

Second Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

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Consideration of the status and operation of the Treaty and other matters important for achieving the objectives and purpose of the Treaty: other matters important for achieving the objectives and purpose of the Treaty: implementing the gender provisions of the Treaty

Report of the gender focal point (Chile)

I. Overview

1. The present report highlights the activities carried out since the first Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons with a view to contextualizing and elaborating on gendered impacts and equal participation issues within the framework of the aforementioned Treaty.
2. The active participation of States parties, scholars, international organizations and civil society, among others, during the intersessional period is acknowledged.
3. Six recommendations are included for decisions to be made at the second Meeting of States Parties on the implementation of actions 47 to 50 of the Vienna Action Plan.¹
4. Three informal meetings were held, on 30 January, 21 March and 14 July 2023, in order to prepare this report. Eight experts spoke at those meetings. All of the speakers have wide-ranging experience in this area and most were involved, in various ways, in the negotiations on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons during 2017.
5. It is important to bear in mind that most States parties have stressed the need to incorporate gender perspectives and gender sensitive approaches that best respond to the differentiated and negative impacts of nuclear weapons. The States parties have done so in various forums, especially the First Committee of the General Assembly; the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; and the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the eleventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.
6. The substantial contribution of gender perspectives and the full, equal and meaningful participation of women to disarmament and violence and conflict prevention and reduction, which is closely linked to the above, was emphasized.

* [TPNW/MSP/2023/1](#).

¹ [TPNW/MSP/2022/6](#), annex II.



II. Activities organized by the informal facilitator

7. An in-person meeting was held at United Nations Headquarters on 30 January 2023 with the following speakers: Ray Acheson, Director, Reaching Critical Will; and Véronique Christory, Senior Arms Adviser, International Committee of the Red Cross.

8. A virtual meeting was held on 21 March 2023 with the following speakers: Mary Olson, founder, Gender and Radiation Impact Project, a non-governmental organization; Erin Hunt, co-director, Mines Action Canada; and Wanda Muñoz, international consultant.

9. On 14 July, a virtual meeting was held with the following speakers: Ivana Hughes, president, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation; Vanessa Griffen, academic; and Zia Mian, researcher, Princeton University.

10. On these three occasions, comments and ideas were exchanged on the following points:

(a) Civil society participation is crucial to support of the promotion, universalization and implementation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons;

(b) Women's active and meaningful participation must be guaranteed in the commitments and activities under this Treaty;

(c) Gender and age sensitive victim assistance programmes in other contexts could be considered;

(d) It is essential to consider the humanitarian dimension of nuclear weapons;

(e) It is acknowledged that impacts of ionizing radiation vary among different ages and genders and ionizing radiation has a disproportionate impact on women and girls;

(f) The creation of a critical mass of scientists focused on the study of radiation damage from nuclear activity should be encouraged and it is important to identify and generate collaborative instruments to achieve this aim;

(g) The catastrophic consequences associated with nuclear weapons are unlimited and pose serious challenges with respect to human survival, the environment, socioeconomic development, the global economy, food security and the health of current and future generations. All of the above consequences exert an impact on men, women and children in different ways;

(h) Negative and harmful gender stereotypes should be avoided. To achieve this, it is essential to create adequate spaces and undertake coordinated actions aimed towards promoting the dissemination of information regarding gender perspectives and its contribution to equality as well as the promotion and protection of human rights.

III. Analysis and conclusions

11. During the intersessional period, States parties and signatory States reaffirmed that, in order to abolish nuclear weapons and achieve nuclear disarmament, women's full, equal, meaningful and effective participation and leadership in the decision-making under the Treaty, as well as the incorporation of a gender perspective throughout the implementation of the Treaty, are essential.

12. The importance of scientific evidence on the disproportionate impact of nuclear weapons on women and girls was emphasized. It was explained that, among other

elements, radiation affects cells, including reproductive cells, leading to deformations and translating into fertility loss, miscarriages, birth defects, possible hereditary mutations, maternal mortality and avoidance of reproduction due to uncertainty. In this regard, the importance of considering the experience of survivors of the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, particularly since girls were the most affected group, was stressed.

13. Various speakers pointed out that although there was no certainty as to why women were most affected, one hypothesis refers to the greater amount of reproductive “radio-sensitive” tissue in women’s bodies. Furthermore, girls’ and boys’ bodies receive the same radiation as adults but since their bodies, and thus their cells, are smaller and divide faster, they are more likely to experience DNA damage during cell division. Radiation harms women more than men at any age and girls are the most acutely harmed by radiation (as measured by the incidence of cancer during their lifetime).

14. The importance of integrating gender perspectives into international cooperation and assistance was highlighted in areas such as medical care (sexual and reproductive health rights) and rehabilitation and psychological support (early detection and intervention), as well as ensuring social and economic inclusion (loss of ancestral lands). This is of particular relevance in the context of the implementation of articles 6 (Victim assistance and environmental remediation) and 7 (International cooperation and assistance) of the Treaty.

15. Consideration was urged of the United Nations publication on gender guidelines which includes a section on victim assistance, as well as cross-cutting gender guidelines, inter alia, on data collection, access to survivors, facilities and equipment, mobility, rehabilitation, psychological and psychosocial support and socioeconomic inclusion.

16. The collaboration of States parties in preparing and sharing national action plans and disaggregated and evidence-based statistics was considered useful. This could help to steer gender-sensitive policies and programmes more easily.

17. With regard to disaggregated statistics, data collection and analysis based on gender, age and other relevant categories were encouraged. Moreover, the exchange of the technologies and good practices that are needed to support the collection of such data should be encouraged among States parties.

18. The link between gender perspectives and transparency and civil society participation is recognized in the process of implementing the Treaty.

19. With a view to promoting gender perspectives, the importance of scientific work and evidence are acknowledged.

IV. Recommendations

20. The gender focal point recommends that the second Meeting of States Parties:

(a) Welcome the intersessional work undertaken by States parties, signatories and other stakeholders on gender impacts and equal participation;

(b) Encourage States parties to continue the implementation of actions 47–50 of the Vienna Action Plan, with particular emphasis on considering gender-related issues in all national policies, programmes and projects related to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons;

(c) Designate a Member State to serve as focal point (coordinator) throughout the next intersessional period;

- (d) Examine, during the intersessional period, how other disarmament-related treaties have integrated gender sensitive guidelines and gender perspectives relating to victim assistance;
 - (e) Encourage the focal point (coordinator) to conduct outreach to women from affected communities, as well as academia and civil society, as appropriate, to deepen understanding on the differential impacts of nuclear weapons and the different needs vis-à-vis victim assistance;
 - (f) Maintain and expand close cooperation with the Scientific Advisory Group, as a valuable source of technical and scientific information, to develop further information on the impact of nuclear weapons on women and girls.
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