

Australia's views on: 'Ways and means to promote the role of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and the implementation of Resolution 71/56'ⁱ

Australia welcomes the opportunity to share our views on 'ways and means to promote the role of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and the implementation of the Resolution 71/56'. Australia strongly supports the promotion of the role of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. Gender inclusive responses to global and regional challenges are necessary to support increased stability, security and prosperity. Australia promotes the need for forums that are dynamic and creative, focused on solving real-world problems and building trust, where women and men contribute equally, to making our world more secure and stable.ⁱⁱ

Further, linking Resolution 71/56 to related agendas facilitates the effective implementation of the objectives outlined in the resolution. We welcome links made in resolution 71/56 to the women, peace and security agenda, which recognises the role of women, including as leaders and mediators in conflict prevention, conflict responses and peace processes and to the Sustainable Development Goals relevant to the promotion of women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

Below we outline the steps Australia has taken to implement Resolution 71/56 followed by ways and means to promote women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control further.

Steps Taken by Australia to Implement Resolution 71/56

Australia works to pursue the equal, full and effective participation of both women and men as an essential factor for the promotion and attainment of sustainable peace and security. The below list of practical steps taken by Australia to implement aspects of resolution 71/56 is limited to a few specific examples. It is not an exhaustive list nor does it address all of the resolutions' operative paragraphs.

Related to para 1 - Urging Member States to promote 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

Australia is committed to women's full and equal participation in the security sector.

- 1) Promoting the role of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control sits within the core of Australia's foreign policy. Australia's 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper states that 'Australia's foreign policy pursues the empowerment of women as a top priority'.ⁱⁱⁱ Our Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy which guides our work on gender equality has established as one of its three priority areas, the enhancement of women's voice in decision-making, leadership and peace-building.^{iv} Research has demonstrated that where women are included in peace processes, the probability of peace agreements being reached and then lasting improves. Our Women, Peace and Security (WPS) National Action Plan 2012 – 2018 (extended to mid-2019), includes the following ways Australia, through a whole-of-government approach, is promoting the role of women in the security sector:
 - By integrating a gender perspective into Australia's policies on peace and security;
 - By embedding the WPS agenda in the Australian government and ensure women have opportunities to participation in decision making positions; and
 - By promoting WPS implementation internationally including through the UN and other multilateral fora.^v

- 2) Australia has ratified and currently implements a number of international treaties and UN programmes on arms control and disarmament in which actively promote women's participation, including the Arms Trade Treaty, the UN Programme on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.
 - For example, through the International Development Fund, a flexible small-grants program run by the Australian Permanent Mission in Geneva, Australia supported a delegation of young women from different geographic regions to participate in the 16th Meeting of States Parties of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention as members of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines delegation in December 2017.

- 3) Australia uses UN and other international fora to engage and embed language that promotes and advocates gender perspectives on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.
 - For example, on 8 March 2018, International Women's Day, Australia called for the Conference of Disarmament to show more leadership in gender equality.
 - In the margins of the Second Meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (2018 NPT PrepCom), Australia co-hosted with the Netherlands, Sweden and Canada, a side event on 'Women in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation of Treaty' on 25 April 2018.
 - At this event the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms Izumi Nakamitsu, promoted women as 'powerful agents for peace and progress' and said she was encouraged by the increasing interest in recent years on the part of Member States in incorporating gender considerations in nuclear non-proliferation discussions despite only slight improvement of female participation in the NPT PrepComs.^{vi}
 - During the General Debate of the 2018 NPT PrepCom, the General Statement on behalf of the Vienna Group of Ten, which includes Australia, emphasised the importance of promoting the equal, full and effective participation of both women and men in nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.^{vii} Australia's statement to Cluster III on Strengthening the NPT Review Process stated that achieving gender parity is not just good policy but has the potential to enhance the capability and effectiveness of NPT processes and their outcomes.^{viii}
 - On 26 October 2017, during First Committee of the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly, Australia joined a statement made by Canada on behalf of a group of States highlighting the importance of increasing the representation and participation of women in disarmament machinery, and consideration of the gender dimensions of disarmament issues.^{ix}
 - On 14 October 2017 at a meeting of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Australia presented on Australia's perspectives on implementing UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, which built on the topic Australia chose for the OSCE-Asian Partners Conference we hosted in 2013 'improving security for women and girls'.^x

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Related to para 5 – Urging Member States to support and strengthen the effective participation of women in organizations in the field of disarmament at the local, national, subregional and regional levels and;

Related to para 6 – Calling all States to empower women, including through capacity-building efforts, as appropriate, to participate in the design and implementation of disarmament, non-proliferation

- 1) Australia is proud to have a number of women represent Australia, home and abroad, on issues of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. Through our role as co-Chair of the Group of Friends for Women in Nuclear, comprising 23 states, we work in consultation with the IAEA to identify practical initiatives to increase the representation of women in the IAEA's Secretariat
 - o Australia is currently looking at practical and concrete ways to support the IAEA's gender equality objectives and work with the agency's focal point network. This includes capacity-building efforts that emphasise and evaluate the role played by focal points to support an inclusive culture.
- 2) Australia was equally proud to Chair the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC) in 2018 and be the second consecutive female chair of the UNDC taking over from Argentina. In the same manner as Argentina, we also achieved gender parity with the two working group chairs of the UNDC (Jamaica and Belgium).
- 3) Australia is a leading donor of the UN Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR) in which donors have agreed on selection criteria whereby applicants need to demonstrate that their proposals have taken gender considerations into account.
- 4) Australia supports the effective participation of women in organisations in the field of disarmament at all levels and has a history of sending female representation to participate in the United Nations Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament, including in 2018.

Related to para 8 – Calling all State to develop appropriate and effective national risk assessment criteria to facilitate the prevention of the use of arms to commit violence against women and child

- 1) Australia's risk assessment for the export of arms is regularly reviewed and updated to ensure the integration of gender analysis in compliance and implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty.
- 2) In 2017, as a joint initiative with civil society, Australia reviewed the link between the arms trade treaty and gender perspectives, highlighted in the publication '*Reinvigorating the Narrative: The Boarder Benefits to the Arms Trade Treaty*'.^{xi}
- 3) In 2016, Australia sponsored the production by Handicap International (now Humanity & Inclusion) of the publication '*Guidance on an Integrated Approach to Victim Assistance*', which aims to promote non-discriminatory and sustainable victim assistance efforts under disarmament conventions on cluster munitions, landmines and other explosive remnants of war.^{xii} The Guidance highlights the need for an age and gender-sensitive approach to victim assistance, to ensure that survivors of all ages and genders are included amongst the beneficiaries of both specific victim assistance and broader development assistance efforts.

Further means to promote women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

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Globally, great strides are being made towards gender equality and women's empowerment but women continue to be underrepresented at the top – in positions of leadership, representation and influence. We will not achieve gender equality while women are absent from leadership.

Australia offers some further practical suggestions to promote women's participation in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control:

- Member States can make an effort to be better informed of the gender dimensions of the issues we work on and apply a gender lens to every aspect of international security.
- Member States can demonstrate leadership by backing diversity in decision-making positions both in their own government structures and in international organisations.
- Women representing Member States can act as mentors to future colleagues and provide an opportunity to hear from our experienced colleagues.
- Member States can facilitate women contributing more actively to fora on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, including by ensuring delegations are gender diverse and to support the participation of women from all levels and backgrounds in delegations.
- When considering experts and participation on panels, ensure panels are gender diverse and seek out qualified women to enrich perspectives.
- Use social media and other public platforms to recognise, promote and celebrate the contribution of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control as a way to counter stereotypes.
- Encourage the collation and presentation of sex disaggregated data where possible on women's participation in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and as a way of measuring progress going forward.

ⁱ Women, disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control, GA Res 71/56, 71st sess, Agenda Item 98 (jj) (adopted by the GA on 5 December 2016 on the report of the First Committee (A/71/450).

ⁱⁱ Statement by Australia to the Conference on Disarmament on Statement on the occasion of International Women's Day, (8 March 2018).

ⁱⁱⁱ Australian Government, '2017 Foreign Policy White Paper,' (2017) p93.

^{iv} Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy' (February 2016) p6.

^v Australian Government, 'Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018' p21.

^{vi} Remarks by High representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms Izumi Nakamitsu, at the 'Women in Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty,' event hosted by the Permanent Missions in Geneva of Australia, Canada, the Netherlands and Sweden.

^{vii} Statement delivered by Australia on behalf of the Vienna Group of Ten to the General Debate of the Second Preparatory Committee for the 202 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) (Geneva, 23 April – 4 May 2018).

^{viii} Statement by Australia to the Second Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), 'Statement for Cluster III (Strengthening the NPT Review Process)' (Geneva, 23 April – 4 May 2018).

^{ix} Statement by Canada delivered on behalf of a group of states to the UN First Committee 2017, 'Statement on Gender and the Disarmament Machinery, Cluster 7,' (New York, 26 October 2017).

^x Statement by Australia at the Meeting of the OSCE Asian Contact Group, 'Implementing UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security: Australian perspectives' (14 October 2016).

^{xi} Centre for Armed Violence Reduction, 'Reinvigorating the Narrative: The Broader Benefits to the Arms Trade Treaty,' (2017).

^{xii} Handicap International, 'Guidance on an Integrated Approach to Victim Assistance' (2016).