a new audience.   |

**Figure 3**

| <b>Public Outreach</b>   |   |
|--|---|
| <b>What to ask?</b>  | <b>Why ask this question?</b>   |
| In reaching out to traditional disarmament constituencies – non-governmental organizations, academics, think tanks, etc. – are gender perspectives being included? | ODA’s status and credibility in these circles will help ensure that gender perspectives are infused throughout the field of disarmament, beyond ODA’s internal efforts to ensure attention to gender issues. These efforts might, in turn, bring new ideas and opportunities for ODA’s work.  |
| Are messages, documents and publications reaching women’s organizations, academics and gender equality advocates?  | It may be useful to include specific networks and organizations on mailing lists and/or make a special effort to reach these organizations.   |
| Is it appropriate or possible to tailor messages so that they are of interest to women’s organizations?  | Possible strategies include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making direct links between their issues and disarmament issues – helping them understand why they should be interested in disarmament themes;</li> <li>• Adapting language - these organizations may not be familiar with disarmament terms and acronyms and therefore more explanation may be required.</li> </ul>  |
| Is it possible to do specific briefings for the ‘women’s press’ or specifically invite networks working for gender equality to briefings?                          | A possible strategy to consider is to specifically brief networks, organizations or publication outlets that explicitly target women and/or work on gender equality issues.   |
| Can public outreach strategies also help bring messages on gender and disarmament to a wider audience?   | In addition to trying to reach women and gender equality networks, it is also interesting to try to bring insights regarding gender and disarmament to traditional disarmament audiences who may initially be disinterested or even resistant. By highlighting these issues or even just including them on agendas, mentioning them in briefings and incorporating into publications, ODA can send the message that this is a valuable theme to explore and consider (even if all the answers are not yet known). |

Figure 4

| <b>Formulation of project proposals<sup>5</sup></b>   |   |
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| <b>What to ask?</b>   | <b>Why ask this question?</b>   |
| Has thought been given to how and why gender perspectives might be relevant to the intended results of the project?                         | <p>This process can involve different methodologies. Yet, key tasks can include:<sup>6</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask questions about the responsibilities, activities, interests and priorities of women and men, and how their experience of the problem may differ.</li> <li>• Question assumptions about “families”, “households” or “people” that may be implicit in the way a problem is posed or a policy is formulated.</li> <li>• Obtain data or information to allow the experiences and situation of both women and men to be analyzed.</li> <li>• Seek the inputs and views of women as well as men about decisions that will affect the way they live.</li> <li>• Avoid assuming that all women or all men share the same needs and perspectives.</li> <li>• Analyze the problem or issue and proposed policy options for implications from a gender perspective and seek to identify means of formulating directions that support an equitable distribution of benefits and opportunities.</li> </ul> |
| Would it be useful to consult with someone who brings both technical expertise in the issue under consideration and gender equality issues? | Specific technical support may be useful in identifying important or missing issues and/or regional contacts.   |
| Have both women and men been consulted on the project?  | <p>Although women may not always or automatically raise issues relating to gender equality perspectives, they can often provide insights or priorities not stated by men.</p> <p>Although widespread consultation may not be practical, it should be asked whether or not this initiative results from a small group.</p>   |
| Do the insights generated by a consideration of a gender perspective point to design changes in the project?                                | Often a gender analysis is done prior to project formulation but then it fails to influence project design. This is especially true if the gender analysis has been conducted as a side exercise or only as a step to placate funders.  |
| Is it appropriate for the project to provide sex-disaggregated data in reporting?   | If the project involves numbers of participants or beneficiaries (participants in a mines-awareness workshop, people receiving training, employees, etc.), then tracking these numbers by males/females can provide interesting insights.   |
| Can the project document interesting lessons learned?   | Given that much of our understanding of gender and disarmament issues is in the initial stages, it is important to look for lessons and document progress.  |

<sup>5</sup> Suggested language for inclusion in all project proposals: “The [project] will incorporate gender considerations into its formulation and implementation pursuant to the ODA Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan (Update II, July 2016).

<sup>6</sup> See Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (2002). **Gender Mainstreaming: An Overview**. United Nations, New York.

Figure 5

| <b>Fellowship Programme, Internship Programme, Groups of Governmental Experts and the Secretary-General’s Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters</b> |  |
|---|--|
| <b>What to ask?</b>   | <b>Why ask this question?</b>  |
| Is it possible to work toward gender balance among participants?  | ODA is already asking this question in an ongoing manner.  |
| Regarding the Fellowship Programme, are all participants exposed to gender and disarmament themes as part of the ‘study programme’?                 | <p>With regards to the Fellowship Programme, it is important that all participants be exposed to basic ideas on gender and disarmament through the integration of this theme into the agenda or curriculum. All too often, it is assumed that only the women are interested in gender issues and so a session is arranged for them.</p> <p>There are often many misunderstandings around what is meant by ‘gender and disarmament.’ Many people assume that it only relates to attempts to balance women’s and men’s participation in specific activities. So it is useful to have an exchange and discussion of the range of ideas that this theme encompasses. The Fellowship programme can provide opportunities to explore new ideas and raise issues. This forum may generate insights, linkages, and ideas on gender and disarmament that may be useful for the work of ODA.</p> |

## **V. Current points of entry for the gender-disarmament nexus**

The UN and ODA benefit from an extensive corpus of mandates, legislative and non-legislative, including internal policy, which provides points of entry for addressing the gender-disarmament nexus. The following section outlines several points of entry for this linkage:

### **1. General Assembly resolutions on women and disarmament**

The General Assembly first explicitly recognized the relationship between women and disarmament through the adoption of resolution 65/69 in 2010. Follow-up resolutions were adopted at the sixty-seventh, sixty-eighth and sixty-ninth sessions of the General Assembly.

The second iteration of the resolution (67/48) requested that the Secretary-General seek the views of Member States on promoting the role of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. Subsequently, the sixty-eighth (68/33) and sixty-ninth sessions of the Assembly adopted the resolution with the same request. The resolution adopted at the sixty-ninth session of the Assembly, with 183 States in favour, (69/61) built on previous versions to reflect recent progress, including the adoption of a gender-based violence criterion in the Arms Trade Treaty.

Resolution 69/61 importantly encourages Member States to better understand the impact of armed violence, in particular the impact of the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons on women and girls, through strengthening the collection of data disaggregated by sex and age. It also calls upon States to develop “appropriate and effective” national risk assessment criteria to facilitate the prevention of the use of arms to commit violence against women and children.

### **2. UN Programme of Action on small arms and practical disarmament measures (PoA)**

The UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons refers to gender in its preamble (para. 6) in which States express grave concern over the devastating consequences of illicit trade in small arms for children “as well as the negative impact on women and the elderly.”

Despite the limited number of explicit references to gender in the PoA document, the linkage between women’s engagement and small arms control has been among the most frequently addressed aspects of the gender and disarmament nexus by Member States and civil society alike. Many non-governmental organizations have highlighted the importance of integrating balanced perspectives of men, boys, women, and girls into policies to combat the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons as well as the synergy between the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the lack of women’s participation in social and political life. Particular emphasis has also been placed on women-led, local programs and capacity-building initiatives that address small arms control.

In 2010, ODA and the International Action Network on Small Arms released a study on “Mainstreaming gender for the effective implementation of the PoA” on the occasion of the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to consider implementation of the

PoA.<sup>7</sup> These guidelines have been developed to assist practitioners in identifying concrete ways of mainstreaming gender perspectives in all relevant initiatives and operations, and at all stages, from information gathering and planning to implementation, monitoring and evaluation, in the process of effective implementation of the PoA.

States have deepened their understanding of gender considerations relevant to the PoA in follow-up meetings to review its implementation. At the second Review Conference of the PoA in 2012, States expressed “grave concern” over the negative impact of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons on women, men, children, youth, the elderly and persons with disabilities. Moreover, States called for further integrating women into efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (A/CONF.192/2012/RC/4, Annex I, 2012 Declaration, para. 14).

Subsequently, at the Fifth and Sixth Biennial Meetings of States, in 2014 and 2016, respectively, gender was also taken into account. The participation and representation of women in small arms control processes were emphasized in the outcome document of the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States (A/CONF.192/BMS/2014/2). At the Sixth Biennial Meeting, this language was expanded, including by insertion of a call for States to take into account the differing impacts of illicit small arms and light weapons on women, men, girls and boys. (*See paras. 59-62*).

In the final outcome document of the Sixth Biennial Meeting, States made use of the word “gender” for the first time in a PoA context. This is important in view of the considerable impact of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons on young men, both as victims and offenders.

### **3. Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)**

Adopted through a General Assembly vote (67/234 B (2013)), the ATT includes a legally-binding provision related to gender-based violence (GBV). The GBV criterion included in the ATT addresses violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) and international human rights law (IHRL) specifically related to GBV.

Article 7(4) under “Export and export assessment” requires that State parties, when making an export assessment, take into account the risk of the transferred conventional arms being used to commit or facilitate serious acts of gender-based violence or serious acts of violence against women and children. A State would be obligated to deny an arms transfer in the event that it determines there is an “overriding risk” that weapons or items covered under the treaty would be used to commit or facilitate such acts of GBV.

Member States, United Nations entities and civil society have undertaken various efforts to operationalize this provision of the Treaty, including through capacity-building workshops and development of risk-assessment tools to assist States.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Guidelines are available here:

<http://www.un.org/disarmament/HomePage/gender/docs/Mainstreaming%20gender%20for%20effective%20implementation%20ofUN%20PoA%20-%20Updated%20guidelines%20-%20UNODA-RDB%20and%20IANSA%20-%20June%202010.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> *See, for example*, “Gender-based violence and the Arms Trade Treaty”, August 2015. [http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Publications/GBV\\_ATT-brief.pdf](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Publications/GBV_ATT-brief.pdf)

#### **4. Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)**

At the conclusion of its fifty-seventh session in March 2013, the CSW adopted a set of agreed conclusions on the theme of the “Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls.” Conclusion 25 states, “The Commission recognizes that the illicit use of and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons aggravates violence, inter alia, against women and girls.”<sup>9</sup> Such a direct reference to the role of illicit small arms in perpetrating violence against women and girls provides an important platform for strengthening gender-sensitive policies in the area of small arms and light weapons.

#### **5. Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women**

The preamble of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) affirms that, inter alia, general and complete disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international control, will promote social progress and development and as a consequence will contribute to the attainment of full equality between men and women. CEDAW also recalls that discrimination against women violates equality and is a barrier to participation, and reaffirms the commitment to disarmament and international peace and security.<sup>10</sup> The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, made up of 23 independent experts who are tasked with monitoring the implementation of the Convention’s provisions, has laid out in its general recommendations that States’ parties must protect women from violence suffered in social settings, including family and work.

#### **6. The Sustainable Development Goals**

Adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was a landmark accomplishment for the international community in 2015. While important in many respects, the SDGs provide a point of entry for the gender and disarmament linkage. Of particular relevance in this regard are two of its goals—Goal 5 (gender equality) and Goal 16 (stable and peaceful societies). Relevant targets adopted as part of the SDGs include: preventing the illicit flow of arms (16.4), promoting a culture of peace and non-violence (4.7), ensuring inclusive and participatory decision-making (16.7) and ensuring equal access to justice for all (16.3).

The broader issue of disarmament and development is also significant and provides an entry point for discussion of gender-sensitive disarmament. The last report of the Secretary-General on this topic was released in 2013.<sup>11</sup> The report notes that disarmament can create an environment conducive to development and vice versa and the spread and wide availability of arms can have a negative impact on development.

#### **7. Security Council resolutions on small arms and light weapons**

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<sup>8</sup> See, Report on the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women (4-15 March 2013). E/2013/27.

<sup>9</sup> Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, New York, 18 December 1979, see, Preamble.

<sup>11</sup> “Relationship between disarmament and development” A/68/119, 28 June 2013.

The Security Council adopted its first resolution dedicated to the theme of small arms in 2014. Resolution 2117 (2014) urges Member States, United Nations entities, and intergovernmental, regional and sub-regional organizations to take further measures to facilitate women's full and meaningful participation in all policymaking, planning and implementation processes to combat and eradicate the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons.

Subsequently, in May 2015, the Security Council took a further step in developing a gendered understanding of small arms control. On 13 May 2015, a Security Council open debate was held on the issue of small arms and light weapons. The debate was informed by the Secretary-General's biennial report on small arms and light weapons (S/2015/289). In that report, the Secretary-General noted the highly gendered nature of the causes and consequences of the use of weapons and recommended that the gendered nature of armed violence and conflict inform policy and programmatic responses. The Secretary-General also recommended the full participation of women in combatting the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons.

Shortly after the debate, the Security Council adopted resolution 2220 (2015). Through this resolution, the Council identified a range of areas in which international cooperation could be bolstered, recognizing the importance of well-targeted and monitored sanctions regimes, appropriate United Nations peacekeeping mandates, effective reintegration and demobilization programmes, security sector reform and the role of women.

## **8. Informal discussions in the Conference on Disarmament**

The first of its kind and at the initiative of the Presidency of the Netherlands, the Conference on Disarmament held the first informal meeting on gender and disarmament in August 2015. The discussion was set within the context of implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), including the high-level review of its implementation and the issuance of the "Global Study". The informal meeting addressed gender as an issue that cuts across all items on the Conference's agenda, including those related to weapons of mass destruction. The discussion was widely welcomed by delegations and interest was expressed in integrating this cross-cutting issue in the work of the Conference on a more regular basis in future. Several States used their national statements to recognize how men and women are affected differently by issues related to weapons systems, including nuclear weapons. A second informal meeting on this subject was held on 19 May 2016 under the Presidency of Pakistan. Building on discussions that took place in August 2015, delegations addressed the importance of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) as well as General Assembly resolution 69/61. Moreover, the relationship between gender-sensitive disarmament and development was also addressed through reference to the SDGs, in particular goals 5 and 16. Broader conclusions on the impact of conflict on women were also drawn.

## **9. Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons**

Since 2010, focus on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons has brought renewed impetus to disarmament efforts. The groundswell of support for the humanitarian initiative has contributed to increased attention paid to integrating cross-

cutting issues, such as gender, public health and the environment, into multilateral processes in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

At the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 2015, while consensus on a substantive outcome document could not be reached, States parties used the forum to express support for the humanitarian dimension of nuclear disarmament, including its relationship to gender. Many States supported the call to ensure women and men are equally represented at all levels in disarmament and non-proliferation processes. Likewise, many States supported a reference in the draft final document to the disproportionate effects on women and children of the health and environmental consequences resulting from nuclear tests.

Several States also raised gender considerations in their statements at the seventieth session of the First Committee. Furthermore, on 7 December 2015, the General Assembly adopted a new resolution (70/50) on the ethical imperatives for a nuclear free world. Introduced by South Africa, the resolution, *inter alia*, declared that “greater attention must be given to the impact of a nuclear weapon detonation on women and the importance of their participation in discussions, decisions and actions on nuclear weapons”.

At the first session of the open-ended working group established by General Assembly resolution 70/33 on “Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations”, Ireland submitted a working paper (A/AC.286/WP.35) through which it emphasized the impact of a nuclear weapons detonation on a host of cross-cutting issues, such as, *inter alia*, climate change, international law and gender. With regards to gender, Ireland underscored the gendered impact of radiation given the fact that women are “biologically more vulnerable than men to the harmful effect of radiation”.<sup>12</sup>

## **10. Counter-terrorism and Violent Extremism**

The Secretary-General has also addressed the relationship between gender, small arms and violent extremism. The Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674), released on 24 December 2015, recognizes the impact of terrorism on women and the importance of gender equality and empowering women and girls in combatting the drivers of violent extremism.

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<sup>12</sup> 59 Anne Guro Dimmen, *Gendered Impacts: The humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons from a gender perspective*, ILPI-UNIDIR Vienna Conference Series, Paper No:5