Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control
A/RES/77/55

India attaches high importance to promoting gender equality and the meaningful participation of women in achieving international peace and security. India welcomes the fact that resolution 77/55 recognizes that the role of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control should be further developed, in particular the need to facilitate the participation and representation of women in policymaking, planning and implementation processes related to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

Armed conflicts have a devastating impact on the lives and dignity of women. The evolving nature of the conduct of hostilities involving armed non-State actors has placed women and girls in war-torn, fragile and humanitarian contexts at great risk of being subjected to violence and discrimination. India is cognizant that addressing such complex challenges requires close cooperation, collaboration and coordination between Member States and other relevant stakeholders across multiple forums and in a sustained manner.

India participates actively in various United Nations forums that invest in and accelerate progress towards gender equality. India has also been among the major contributors to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) since its inception. Women have held leadership positions in the Indian Ministries of External Affairs and Defence and have led India’s disarmament and arms control efforts.

Indian women have excelled at the United Nations and various international organizations and have occupied prominent positions as negotiators. Hansa Mehta’s stellar efforts as India’s delegate to the Human Rights Commission in 1947–1948 culminated in the replacement of the phrase “all men are born free and equal” in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with “all human beings are born free and equal”. In 1953, Vijay Lakshmi Pandit became the first woman to be elected President of the General Assembly. Over the decades, several women ambassadors have ably represented India at various multilateral forums on disarmament and international security, including the Conference on Disarmament, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency. India is pleased to note that its expert for the Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, Ms. Muanpuii Saiawi, chaired the sessions of the Group during the period 2022–2023 and led the Group to adopt a consensus report.
India works closely with UN-Women, United Nations peacekeeping operations and other relevant United Nations agencies to advance women’s role and participation in matters relating to international security. India’s contribution of the female formed police unit to the United Nations Mission in Liberia represented the first-ever women contingent in the history of United Nations peacekeeping operations and was lauded as a role model by the United Nations when the United Nations Mission in Liberia was wound up in March 2018.

We strongly believe in capacity-building to complement various cross-cutting efforts in promoting the participation and agency of women in peace and security issues. In this context, India actively encourages the participation of women diplomats in its Annual Disarmament and International Security Affairs Fellowship, launched in 2019. India has hosted specialized courses for women military officers in partnership with UN-Women at the Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping in New Delhi. India has also taken the lead in hosting specialized training courses for peacekeepers relating to sexual violence in armed conflict situations. India is pleased to note efforts by Member States to mainstream gender perspectives and promote the equal participation of women in various disarmament and non-proliferation forums and instruments. A number of General Assembly resolutions and group of governmental experts’ reports pertaining to disarmament and international security exhort the international community to achieve this aim, and they enjoy India’s support.

Indian women Army officers have contributed effectively in the field of global ammunition management. Lieutenant Colonel Preeti Kanwar delivered training in a workshop for women Armament and Ammunition Technical Officers (AATOs) at Geneva from 8 to 11 November 2022 in the compliance of International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) and how IATG can be incorporated into the national ammunition management policy frameworks. Based on her admirable performance at this event; on 14 February 2023, she was also invited to be a panelist in a virtual event on ‘Women’s Meaningful Participation in Ammunition Management: insights from women ammunition management experts’, organized by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and Small Arms Survey. In this, she highlighted India’s lead in giving equal career and training opportunities to women officers for training and growth as AATOs. Her talk and comments were acknowledged by the other participants to have inspired many women to seek leadership roles in the armed forces.

In continuation of its commitment towards women’s participation in UN led programmes, India again nominated, this year, women Army officers - Major Apaiksha Uppal as Trainer and Major Paayel Dutta as Trainee - in the UN safer
Guard Training for Women AATOs on the IATG at Wiener Neustadt, Austria from 01-12 July 2024.

India stands ready to contribute to further international efforts relating to both the normative and the practical aspects of promoting women’s participation and role in disarmament and international security.

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