

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

LESS ARMS, MORE PEACE

Vienna Conference on
Women, Peace and Security
&
the Future of Disarmament



Introduction and Key Takeaways

The conference focused on the intersections of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation issues, bridging these seemingly unconnected issues.

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) is celebrating its 20th anniversary. A gender-approach to disarmament falls within the four pillars of the WPS Agenda, although but disarmament is not explicitly mentioned in Resolution 1325 – except in the limited context of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR). Additionally, most disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation frameworks lack a gendered approach and gender mainstreaming. The aforementioned underrepresentation of gendered approaches in the field of disarmament, and especially in the context of weapons of mass destruction, is concerning and dangerous.

Among the many ways to remedy this crucial shortcoming, the conference highlighted the following:

- Inclusion of women must increase. It must be included in a full and meaningful manner at all levels of negotiations.
- The focus in disarmament negotiations must broaden beyond state security to include people-centred security approaches such as humanitarian disarmament.
- Non-nuclear states can and must play an essential role in countering the hegemonic voice of nuclear weapons states by introducing critical discourses, people-centred notions, and promoting the inclusion of civil society.

Findings and Recommendations

The number of women participating in arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament has grown steadily over the last four decades, but women remain underrepresented. When UNSCR 1325 was adopted, women comprised only 15% – 20% of diplomats participating in arms control conferences and negotiations. This is problematic as the impact of conflict and wars disproportionately affects women.

- **Negotiations need to include more women. Full and meaningful participation at all levels needs to be encouraged. This can be achieved starting with different and improved hiring practices, establishing mentoring programmes in your organisations, instituting quotas and prioritising gendered approaches.**

The concept of humanitarian disarmament, a people-centred approach focusing on preventing and remediating redressing human and environmental harm, has grown in importance over the past decade. Shifting the focus from state security strengthens international humanitarian law and multilateralism.

- **Including survivors and affected communities humanises the issue of disarmament. First-hand experiences of effective measures can help with lobbying in pursuit of new norms and standards. The WPS Agenda should demand a humanitarian disarmament approach not only to small arms and light weapons, but equally to weapons of mass destruction.**

Findings and Recommendations

Nuclear weapon states dominate negotiations on nuclear weapons and disarmament. Negotiations perpetuate the current system of hegemonic powers instead of introducing critical notions and including non-nuclear weapon states or civil society representatives.

- **Non-nuclear states need to claim their space in the debate and steer it towards a critical discourse underlying a humanitarian approach. They could initially pursue this goal by supporting the introduction of effective and consistent gender mainstreaming, and promoting the inclusion of civil society representatives.**
- **Non-nuclear states can be important actors for change in the way security is instinctively perceived in the international arena. Their adoption of a more critical security discourse will enable for a rethinking of security policy as a traditionally masculine and militarised concept, thereby also normalising and promoting the acceptance of disarmament initiatives as worthy pursuits for human and public good, rather than acts of weakness in the international arena.**

Sources:

[Still behind the Curve, UNIDIR](#)

[UN Action Joins The Call of The Secretary-General for a Global Ceasefire](#)

WHO WE ARE



Women In International Security (WIS – pronounced ‘wise’) Austria is an independent, non-partisan, non-for-profit organisation headquartered in Vienna. Completely run by volunteers, its mission is to create an international platform for women and men to work side-by-side towards equitable peace and security by hosting policy debates, creating a network of young professionals in Vienna, giving a voice to female security experts and offering a mentoring programme for young women.

WIS Austria is dedicated to contributing to the inclusive and multidimensional participation of women in fields related to international security including but not limited to peace, conflict resolution, economic development, humanitarian affairs, and human rights. This is done through collaborative research, policy analysis and recommendations, information exchange, professional development and training, networking and new initiatives.

WIS Austria particularly focuses on European security, nuclear security and the physical security of women.

You can find out more here: www.wiisaustria.com