



**United Nations Office
for Disarmament Affairs**

**Side Event Empowering Change: The Role of Women in WMD Non-
Proliferation and Disarmament**

**Delivered by Mr. Adedeji Ebo Director and Deputy to the High
Representative for Disarmament Affairs.**

As delivered



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New York

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It's a great honor to address this special event on behalf of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu. The 25th anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325, coinciding with the 1st Committee meeting period and the 1540 Committee's Open Briefing, is an important opportunity to further highlight women's central role to lasting peace and security.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of Slovenia for convening this important event. As a non-permanent member of the Security Council and a dedicated proponent of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, Slovenia's leadership in advancing this discussion on women's empowerment in the non-proliferation and disarmament of weapons of mass destruction is timely and vital.

The goal of the WMD non-proliferation and disarmament regime—preventing the spread and bringing about the ultimate elimination of all Weapons of Mass Destruction—is a cornerstone of international peace and security. To successfully achieve this enormous task, we need all available talent, perspectives and experiences. That means recognizing and strengthening the critical, yet often marginalized, role of women.

Addressing the gender gap in WMD non-proliferation and disarmament is not merely a matter of fairness; it is a critical security vulnerability. When women are absent from the negotiating table, from the laboratories, and from the security institutions addressing WMD non-proliferation and disarmament, our efforts are less comprehensive, less innovative, and ultimately, less effective.

Empowering women in WMD non-proliferation and disarmament strengthens our collective security in three profound ways:

First, it enhances threat assessment and response: women often possess unique insights into the threat of WMD proliferation, and its impact. Integrating these perspectives leads to more robust risk analysis and preparedness, and more effective national control measures to prevent proliferation risks.

Second, it drives better governance: inclusive decision-making processes are widely recognized as more legitimate and effective. Involving women as technical experts and policymakers brings diversity, inclusion and efficiency that are essential for tackling the complex and evolving nature of WMD proliferation.

Third, it upholds the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda: our work to secure the world from the threat of WMDs is inextricably linked to commitments on women, peace and security, which world leaders pledged in the Pact for the Future. When we champion one, we reinforce the other.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We must shine a light on the women who are already demonstrating excellence in this highly technical and demanding field. They are role models and proof of concept for the importance of gender balance, as demonstrated by our distinguished panelists at this event.

Their expertise on WMD non-proliferation and disarmament is indispensable in assisting Member States to fulfill their obligations under relevant international instruments. Their endeavors for a more secure world free from the threat of WMDs is exemplary for the next generation of women entering this profession. The UN Office for Disarmament Affairs is deeply committed to facilitating progress on gender-responsive non-proliferation and disarmament, moving resolutely toward full gender parity.

To translate our commitment to women's empowerment from rhetoric to reality, I encourage all Member States and partners to prioritize concrete actions:

Invest in building capacity for women professionals in this field: increase support, including through contributing resources, for gender-responsive programmes that focus on training and mentoring women working in the field

of WMD non-proliferation and disarmament, including relevant national authority focal points.

Insist on women's engagement and participation: systematically include women in all national delegations and as candidates for international expert groups, advisory boards, and leadership roles in organizations and institutions related to WMD non-proliferation and disarmament.

Mainstream gender in programme and mandate delivery: ensure that all requests for and offers of assistance facilitated by the United Nations and its inter-governmental bodies, including relevant subsidiary organs of the Security Council, consider and integrate a gender perspective to maximize effectiveness and efficiency of their work.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Despite progress, women remain underrepresented in the field of WMD non-Proliferation and disarmament, highlighting the need for targeted investment in education, outreach, and leadership development. The UN Office for Disarmament Affairs continues to champion gender equality through its Gender Policy, data-driven approaches, and inclusive programming, reinforcing the imperative that women's empowerment is central to effective and equitable non-proliferation and disarmament efforts.

There are normative, institutional, and technological gaps in current strategies.

And there exists huge potential to cultivate the next generation of women leaders, who can thrive in the field of WMD non-proliferation and disarmament, as a powerful agent for change for global security.

Marie Curie said, “Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood”. Her wisdom still holds truth today. With more understanding and appreciation for women working for WMD non-proliferation and disarmament, and by making them leaders, policymakers, and experts—we are not merely doing the right thing, we are creating a stronger, more resilient, and more sustainable international non-proliferation and disarmament architecture for all.

Thank you.