Canada’s Submission

This submission provides a summary of Canada’s views on and efforts to implement UNGA A/RES/77/55 Resolution “Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.” This submission responds to a note verbale from the Office of Disarmament Affairs ODA/2024-0034/women) pursuant to OP13 of the above-mentioned resolution, requesting the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States.

Women in disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control

It is not enough to simply acknowledge that women have a role to play in disarmament. We must also recognize that the advancement of peace and security is impossible and incomplete without women in all their diversity.

The gendered effects of arms

Women and girls are disproportionately represented as victims of armed violence, especially where arms are used to perpetuate sexual and gender-based violence. As women are persecuted due to their gender, whether in conflict or outside of it, the lack of gender considerations in policies surrounding disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control seriously impedes the ability for women to live and work safely.

Women at the table

Women have historically been excluded from and continue to be discriminated against in disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control forums. Even when invited to the table, women are often disincentivized to speak and influence the conversation, whether through intentional harassment, or disempowerment. It is vital that women are not only invited to be a part of the conversation, but are also equipped, empowered, and encouraged to shape discussions and policy.

Canada’s policy of gender mainstreaming

Canada’s gender policy focuses on 1) advocating for increased data on victims of armed violence, disaggregated by age, sex, economic class, religion, ethnicity, and gender, 2) increasing the representation of women in disarmament forums, and 3) integrating a gender-based analysis plus (GBA+) framework to increase understanding of the impacts of weapons on women, and identify further areas of work.

This has led to Canada’s UN General Assembly First Committee sponsorship policy, which limits Canadian co-sponsorship of resolutions to those which incorporate meaningful gender references. In addition, Canada’s leadership on statements, working papers, and initiatives is specifically focused on analyzing the gendered effects of arms proliferation and armed conflict. Domestically, Canada integrates gender-transformative
policies in arms exports, gun legislation, ammunition management, victim assistance programs, and gender-based violence hotlines.

As part of the recently released 3rd National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, Canada has renewed the commitment to increase the full, meaningful, and effective participation of women in international security forums, including disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control meetings and conferences. Domestically, this has led to internships specifically geared towards hiring women of colour and women with disabilities. Canada also provides funding to the United Nations and the IAEA to bolster training for and employment of women.

Canada is committed to aligning the priority of gender equality with the goal of reducing arms and eliminating weapons of mass destruction. This commitment is enhanced by consulting with civil society, Indigenous Peoples, youth, and members of the LGBTQI+ community, and advocating for a feminist and intersectional approach to disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control that leaves no one behind.