



IRELAND

Statement by

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Thank You Mr Chairman,

I would like to take this opportunity to further explore the question of the participation and engagement of women in the disarmament machinery, following on from the joint statement delivered on behalf of Ireland and 31 other states, and the excellent statement delivered by CARICOM on Monday, which highlighted the importance of a gender perspective in disarmament.

Mr Chairman,

Promoting gender equality is universally recognized as crucial to achieving the sustainable development goals. Over recent decades the international community has worked towards strengthening the representation and role of women in peace and security. There has been notable, recent progress in the disarmament and non-proliferation field.

My Delegation welcomes the recognition of the equal, full and effective participation of both women and men in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the first time a reference of this sort has been included in an international agreement in this manner. We also welcome the recognition in the TPNW of the gendered impact of nuclear weapons.

Ireland was pleased to present a working paper on Gender, Development and Nuclear Weapons to the NPT preparatory committee in May of this year and welcomes the NPT Chair's factual summary of the meeting which referenced these issues. We look forward to working with other States and Civil society on these important questions at the next NPT preparatory meeting.

Mr Chairman,

Despite this progress, women's participation in all international negotiating forums and peace processes, sixteen years on from the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, lags behind that of men in most bodies. Last year, Ireland funded a seminal research study by UNIDIR and ILPI on Gender, Development and Nuclear Weapons which, in addition to providing information on the gendered impact of ionizing radiation, highlighted the need for greater participation and engagement by women in multilateral disarmament negotiations.

The UNIDIR research showed that women are heavily under-represented across multilateral forums that focus on security, with First Committee and the NPT meetings leading the way in this regard. The imbalance at First Committee is evident, delegations need only take a look around this room to see this for themselves. Studies show that diversity and differing perspectives make group prediction and problem solving more effective. Considering that security is in the interests of all, it is essential that the voices of all are heard, as we strive to meet the goals our world leaders set two years ago.

Mr Chairman,

States are familiar with the rhetoric of how different disarmament fora can become stale and stagnant. Improving the engagement and participation of women will provide fresh perspectives and inject further impetus into our work, which takes on greater significance as we enter important Review Cycles and approach landmark anniversaries of our Conventions and Treaties. Assisting and sponsoring qualified female participants is one example of how we can rejuvenate the discussion, along with taking gender diversity into account in the composition of delegations, as well as when putting expert panels together. On the rare occasion an all-female panel occurs, it is frequently remarked upon with surprise. It is our belief Mr Chairman, that an all-male panel should invite the same reaction.

The imbalance in our disarmament meetings at present serves to limit our ability to succeed. We encourage States to consider (i) what can be done to address this issue? (ii) What are the next steps we can take? We urge states to take these questions back to capital for further reflection, emphasising to colleagues that the participation and engagement of women in disarmament is not simply a 'nice to have', but rather, a 'must have'; essential if we are to achieve progress across our collective goals.

Mr Chairman,

Let us ensure the agreements we have signed up to are not limited by lack of perspective. Let us be proactive and solution-orientated in our endeavours to explore how we can further promote the participation and engagement of women in disarmament, using women's agency as a positive force for change, for the benefit of all.

Thank You.