

Advocacy Report

Meeting attended:

Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons ('NPT')

2 – 12 May 2017, Vienna International Centre attended by Elisabeth Francis

Subject of Meeting:

The NPT entered into force in 1970 and was extended indefinitely in 1995. The Treaty is the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and an essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. It was designed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, to further the goals of nuclear disarmament, and to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. This meeting in Vienna, attended by all states party to the treaty, was the first of three annual sessions that will be held prior to the major 2020 Review Conference of the NPT.

Elisabeth Francis represented GWI at this ten day meeting and attended many side events. Of particular interest were:

- 1) **Gender, Development and Nuclear Weapons**, hosted by the Governments of Ireland and Sweden. and
- 2) **Mayors for Peace Youth Forum**, with representatives from Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Volgograd and other cities, including two NGOs: INSEAP from Germany and ICAN Austria.



A Plenary session at the Preparatory Committee meeting

- 1) At the **Gender, Development and Nuclear Weapons** side event, hosted by Sweden and Ireland, the relationship between nuclear weapons and gender was discussed - how and why the two are connected, to each other and to global agendas such as sustainable development. A study by ILPI (International Law and Policy Institute)



and UNIDIR (United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research), sponsored by Ireland, was presented and discussed. Its conclusions were:

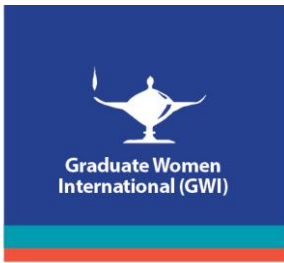
- “A gender perspective is useful and highly relevant in understanding the impact, discourse and actors dealing with nuclear weapons.
- Impact: Nuclear weapon detonations affect women and men differently, both in terms of the biological effects of ionizing radiation and the social, economic and psychological impacts.
- Discourse: Applying a gender lens to the nuclear weapons discourse gives insight into how ideas and policies related to nuclear weapons are gendered; that is, are underpinned by notions of masculinity and femininity. A gender perspective contributes to diversifying the debate on nuclear weapons and to challenging the established pattern of power relations, and is helpful in creating conditions for reaching the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.
- Representation: In spite of international agreement on the importance of women’s participation in decision-making, there is a gender imbalance in multilateral disarmament forums. Men continue to be heavily over-represented and women are under-represented in multilateral forums concerned with security issues, including nuclear weapons. Men’s over-representation / women’s under-representation seems to be even more pronounced in forums concerned with security issues and disarmament than in others.
- Failure to apply a gender perspective and lack of female participation may be factors contributing to the current lack of nuclear disarmament progress, and why other agreements to tackle global problems (such as the Sustainable Development Goals) seem to be so often ignored or contradicted in the prevailing international policy discourse on nuclear weapons.”

The Government of Ireland concluded: “We must approach our commitments to disarmament of nuclear weapons with due regard also to our commitments under humanitarian law, to sustainable development, gender equality and our commitments under the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. We cannot continue to maintain, modernize and improve weapons which are now known beyond any scientific doubt to have disproportionate gendered impacts on women.”

GWI members may also be interested in other research presented at this side event which showed:

‘As of August 2016, only thirteen of the heads of state of United Nations member states (and observers) were female. That amounts to less than seven per cent. The number of heads of government is even lower, at a total of eight, which constitutes just over four per cent.

Among the United Nations’ 195-member states and observers, only 29 - less than fifteen per cent - have female foreign ministers.



The percentage of women heads of diplomatic mission globally was fourteen per cent in 2012 (versus seven per cent in 2000).

There are 37 female Permanent Representatives to the United Nations in New York, approximately 20 per cent of the total. Despite several UNSC resolutions on women, peace and security underlining the importance of the roles of women in the realms of peace and security, women are still largely under-represented at peace negotiation tables. For example, one study found that in 33 recent peace negotiations involving governments and armed groups in 20 countries, there were only eleven women of 280 people participating—just four per cent.'

2) The Mayors for Peace Youth Forum was hosted by the mayor of Hiroshima and President of Mayors for Peace, Mr. Kazumi Matsui. He expressed his hope in the younger generations, reminding participants that the average Hibakusha (atomic bomb survivor) is now over 80 years old, and urged others to keep their message of peace alive. The director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, warmly encouraged the youth to raise awareness about nuclear weapons impacts. There were ten impressive presentations from youth from around the world about the diverse and creative activities they have been implementing to further peace and the abolition of nuclear weapons. During the Q & A, education, advocacy and campaigning strategies to influence public opinion and governments were discussed.

Mrs Michiko Kodama, a Hibakusha – a survivor of the Hiroshima atomic bomb – gave a very moving account of her experience during a plenary session.

Refers to SDG #: 16

Relevant treaties/conventions/resolutions: The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

Intervention by GWI Rep:

Networking with Preparatory Committee representatives and other NGO participants.
Participation in discussions at the side events.

What needs to be done:

As the Committee concluded in its report, 'the risk of nuclear conflict endures. Almost three decades after the cold war ended, there are approximately 16,000 nuclear weapons in the arsenals of nine countries. Moreover, a significant proportion of the world's states continue to regard nuclear deterrence as central to their strategic doctrines.' The NPT makes an important contribution to international peace, security and stability. In the words of the Committee chair, 'it has created a political rules-based order, like a constitution, and requires constant maintenance and strengthening.' It is a key forum for addressing global issues such as nuclear weapons in North Korea, the Iran issue, and the possession of nuclear weapons by states that have acquired nuclear weapons but not signed the Treaty – India, Israel and Pakistan.

Given the importance of the NPT to world peace, members may want to be aware of the important 2020 Review of the Treaty and the preparations for it, so that they can be involved with advocacy in their own countries.

<https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/npt/>



Michiko Kodama (center) with Elisabeth Francis (left) before the conference