

**Izumi Nakamitsu
High Representative for Disarmament Affairs**

**High-level Exchange and Follow-up on Resolutions and Decisions Adopted at the
Previous Session of the General Assembly's First Committee and Committee and
Presentation of Reports of the Secretary General**

Friday, 14 October 2022, 3:00 PM, CR-4

Your Excellency, Ambassador Peiris, Chair of the First Committee,

Distinguished delegates,

Excellencies,

Dear Participants,

I welcome this second opportunity to address the 77th session of the First Committee.

As I already provided comprehensive opening remarks, I will refrain from repeating my assessment of the international security landscape.

Nevertheless, the main concerns I raised in my remarks are worth emphasizing.

Divisions are deep, rhetoric is inflammatory, and tensions are high.

Throughout the general debate, many delegations expressed similar concerns over the deteriorating international security environment.

Many States said the risk of the use of nuclear weapons is unacceptably high.

Several delegations lamented the erosion of the norm against the use of chemical weapons.

Others referred to a lack of trust and transparency as stumbling blocks to disarmament efforts.

Several regretted unconstrained military spending and its opportunity cost for achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

As the Committee moves onward to action on draft resolutions and decisions, I urge delegations to proceed constructively and purposefully toward tangible solutions.

The troubling developments before us—not the least of which is the unnecessary and devastating war in Ukraine—demand urgent and meaningful responses.

Complacency is not an option.

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished delegates,

For this high-level exchange, I would like to speak to the cross-cutting topic of more inclusive and participatory processes of disarmament discussions. Gender, and enhancing the role of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control discussions and policy-making is a key part of this issue.

But before that, I want to briefly touch upon the question of “Follow-up on Resolutions and Decisions Adopted at the Previous Session of the Committee and Presentation of

Reports of the Secretary General.”

In line with recent practice, I will forgo providing a detailed accounting of the views of Members States received pursuant to requests by the General Assembly.

Those details will be posted on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs in an annex to this statement.

That said, the low levels of response to requests for views of Member States, including from sponsors and co-sponsors of the mandating resolutions, remain disappointing.

For the 77th session, 18 reports of the Secretary-General were presented to the First Committee pursuant to resolutions that include a mandate to request information or views of Member States.

Two of those reports contain information submitted by Member States relating to military expenditures and the UN Register of Conventional Arms.

The number of replies provided to these transparency instruments are 32 and 37, respectively. In recent years, reporting levels for both instruments have consistently remained below 45.

Out of the reports presented to the General Assembly that include compilation of views, the majority received inputs from fewer than 10 States.

Eight reports received five or fewer responses.

Among the highest number of inputs (33) were those received for the “Report of the

Secretary-General on promoting international cooperation on peaceful uses in the context of international security” (A/77/96), a first-time report.

For the majority of the reports, the replies have hovered around the same low number for consecutive sessions, thus raising questions of interest and utility.

I would invite delegations to assess how these reports can contribute to States’ consideration of the respective topics and to reflect on the type of information that would best facilitate effective discussions in today’s evolving contexts

A welcome practice of States has been the request to the Secretary-General to prepare a substantive report on “Current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts”.

This year, the Secretary-General submitted the fifth version of this report with updated information on recent developments in science and technology of relevance to weapons, means or methods of warfare.

This year’s version also contains a cross-cutting section on implications of new technologies for existing legal frameworks related to the use of force (A/77/188).

We hope that this report remains a useful reference document for delegations, particularly for those delegates who might be new to these issues.

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished delegates,

Now turning to the issue of gender.

In this Committee, we cannot separate our work from people.

Here I speak about both the people affected by our decisions, as well as the people making them.

When we speak of inclusivity, the equal, full and effective participation of women is key.

We simply cannot afford to leave parts of our population behind when negotiating our common future.

Yet, we are still far from parity and diversity in disarmament fora.

This Committee has had only one female chair in all 77 sessions.

Last year, in the First Committee, only 25 percent of delegates taking the floor were women; and the number of women heads of delegations saw a slight decrease from the previous year.

The biennial resolution on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control will be tabled at this year's session.

It has been twelve years since Trinidad and Tobago first introduced this text calling for gender-responsive disarmament policies and programmes and the equal and full participation of women in our field of work.

The resolution as a whole has traditionally been adopted by consensus, thus its core message of equality supported by all. I hope this strong pattern of support continues. It is also positive that States have supported updates to the text to ensure it is fit-for-purpose. I hope that the resolution continues to evolve to reflect the latest developments.

Since the introduction of this resolution in 2010, we have seen several positive developments on the gender front.

It has become broadly unacceptable to hold all-men panel discussions.

Over the last twelve years, we have also seen an important trend of an increasing inclusion of gender perspectives across multilateral disarmament fora.

There have been working papers and joint statements on this topic, including from civil society.

Member States, the UN and other international organizations are regularly implementing projects, programmes, training, side-events and research on the nexus between gender and disarmament.

We have witnessed a marked increase in gender-related provisions in disarmament instruments and frameworks. Several other First Committee resolutions have incorporated language on gender or women. The increase in gender references has been steep—from 3 resolutions in 2010 to 19 last year, covering a wide range of areas from conventional arms to weapons of mass destruction and new and emerging technologies.

The Arms Trade Treaty commits States Parties to assess the likelihood of arms being used to commit gender-based violence.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons calls for gender-responsive victim assistance.

In June this year, at the Eighth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons, new progressive language on gender was included in the outcome document.

In the first progress report of the Open-ended working group on information and communication technologies security, States underscored the importance of narrowing the “gender digital divide” and committed to focused discussions on gender dimensions at future sessions.

My sincere hope is for these positive trends to continue and further increase. Gender mainstreaming is not an option, it is a necessity.

As you know, the biennial report of the Secretary-General— “Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control”— tackles gender dimensions of disarmament. The latest iteration of the report was prepared for this session of the First Committee.

Allow me to extend my appreciation to States from all regions for sharing their views on ways and means of promoting women in disarmament.

I also thank our partners from the UN system and other international organizations that provided their inputs.

The report shows important progress in efforts to implement the resolution, and I hope it continues to serve as a vehicle for sharing good practice and shedding light on the importance of ensuring full and effective participation and leadership of women. I could not speak about inclusive disarmament processes without recognizing the important role played by civil society.

As advocates, researchers and experts, civil society supports States in a variety of ways—from implementing commitments to keeping them informed.

For instance, in June, States concluded a multi-year consultative process on the humanitarian consequences that arise from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, achieving a political declaration with important technical and substantive contributions from non-governmental experts.

Today, advocates in civil society are providing powerful encouragement to States to sign and support the political declaration ahead of its formal adoption in November.

Within the frameworks of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the past year saw broad and active participation by civil society in our collective efforts to sustain and strengthen the nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control regime.

I call on every Member State to strengthen the principles of transparency and inclusivity of relevant non-governmental actors to support the work of intergovernmental disarmament processes.

The same goes for the participation of and contributions made by private sector and industry actors, as well as young people around the world. Let me be clear: broad, inclusive participation of diverse actors enrich your intergovernmental decision-making.

Diversity brings to us innovative and creative approaches that are so needed to tackle some of our most difficult disarmament and security challenges. Inclusive multilateralism, based on strong partnership with diverse actors, is a smart and indeed necessary element for today's disarmament discussions.

I thank you very much for your attention.