FACT SHEET:
GENDER PERSPECTIVES ON DISARMAMENT AND ARMS CONTROL

Why is gender important to disarmament?

Men and women are differently affected by, and involved in, issues related to weapons, including weapons of mass destruction, small arms and light weapons, landmines and cluster munitions. Therefore, mainstreaming a gender perspective into disarmament policies is crucial.

There is wide recognition that the equal, full and effective participation of both men and women is vital to international peace and security. Ever since the adoption of Security Council resolution (SCR) 1325 (2000) and the genesis of the women, peace and security agenda, the world has witnessed an outpouring of efforts to engage women as “agents of change” in all disarmament and arms control processes. This positive trend has been advanced by involving women directly affected by armed violence as well as initiating women-led policy initiatives.

Where is this perspective being addressed?

United Nations General Assembly

Gender-sensitive disarmament policy was addressed in General Assembly resolution 65/69 (2010) when the Assembly recognized the contributions of women to disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control. The resolution also encouraged women’s participation in all decision-making processes. The sixty-seventh session of the Assembly adopted an updated version of the resolution (67/48) requesting that the Secretary-General seek the views of Member States on ways of promoting the role of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. Subsequently, the sixty-eighth session of the Assembly once again adopted this resolution illustrating the commitment of States to this linkage (68/33).

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 risk of GBV thus forms an essential criterion in the export assessment that must precede the authorization of any transfer of conventional weapons, ammunition and munitions, and parts and components that fall within the scope of the ATT.
**Small arms and light weapons**

The UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons (SALW) refers to gender in paragraph 6 of its preamble 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.” The participation and representation of women in small arms control processes were particularly emphasized in the June 2014 outcome of the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States to consider the implementation of the UN Programme of Action on SALWs (A/CONF.192/BMS/2014/2).

Similarly, resolution 2117 (2014) on small arms, adopted by the Security Council in September 2013, urges Member States, United Nations entities, 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 in all its aspects.

**Women’s engagement in small arms control** is increasingly being addressed by both Member States and civil society. The UN continues to highlight the importance of integrating gender-balanced perspectives into policies to combat the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons.

**Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)**

At 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.”

**The role for the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs**

The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), through implementation of its gender mainstreaming action plan, continues to further disarmament objectives through gender-sensitive programmes, activities and policies. UNODA’s goals include:

- Exploring the linkages between the promotion of greater gender equality and disarmament
- Strengthening ODA’s capacity to ensure the ongoing incorporation of gender perspectives into its work
- Undertaking outreach and advocacy on the importance of including gender perspectives in disarmament discussions
- Supporting equitable participation in disarmament discussions