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### Women in Disarmament, Non-Proliferation, and Arms Control

Col. Dana Perkins

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# **Women in Disarmament, Non-Proliferation, and Arms Control: It Takes a Village**

**COL Dana Perkins, PhD  
Research Officer, U.S. Army War College**

**Women, Peace, and Security Symposium  
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## Disclaimer

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## Women in pandemics and disasters

- Historically, epidemics, pandemics, and disasters increased the risk of gender-based violence, sex trafficking, higher infection rates of primary caregivers and of those who are not empowered to participate in reproductive decision-making, with women and girls particularly at risk.
- At the forefront of the fight against COVID-19 (as the majority in the global health and social sectors) and in their socially-ascribed caretaking roles, women were the most adversely affected.
- The international public health crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic underscored the world's vulnerability to nature- or man-made biological weapons.
- These lessons learned should create the impetus we need to rally women's increased participation in national and international efforts to stave off the worst-case scenarios of effects caused by Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) in particular Biological Weapons (BW).
- This is a watershed moment in history in favor of international efforts to ensure global health security and in general, the inclusion of more voices in governance, peace, and security.



## Toward International Synergy and National Convergence

### UN Security Council resolutions on *Women, Peace, and Security*

- UNSCR 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions
  - Participation
  - Protection
  - Prevention
  - Relief & Recovery

- National and Regional Strategies
- Foreign policies toward gender equality & women's empowerment
- Legislation <https://www.congress.gov/115/plaws/publ68/PLAW-115publ68.pdf>
- WPS National Action Plans
- WPS and Humanitarian Action (WPS-HA) Compact <https://wpscompact.org/>
- WPS Focal Points Network <https://wpsfocalpointsnetwork.org/>
- Since 2011, annual WPS Reports of the Secretary-General (SG)
  - According to the 2022 SG report on WPS, less than half of all NAPs on WPS include specific actions on disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control, "despite its importance for the realization of the women and peace and security agenda"  
<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GE/N/N22/614/86/PDF/N2261486.pdf?OpenElement>

### UN General Assembly (GA) resolutions on *Women, Disarmament, Non-Proliferation, and Arms Control*

- UNGA resolution 65/69 (2010) and subsequent resolutions
- Calling upon all States to empower women, including through capacity-building efforts, to participate in the design and implementation of disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control efforts
- Urging Member States, relevant subregional & regional organizations, the UN, and the specialized agencies to promote equal opportunities for the representation of women in all decision-making-related processes.
- Starting in 2013 and biannually since 2014, Secretary-General's reports on Women, Disarmament, Non-Proliferation, and Arms Control
  - NATO reported in 2016
- Secretary-General's Disarmament Agenda: States to incorporate gender perspectives in the development of legislation on disarmament and arms control
- "Women remain grossly underrepresented in many weapons-related fields, including technical arms control and only 12 percent of Ministers of Defence globally are women" – Antonio Guterres, 2022



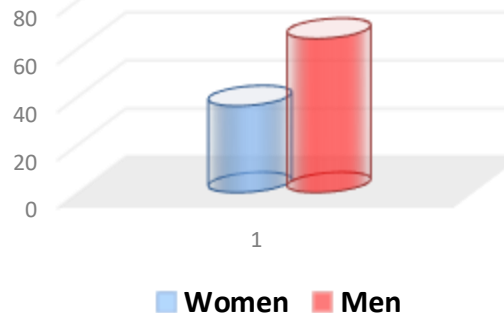
## Women in the Global Biological Weapons Non-Proliferation Regime

### 28 November-16 December 2022- The Ninth Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) Review Conference:

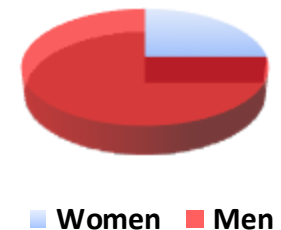
- 36% of State Parties delegates were women at the Ninth Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) Review Conference in 2022
- 31% of participatory State Parties at the Ninth BWC Review Conference had a woman as the head of the delegation
- 7 out of 137 States Parties had all-women delegations and 31 had all-men delegations.
- The largest State Parties delegations (over 20 participants) were from US (56% women), Germany (55% women), UK (42% women), and UAE (22% women).

- UNSCR 1540 on WMD Non-Proliferation (adopted in 2004 under Chapter VII of the UN Charter)
- The 1540 Committee is assisted by a Group of Experts nominated by States and selected by the UN Secretary-General to assist the Committee in carrying out its mandate, including through the facilitation of assistance to improve the implementation of the resolution.
- Only 25% of the total number of current and former experts are women and only men served as coordinators of the Group of Experts

State Parties delegates at the BWC Ninth RevCon (%)



Current and former 1540 experts (%)

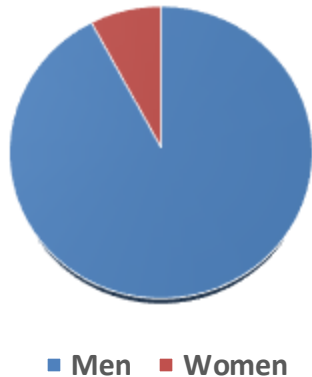


Data is consistent with reports from other multilateral forums dealing with arms control, non-proliferation, and disarmament showing that women's participation in "WMD non-proliferation diplomacy" has grown steadily over the last four decades, but women remain underrepresented as participants or leaders and, at the current rate, it will take two decades to achieve gender parity and even more decades before gender balance among heads of delegations will be achieved.



## Education and Training as Enablers for Meaningful Participation of Women in WMD Non-Proliferation Diplomacy

USANCA CWMD Advisor  
Course



- Top-down (UN) and bottom-up (national) approaches are needed to promote women's participation in countering WMD as national and international technical experts, diplomats, delegates, decision-makers, and advocates
- External factors, like a lack of role models, cultures that tend to exclude women, and persistent stereotypes about women's intellectual abilities, reinforce a wide gender gap in meaningful participation
- Address the lack of awareness about global norms against BW
- Promote the shared tenets of WPS Agenda and Women in Disarmament, Non-Proliferation, and Arms Control resolutions in the PME curriculum
- Utilize and contribute content to the UNODA Disarmament Education portal (<https://education.unoda.org>) and to the Secretary-General's reports on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education
  - The SG reports contain information from Member States, international, regional and non-governmental organizations, and academic institutions on the implementation of the 2002 UN study recommendations (A/57/124)





## Conclusion

**Empowering women in WMD non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament negotiations and governance will underwrite global peace and security at a time when new approaches and synergies are sought in order to counter grave and persistent WMD threats and violent extremism.**

***“Women are the largest untapped reservoir of talent in the world” –***

Hillary Clinton, 2011







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**Thank you for your attention!**

**COL Dana Perkins, PhD**  
[dana.s.perkins.mil@army.mil](mailto:dana.s.perkins.mil@army.mil)  
410 446 7256

