

Joint civil society statement on gender and disarmament

UN General Assembly First Committee, 13 October 2020

Drafted by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Chairperson, delegates,

We are facing in our world a conflagration of crises. Climate change, COVID-19, conflicts; as well as fascism, poverty, inequality, armed violence, and brutality.

At the root of these challenges, among other things, lies patriarchal militarism. A world order resting upon massive investments in weapons and war and the celebration of violent ideas about masculinity.

This is why the governments of the world invested nearly \$2 trillion in militarism last year. It's why even during a global pandemic, the arms trade has continued and weapon manufacturers have been deemed "essential services" in many countries.

We have built a world in which governments only imagine the capacity of violence as providing security for their people. But weapons do not provide us with security. Care, justice, equality, housing, education—these are what make us secure.

Peace cannot be found through weapons. The idea of "peace through strength," measured in nuclear bombs and bullets, is a patriarchal fallacy.

Delegates at the First Committee should discuss and acknowledge these dynamics. While the civil society organisations that have signed onto this joint statement welcome the growing interest in the topic of "gender and disarmament" over the past few years, we call for a more robust reflection of the gendered norms associated with weapons, war, and violence.

In last year's statement on gender, we deconstructed the binary notions of sex and gender as ideas that reinforce militarism and patriarchy. Once again, we call on First Committee delegates to push beyond the boundaries of the binary in their work on gender and disarmament. This isn't just about adding particular bodies to a discussion. It's about changing our perceptions and understandings in order to crack through the deadlock and despair to make concrete progress in building a peaceful and just world for all.

Weapons are not the answer to insecurity. Disarmament is.

During the First Committee, we recommend that delegations:

- Welcome the gender perspectives included in recent forums and documents, and commit to advancing the goals contained therein;
- Ensure that gains made on gender in the 2019 First Committee are maintained and expanded;
- Collaborate to make First Committee resolutions more gender-sensitive;

- Highlight the need to ensure gender and other forms of diversity in disarmament discussions and negotiations; and
- Share their experiences with ensuring gender perspectives in disarmament policies and initiatives.

Beyond the First Committee, we urge states and other actors to:

- Avoid gender essentialisms, gender binaries, and reinforcement of violent masculinities in resolutions and action plans on disarmament and arms control;
- Implement and report back on agreed provisions related to gender diversity, gender perspectives, and against gender-based violence from relevant agreements;
- Seek to ensure gender and other forms of diversity in disarmament and arms control discussions, negotiations, and peace processes, with an emphasis on amplifying perspectives of those affected by armed violence, including Black, Indigenous, and women, gender non-conforming, and LGBTQ+ people of colour;
- Continue to research and assess the specific impact that weapons, armed conflict, and armed violence have on diverse populations, including through the collection of sex- and gender-disaggregated data;
- Promote practical linkages between the Sustainable Development Goals and the Women, Peace, and Security agenda and disarmament initiatives; and
- Invest in social equality, economic justice, and other human rights instead of militarism.

The following civil society organisations endorse this statement:

Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy
 Campaign Against Arms Trade
 Campaña Colombiana Contra Minas
 Center for Peace Education-Miriam College
 Control Arms
 International Campaign to Ban Landmines – Cluster Munition Coalition
 International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW)
 Kandy Sri Lanka
 Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy
 Mines Action Canada
 Network of Women in Security and Defense in Latin America and the Caribbean (AMASSURU)
 Niall O'Brien Center
 Nuclear Age Peace Foundation
 PAX
 Pax Christi-Asia Pacific
 Pax Christi-Pilipinas
 PEAC Institute
 Peace Boat US
 Project Ploughshares
 Saferworld
 Shadow World Investigations

Soka Gakkai International

Women Peacekeepers Pilipinas (WePeace)

#WomenInspiringWomen (#WIW)

Women's Institute for Alternative Development (WINAD)

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)