

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

Distr.: General
17 February 2025

Original: English

New York, 3–7 March 2025

Item 11 (f) (iv) of the provisional agenda*

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 (Mexico)

I. Overview

1. The present report highlights the activities carried out in the intersessional period since the second Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons with a view to contextualizing and elaborating on the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and broader gendered impact issues within the framework of the Treaty.
2. The active participation of States Parties, academics, international organizations and civil society, among others, during the intersessional period is acknowledged.
3. Eight recommendations are included on decisions to be taken at the third Meeting of States Parties, on the implementation of actions 47 to 50 of the Vienna Action Plan.¹
4. Two informal meetings were held, on 21 June 2024 and 27 January 2025, in order to prepare the present report. Six experts spoke at those meetings. All the speakers had wide-ranging experience in this area, and most were involved, in various ways, in the negotiations on, the follow-up to or the implementation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.
5. Moreover, the gender focal point participated in various informal events and consultations regarding the issue of full, equal and meaningful participation of women and broader gender impact issues within the Treaty. Among others, the gender focal point participated in a webinar organized by the Office for Disarmament Affairs on gender and nuclear weapons with its 2023–2024 cohort of the Youth Leader Fund for a World without Nuclear Weapons, an online discussion with civil society on perspectives of gender and nuclear weapons, a virtual seminar organized by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) on the theme “Foreign

* [TPNW/MSP/2025/1](#).

¹ [TPNW/MSP/2022/6](#), annex II.



policy, gender, nuclear disarmament and environment: perspectives from the South”, and the youth forum organized by civil society on the theme “From the Pacific to the Steppes: addressing the nuclear sins of the past and advancing justice”.

6. 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 negative impacts of nuclear weapons. The States Parties have done so at various forums, among others the First Committee of the General Assembly; the Conference on Disarmament; meetings on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; and previous meetings on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

II. Activities organized by the informal facilitator

7. A virtual meeting was held on 21 June 2024 with the following speakers: a Professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and former Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations (where she presided at the United Nations conference that negotiated and adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons), Elayne Whyte; the Programme Coordinator of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, Susi Snyder; and the Head of the Gender and Disarmament Programme at UNIDIR, Renata Hessmann Dalaqua.

8. A virtual meeting was held on 27 January 2025 with the following speakers: Ms. Hessmann Dalaqua; the founder of the Gender and Radiation Impact Project, a non-governmental organization, Mary Olson; and a postdoctoral researcher at the University of California at Santa Barbara, Amanda Nichols.

9. On the two aforementioned occasions, comments and ideas were exchanged on the following points:

(a) It was recalled that the Treaty is a beacon of innovation with regard to the incorporation of a gender-sensitive perspective, including on the full, equal and meaningful participation of women;

(b) Civil society participation is crucial to support the promotion, universalization and implementation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, including through their inputs in all substantive gender aspects in its comprehensive dimension;

(c) In accordance with the Treaty preamble, the Vienna Action Plan and previous decisions of the meetings of States Parties, the importance of championing women’s leadership in the institutionality and implementation of the Treaty was highlighted;

(d) There was a recognition of the contributions of women in shaping the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and of the importance of systematizing the experiences of those women leaders, as well as of promoting the need for intergenerational dialogue between traditional women leaders and emerging women’s voices in the humanitarian nuclear disarmament discussions and of incorporating their visions within the work of the Treaty;

(e) With regard to fulfilling the commitments to women’s full, equal and meaningful participation under this Treaty, it was recognized that there is a need to adopt the best practices of other frameworks to provide gender-disaggregated data on participation at review conferences and meetings of States Parties, consider appointing gender champions and ensure that gender questions are taken into account in meetings throughout the intersessional process;

(f) Moreover, it was mentioned that it is important for States Parties to the Treaty to make a national commitment to ensuring full, equal and meaningful participation within the Treaty while determining their delegations and the positions required in the institutionality of the Treaty;

(g) It was reiterated that the catastrophic consequences associated with nuclear weapons are broad 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, boys and girls in different ways;

(h) Further studies were presented on A-bomb survivors that clearly show that young girls exposed to radiation are twice as likely to develop cancer throughout their lifetime compared with boys of the same age group, and that existing radiation safety standards have been male-centric (based on a “reference man” model), which has not been fully accountable and has failed to protect vulnerable groups such as women and girls, pregnant individuals and children. Therefore, radiation exposure limits should be revised to reflect gender-based vulnerabilities;

(i) These nuanced studies understanding the differentiated radiation impacts due to biological differences have shown that the higher reproductive tissue density in females increases vulnerability, and that hormonal factors may influence cancer, cardiovascular disease and stroke risks;

(j) It was referenced that post-2006 research shows that radiation effects persist for at least three generations and prove clearly that the transgenerational impacts of the effect on exposure to the explosions of nuclear devices extend beyond previously considered limits, and longitudinal studies on transgenerational radiation harm should be prioritized by governments and scientific institutions;

(k) Moreover, taking into account the transgenerational radiation harm studies, it is important to develop new gender-based risk assessment frameworks, as well as new safety guidelines to account for reproductive health risks in radiation-affected areas;

(l) It was highlighted that, in ensuring the full scope of gender discussions within the Treaty, there should be further reflection on the intersectionality; and therefore data collection studies on radiation impacts should be disaggregated by sex, age, socioeconomic status, group vulnerabilities and geographic region. This will be particularly important to ensure gender-sensitive medical and social support programmes for radiation-exposed populations;

(m) It was also proposed to establish and enhance collaboration with other international bodies (e.g. UNIDIR, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Health Organization) to update radiation safety standards to reflect gendered vulnerabilities;

(n) It was mentioned that States Parties should allocate sufficient and dedicated funding for continued research on the gendered impacts of ionizing radiation with the aim of further informing policy decisions on nuclear disarmament;

(o) With regard to support for radiation-affected populations, the need to implement victim assistance programmes was highlighted, including medical care tailored to age- and gender-specific health risks, mental health support for affected individuals and communities, as well as training programmes for policymakers, scientists and health professionals to better understand gendered radiation risks;

(p) While recognizing the different approaches to the gender debate both within and beyond the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, it was proposed to establish a conversation series on the topic within the Treaty during the

intersessional period, aimed at promoting the dissemination of information regarding gender perspectives and its contribution to the full implementation of the Treaty;

(q) Also highlighted were gendered language in nuclear disarmament discussions and its impact, as well as the identification of the Treaty as a pertinent space for gender perspectives on security, peace and disarmament based on the humanitarian underpinnings of the Treaty itself; such gender-specific concerns should be mainstreamed into all discussions on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

III. Analysis and conclusions

10. The discussions and exchanges underscore the fundamental role of gender perspectives in the implementation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The Treaty stands as a pioneering instrument in international disarmament, integrating gender-sensitive considerations into both its structure and operationalization. The key points of engagement throughout the meetings have reinforced the significance of women's participation, gendered impacts of nuclear weapons, and the necessity of continuous research and policy adaptation to address these dimensions.

11. The Treaty is recognized as an innovative framework that champions the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in nuclear disarmament discussions. This commitment aligns with broader international obligations that emphasize inclusivity and gender equality. Civil society participation has been deemed crucial in supporting the Treaty's universalization and implementation, with a particular focus on incorporating gender perspectives into its comprehensive framework.

12. The acknowledgement of women's leadership and contributions in shaping the Treaty further highlights the need to document and systematize their experiences. Moreover, fostering intergenerational dialogue between established women leaders and emerging voices in nuclear disarmament remains essential to ensuring a sustainable and progressive approach to gender mainstreaming within the Treaty's operations.

13. A strong emphasis has been placed on the necessity for gender-disaggregated data in the context of conferences and meetings on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The adoption of best practices from other international frameworks could enhance the monitoring of gender representation, including the appointment of gender champions and integrating gender-focused discussions throughout the intersessional period. National commitments from States Parties to promote gender parity within their delegations and Treaty-related institutional structures will be integral in realizing this goal.

14. The catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons have wide-ranging implications for human survival, the environment, socioeconomic development and public health. However, these effects are not uniform across populations, and they impact men, women, boys and girls in different ways. The discussions have reinforced the urgency of addressing these gendered dimensions.

15. Scientific research, particularly studies of A-bomb survivors, has provided compelling evidence that women and girls are disproportionately affected by radiation exposure. Young girls exposed to radiation have been found to be twice as likely to develop cancer as boys of the same age during their lifespan. Moreover, existing radiation safety standards, historically based on a "reference man" model, have failed to adequately account for vulnerable groups such as women, pregnant

individuals and children. As a result, there is a pressing need to revise radiation exposure limits to reflect these gender-specific vulnerabilities.

16. Further studies indicate that the biological differences between sexes, including higher reproductive tissue density in females and the influence of hormonal factors, contribute to increased risks of cancer, cardiovascular disease and strokes following radiation exposure. Additionally, post-2006 research highlights the transgenerational effects of radiation exposure, with impacts persisting for at least three generations. This underscores the necessity of prioritizing longitudinal studies on transgenerational radiation harm, which should be spearheaded by governments and scientific institutions.

17. Recognizing these gendered impacts, the discussions have reinforced the importance of developing new gender-based risk assessment frameworks and safety guidelines that specifically address reproductive health risks in radiation-affected areas. Disaggregated data collection – by sex, age, socioeconomic status and geographical region – will be instrumental in shaping effective gender-sensitive medical and social support programmes for affected populations.

18. To further enhance research and policymaking, it is imperative that States Parties allocate sufficient and dedicated funding for continued studies on the gendered impacts of ionizing radiation. These findings should then be integrated into policy decisions that support nuclear disarmament and victim assistance efforts.

19. The expansion of victim assistance programmes remains a critical component of the Treaty's implementation. This includes the provision of medical care tailored to gender-specific health risks, mental health support for affected communities and specialized training programmes for policymakers, scientists and healthcare professionals to improve their understanding of gendered radiation risks.

20. While recognizing the diverse approaches to gender within the nuclear disarmament discourse, the proposal to establish a conversation series on gender within the intersessional period of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons marks a significant step forward. Such an initiative would facilitate the dissemination of gender-related insights, best practices and policy recommendations, ensuring that gender considerations remain a central pillar in the Treaty's implementation.

21. Additionally, the impact of gendered language in nuclear disarmament discussions has been highlighted, reinforcing the need for a gender-sensitive approach to security, peace and disarmament dialogues. The humanitarian foundations of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons provide a strong basis for mainstreaming gender perspectives into all its discussions and decision-making processes.

22. The discussions and findings underscore that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is not merely a legal instrument for nuclear disarmament but also a platform for advancing gender equality and inclusivity in international security. By integrating gender-sensitive policies, promoting women's leadership and addressing the gendered impacts of nuclear weapons, the Treaty serves as a transformative framework for disarmament and humanitarian action. Moving forward, the successful implementation of these gender perspectives will require continuous engagement, research and policy adaptation. The commitment of States Parties, civil society organizations and scientific communities will be crucial in ensuring that gender considerations remain embedded in all aspects of the Treaty, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and effective disarmament regime.

IV. Recommendations

23. The gender focal point recommends that the third Meeting of States Parties:

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

(b) Encourage States Parties to continue the implementation of actions 47 to 50 of the Vienna Action Plan, with a 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) Study the best practices of other international frameworks to enhance the monitoring of gender representation, including the appointment of gender champions and integrating gender-focused discussions throughout the intersessional period, and develop national commitments from States Parties to promote gender parity within their delegations and Treaty-related institutional structures, including presidents of review conferences and meetings of States Parties;

(e) Strengthen gender inclusion and leadership, and promote intergenerational dialogue between past women leaders on disarmament and emerging voices in humanitarian nuclear disarmament;

(f) Promote close cooperation with the Scientific Advisory Group and suggest initiatives for further work: developing guidelines for gender-sensitive impact assessments for radiation exposure risks; creating a database on gender and radiation (disaggregated by sex, age, socioeconomic status, group vulnerabilities and geographic region); further examining longitudinal studies on transgenerational radiation harm; and revising radiation exposure limits to reflect gender-based vulnerabilities, including reproductive tissue density and hormonal factors, among others;

(g) In the implementation of the positive obligations of the Treaty, deliver victim assistance programmes that include age- and gender-specific medical care, provide mental health support to affected individuals and communities, and train policymakers, scientists and health professionals to understand all harms from nuclear weapons that disproportionately impact women and girls;

(h) Mainstream gender perspectives into all the Treaty workstreams, ensuring their integration into nuclear disarmament, security and peace dimensions.