



**GENDER
PERSPECTIVES
IN ARMS CONTROL
AND DISARMAMENT**
VIEWS FROM AFRICA
WORKSHOP REPORT



UNIDIR

UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE
FOR DISARMAMENT RESEARCH

ABOUT UNIDIR

UNIDIR is a voluntarily funded, autonomous institute within the United Nations. One of the few policy institutes worldwide focusing on disarmament, UNIDIR generates knowledge and promotes dialogue and action on disarmament and security. Based in Geneva, UNIDIR assists the international community to develop the practical, innovative ideas needed to find solutions to critical security problems.

ABOUT THE GENDER AND DISARMAMENT PROGRAMME

The Gender and Disarmament programme seeks to contribute to the strategic goals of achieving gender equality in disarmament forums and effectively applying gender perspectives in disarmament processes. It encompasses original research, outreach activities and resource tools to support disarmament stakeholders in translating gender awareness into practical action.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Support from UNIDIR core funders provides the foundation for all of the Institute's activities. The Gender and Disarmament programme is supported by the governments of Germany, Ireland, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

This report is a summary of the themes, insights and recommendations from a workshop held in Entebbe, Uganda, on 25–26 February 2020. The author is grateful to all participants for sharing their knowledge and experience. The author would like to thank Joanitah Akoyo, Renata Dwan, Renata H. Dalaqua, Lenka Filipová and Einas Mohammed for their thoughtful comments and suggestions on earlier drafts. The author would also like to thank Valentina Bacco and Stella Kigozi for their assistance in preparing this publication.

NOTES

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The views expressed in the publication are the sole responsibility of the individual author. They do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the United Nations, UNIDIR, its staff members or sponsors.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Context	1
Takeaways and Recommendations	3
Summary of Discussions	6
1. From Women, Peace and Security to Gender-Responsive SALW Control	7
1.1 <i>The Role of National Structures on SALW Control</i>	10
1.2 <i>Gender Analysis and Data Collection as a Means to Improve Arms Control and Disarmament</i>	11
2. Beyond SALW: Gender Mainstreaming in the Fields of Cyber Security, Artificial Intelligence and Weapons of Mass Destruction	13
3. Women's Participation and Leadership in Arms Control and Disarmament	16
Glossary of Terms	20
Workshop Agenda	22

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



CHRISTINE BUTEGWA is a gender and development expert with 20 years of experience in gender and women's rights programming. Christine holds an MA in communications studies from the University of Leeds and a BA in mass communications from Makerere University.

ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER



JJUMBA MARTIN is an independent, self-taught photographer, with ten years of experience in documentary photography. His work focuses on daily life stories. He has worked intensively in the East African region and Africa at large.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

1325 NAP	National Action Plan to implement Security Council resolution 1325
AU	African Union
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
GBV	gender-based violence
RECSA	Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States
SALW	small arms and light weapons
STEM	science, technology, engineering and mathematics
WPS	Women, Peace and Security



CONTEXT

In 2000, Security Council resolution 1325 asserted that sustainable peace is inextricably linked with gender equality. It was the formal inauguration of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, a normative framework that places women's rights and roles at the forefront of all efforts to prevent, resolve, and rebuild after conflict and to protect civilians in conflict situations. Since then, African States have been at the forefront of efforts to implement the WPS agenda, with twenty-five States developing and implementing National Action Plans (NAPs) on resolution 1325. In 2014, the African Union (AU) became the first regional organization to assign a Special Envoy on WPS.

This year, as the WPS agenda will celebrate its twentieth anniversary, is also the year in which AU member States have made 'silencing the guns' their main priority. This represents a timely opportunity to discuss gender-responsive arms control and to strengthen the convergences between these policy areas, which are often considered separately. Specifically, what can be done to integrate 1325 NAPs with national action plans on small arms and light weapons (SALW)? What

are the necessary tools to mainstream gender in arms control initiatives? What are the obstacles and the opportunities for improving women's participation in settings related to weapons, as well as security technologies, such as cyber and artificial intelligence?

These were some of the main questions guiding the workshop **Gender Perspectives on Arms Control and Disarmament: Views from Africa**, organized by UNIDIR in Entebbe, Uganda, on 25–26 February 2020. The workshop brought together diplomats, military officers, policymakers, activists, civil society practitioners and academics from more than a dozen African countries, as well as representatives of regional and international organizations. Over two days, participants exchanged policy ideas, research findings and lived experiences of gender dynamics in contexts of armed violence and insecurity. They analysed recent initiatives and proposed recommendations to improve understanding of gender perspectives and their relevance to peace and security.



TAKEAWAYS & RECOMMENDATIONS

» MAINSTREAM ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT IN THE WPS AGENDA

WPS-related policies have been instrumental in the promotion of women's participation in security structures and in drawing attention to the connection between gender roles and violence. However, for the most part, they have not been used to address the connections between gender roles and armed violence, between violent masculinities, weapons and gender-based violence (GBV). This a missed opportunity, given that policies and programmes that seek to better regulate the arms trade, to reduce the flow of illicit weapons and to prevent weapons diversion are of relevance to all pillars of the WPS agenda: Prevention; Participation; Protection; Relief and Recovery.

A first step to strengthen synergies between these policy areas would be to include arms control and disarmament in the agenda of WPS meetings at local, national and international levels. This would allow for a dialogue between arms control and WPS practitioners and pave the way for further integration. Actions

to build arms control expertise within the WPS community, to integrate arms control measures into national legislation combating violence against women and into 1325 NAPs should also be pursued by national governments, international organizations and civil society groups.

» TAKE GENDER ROLES SERIOUSLY WHEN DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT POLICIES

Gender dynamics can affect the likelihood of being targeted by weapons systems, prospects of becoming a victim/survivor of armed violence, the ability to access medical attention in the aftermath of armed conflict, and the long-lasting biological, psychological and economic impacts of weapons on individuals. Clear examples of these associations were discussed in the workshop, including the conflict and subsequent disarmament programme carried out in the Karamoja region of Uganda in the 1990s and early 2000s.

To ensure that knowledge of gender dynamics at the local level can feed into SALW policymaking processes at national and international levels, it is important to have systems in place to collect gender-disaggregated data and gender expertise available to process and analyse the information. National structures in charge of arms control could be key in this regard and some of them have already started to integrate gender considerations into their core work, including Côte d'Ivoire's National Commissions on SALW and Uganda's National Coordinator on Small Arms Control.

Regional and continental training programmes could be established to scale up good practices and boost national capacity to integrate gender across the small arms life cycle and to collect gender-disaggregated data. Institutions such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Makerere University Rotary Peace Centre and Namibia's upcoming Women's Peace Centre could contribute to this by delivering trainings on gender mainstreaming in arms control and disarmament, as well as by creating spaces for States to share their experiences in this area.

» **IMPROVE MULTI-SECTORAL COORDINATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES**

The WPS agenda and gender-responsive SALW control have a greater likelihood of success when government agencies work together. Participants agreed that special efforts should be made to strengthen the links between various ministries—such as gender, justice, and health—and national agencies working on security-related matters. A positive experience in this regard is the participation of Uganda's Ministry of Gender in the review process of SALW plans, which led to the incorporation of a specific indicator on cross-cutting gender issues in the revised national action plan.

Going a step further, States could streamline related policies by developing 1325 NAPs in conjunction with the national action plans on SALW control, establishing interlinked goals and indicators for both instruments, and setting up joint monitoring and reporting frameworks. If done properly, this could optimize the use of financial resources and accelerate progress on both fronts.

» **COMBAT HARMFUL GENDER STEREOTYPES AND PROMOTE GENDER PERSPECTIVES IN THE FIELDS OF CYBER SECURITY, ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND BIOTECHNOLOGY**

Participants noted with concern the low level of women's participation in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in Africa. They suggested that initiatives such as scholarships, fellowships and internships for young women should be made available to increase women's engagement with new and promising fields, such as cyber security, artificial intelligence and biotechnology. Investing in the next generation would build on Africa's demographic dividend, in line with the goals of Africa's Agenda 2063.

In addition to gender equality, it is important to ensure that technological policies are informed by gender perspectives. At the moment, most frameworks related to cyber, artificial intelligence and biotechnology do not address gender concerns, such as differentiated impacts of technology, unequal access to resources, gender inequality and sexual harassment in STEM. To change this, member States could include gender in the agenda of multilateral meetings and establish gender mainstreaming strategies in specialized committees and agencies, for example the AU Cyber Security Expert Group and the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services in Africa.

» ESTABLISH MENTORSHIP, COACHING AND HeForShe INITIATIVES THAT CAN PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY IN THE SECURITY FIELD

While African governments are making progress in increasing the numbers of women in security institutions, effective participation goes beyond numerical representation. Among the challenges highlighted by workshop participants were gender stereotypes, violent masculinities related to weapons, gender bias in recruitment and promotion, and institutional barriers to women in the military.

Participants agreed on the importance of role models and mentors who can support and encourage women to take steps that advance their careers in male-dominated environments. They identified a need for targeted initiatives, such as leadership strategies, mentorship networks and coaching programmes.

Even though the aim would be to improve women's standing in the security field, these initiatives should also reach out to men. Capacity-building programmes for both women and men should aim for gender transformative approaches that dismantle the unequal power relations manifest within the field of arms control and disarmament. Moreover, initiatives like HeForShe should be encouraged, as

they call on men to be agents of change and to take action to promote gender equality.

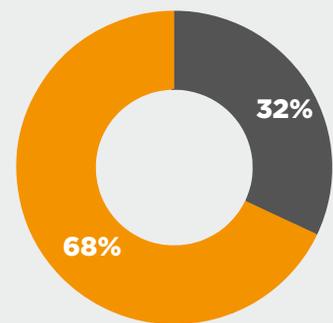
» INCREASE FUNDING FOR GENDER RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMES AND WOMEN'S GROUPS WORKING WITH ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT

Underlying all of these recommendations is the issue of funding. Participants identified a need for deliberate donor funding for gender-responsive policies. They noted that the collection of sex- and gender-disaggregated data could be made a requirement for funding by donors to encourage gender-responsive programming, monitoring and evaluation in SALW control and disarmament.

Additionally, donors should also support civil society organization advocacy for community security and against the proliferations of illicit weapons, particularly where it is led by women's organizations and women's activists. Channelling specific funds to women's organizations is crucial, especially now, when women's organizations in Africa are facing challenges of shrinking funding streams.¹

STILL BEHIND THE CURVE

The proportion of women participating in arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament diplomacy has grown steadily over the last four decades, but women remain underrepresented.



On average, women comprise just 32% of diplomats in large multilateral meetings dealing with weapons, while men comprise 68%. The imbalance is even greater at the leadership level, as men outnumber women as heads of delegations 3 to 1.



At the rate of current progress, it will take another two decades to reach gender parity in disarmament diplomacy and almost another five decades, until 2065, before gender balance among heads of delegations will be achieved.

Read more in UNIDIR's 2019 Report, *Still Behind the Curve*, at: [unidir.org/stillbehindthecurve](https://www.unidir.org/stillbehindthecurve)

¹ A review of financial support given by major donor States revealed that less than 10% of gender-related international aid is directed to women's equality organisations and institutions. See Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Aid in support of gender equality and women's empowerment (annual statistical charts)*, 2019, <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-topics/Aid-to-gender-equality-donor-charts-2019.pdf>.



SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS



1. From Women, Peace, and Security to Gender-Responsive SALW Control

The proliferation and misuse of SALW is a global phenomenon that has affected multitudes of people across the world. Due to their accessibility, low costs and ease of use, SALW are weapons of choice in most conflicts in the world today.

There are more than 1 billion firearms, with the vast majority (857 million) in civilian hands.² Gun ownership is overwhelmingly male. Likewise, men comprise the majority of professionals working in sectors that involve small arms use (e.g. law enforcement, military and private security).

Men are the perpetrators of most firearms-related incidents. They also account for the majority of victims. At the global level,

it is estimated that men account for 84% of firearms victims, but this proportion can be higher in certain regions of the world, for example South America, Central America, and Southern Africa.³

Women own only a minor share of firearms, but are disproportionately represented among victims. A small arm is used in approximately one third of all femicides. In countries with the highest rates of femicide, more than half of these killings are perpetrated with small arms.⁴ Most perpetrators of femicide are men and are frequently known to the victim—often their current or former intimate partners, family members or friends. The presence of a gun increases the risk of femicide in

² Aaron Karp, *Estimating Global Civilian-Held Firearms Numbers*, briefing paper, Small Arms Survey, 2018, p. 3, <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/T-Briefing-Papers/SAS-BP-Civilian-Firearms-Numbers.pdf>.

³ Gergely Hideg and Anna Alvazzi del Frate, *Darkening Horizons: Global Violent Deaths Scenarios, 2018–30*, briefing paper, Small Arms Survey, 2019, p. 5, <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/T-Briefing-Papers/SAS-BP-Violent-Deaths-Scenarios.pdf>.

⁴ MOSAIC Module, *Women, Men and the Gendered Nature of Small Arms and Light Weapons*, United Nations, 2018.

the domestic context.⁵

These facts highlight the connection between gender and weapons use and direct attention to the importance of tackling socially constructed gender norms, identities and inequalities in SALW control. Effective gender mainstreaming in SALW control could help to address the drivers of small arms violence and identify concrete ways to reduce it. In this sense, gender-responsive SALW control can contribute to saving lives and communities.⁶

Participants at the workshop explored various strategies that have been used at continental and national levels to integrate gender into SALW control and into broader initiatives to promote peace and security. They noted that, in the last decade, the AU has put in place campaigns, roadmaps and reporting frameworks aimed at saving lives, ending wars and reducing armed violence. The most prominent is the Silencing the Guns by 2020 campaign, which some felt has been overly ambitious in its target date.

Civil society activists have sought to raise awareness about the need to amplify women's and girls' agency to silence the guns in Africa, by making this the main theme of the 2020 AU pre-summit Civil Society Consultative Meeting.⁷ Activists, experts and officials from all regions of Africa met in Addis Ababa to discuss existing gaps in the realization of silencing the guns in Africa, including the need to "scale up the involvement of women and girls in prevention mechanisms, interventions for peace building and the post-conflict reconstruction efforts".⁸

These attempts to bring women's voices and gender perspectives into arms control initiatives are a welcome development, seeing that most efforts addressing gender in security discussions tend to be confined to WPS frameworks. While WPS-related policies have been key to promote women's participation in security structures and to draw attention to the connection between gender roles and violence, for the most part they have not been able to consider the role of arms control in the four pillars of the WPS agenda: Prevention; Participation; Protection; Relief and Recovery.

The AU, for instance, developed a 10-year Results Framework for Monitoring the Implementation of the WPS Agenda. Adopted in 2018, the document sets out key indicators for States to monitor their implementation of the WPS agenda. While several of the indicators relate to sexual and GBV, the awareness that such violence is facilitated by weapons is not explicitly acknowledged in the document.⁹

This is often the case at the national level as well. Nearly half of all AU member States have adopted 1325 NAPs, but not many of those plans include references to disarmament or provide specific actions on weapons control. At the workshop, participants shared that Uganda is developing its third 1325 NAP. Although the first two focused on addressing GBV in the context of armed violence in northern Uganda, arms control did not feature explicitly among protection measures, for instance.

In line with actions undertaken by the AU, five of the eight regional economic communities in Africa have enacted

⁵ SEESAC, *Gender and SALW. Gender Aspects of SALW and How to Address Them in Practice*, 2018, p. 10, <http://www.seesac.org/f/docs/Gender-and-Security/Gender-Aspects-of-SALW---ENG-28-09-2018.pdf>.

⁶ See also Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, *Gender Responsive Small Arms Control in the Decade for Action for the SDGs*, Center on International Cooperation, 2020, <https://www.sdg16.plus>.

⁷ Gender Is My Agenda Campaign, <http://www.genderismyagenda.com>.

⁸ African Union, *Bridging the Gap of Women's Role in the Peace and Security Agenda*, press release, 4 February 2020, <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20200204/bridging-gap-womens-role-peace-and-security-agenda>.

⁹ Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, *Continental Results Framework: Monitoring and Reporting on Implementation of Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa (2018–2028)*, African Union Commission, 2019, https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/35958-doc-continental_results_framework_wps_.pdf.



My biggest challenge has been how do you do small arms control in situations of post conflict security and peace building? How do you effectively do this in parameters that are not known? How do you balance between border control and promoting transnational border movement?"

– **ONYINYE ONWUKA**
ECONOMIC COMMUNITY
OF WEST AFRICAN STATES



policy frameworks on WPS.¹⁰ During the workshop, participants had a chance to learn about and discuss the steps taken by ECOWAS to further the implementation of the WPS agenda among its member States, as well as to integrate those actions with SALW control. The organization has an Advisory Committee on WPS, which comprises representatives from seven divisions, including the Small Arms Division. In 2018, ECOWAS commenced work on a Baseline Study on Gender-Responsive Small Arms Control to assess the regional context of the proliferation, illicit circulation and trafficking of SALW and the impacts on women and girls compared to the impact on men and boys.

Building on the Baseline Study, ECOWAS produced a Regional Action Plan on Gender Mainstreaming in SALW Control, which was validated in October 2019. The Action Plan provides practical measures to tackle SALW proliferation and the misuse of SALW through a gender lens. ECOWAS

will work with National Commissions on SALW in the region to implement the regional action plan to promote gender-sensitive SALW control.

At the moment, the ECOWAS Commission is considering setting up an armed violence monitoring mechanism to gather, monitor and analyse information and data on SALW-related violence, including GBV. Moreover, there have been discussions on revising the ECOWAS legal and normative frameworks on SALW control to incorporate gender perspectives.

¹⁰ These are the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the East African Community (EAC), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). See Aswan Forum, *More than a Seat at the Table: Advancing the Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa*, September 2019, <https://www.cairopeacekeeping.org>.

1.1 The Role of National Structures on SALW Control

During the discussions, participants observed that 1325 NAPs were rarely developed in conjunction with national action plans on SALW control. They asserted the need to seize what they considered as missed opportunities and to strengthen synergies between these plans at the national level. In this regard, national structures in charge of SALW control could offer good prospects for further integration between the WPS agenda and arms control and disarmament.

In West African States, the National Commissions on SALW are the authorities in charge of implementing the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons. They also function as the national counterpart of the ECOWAS Commission's Small Arms Division. In other regions of Africa, States might not have an established NATCOM, but rather a National Focal Point on SALW.¹¹ Notwithstanding these differences, both National Commissions on SALW and National Focal Points have had limited experience in integrating gender considerations into their core work.

In 2014, the National Commission of Côte d'Ivoire organized its first roundtable on gender and SALW, bringing together 25 leaders of women's associations and women in security forces to discuss gun control and security measures. Beyond outreach activities, Côte d'Ivoire is also working to establish a law that integrates gender in arms control processes in the country. Commending this initiative, participants emphasized the importance of legislation that effectively promotes gender mainstreaming in SALW control.

In Uganda, the National Coordinator on Small Arms Control is responsible for developing and implementing national action plans on SALW control. Guided by regional arms control frameworks, Uganda has developed and implemented three of such plans. A review of the first SALW control plan (2004–2009) pointed out that cross-cutting issues of gender, human rights, HIV/AIDS and environment had not been adequately articulated or implemented. In the following action plan (2012–2017), a specific objective to address cross-cutting issues was added and it included, among other activities, the development of a framework for gender mainstreaming in SALW control.¹²

The participation of the Ministry of Gender in the review process was key in the Ugandan experience. Since then, Uganda's National Coordinator on Small Arms Control has established a multi-sectoral system to collect sex- and gender-disaggregated data by collaborating with relevant government and non-governmental agencies whose work brings them in contact with SALW and GBV such as police, army, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Gender, and Uganda Bureau of Statistics.

Participants underscored the importance of multi-sectoral engagements in pursuing peace and disarmament. The WPS agenda and gender-responsive SALW control have a greater chance of success when institutions and stakeholders work together. Participants agreed that special efforts should be made to strengthen the links between various ministries—such as gender, justice, and health—and national agencies working on security-related matters in order to mainstream gender and enhance synergies between the 1325 NAPs and national action plans on SALW

¹¹ 93% of States in Africa have national coordinating mechanisms on SALW. See African Union Commission and Small Arms Survey, *Weapons Compass: Mapping Illicit Small Arms Flows in Africa*, 2019, p. 26 <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/U-Reports/SAS-AU-Weapons-Compass.pdf>.

¹² Uganda National Focal Point on Small Arms and Light Weapons, *Uganda National Action Plan on Arms Management and Disarmament 2012–2017*, Ministry of Internal Affairs, <https://www.mia.go.ug/sites/default/files/txt%2C%20pdf%2C%20doc%2C%20docx%2C%20ps/NAP%202012-2017.pdf>.



We need gender analysis as a grounding approach to knowing and thinking of this aspect of gender perspectives in small arms control. We also need to question the reproduction of gender stereotypes in small arms control and disarmament.”

– MIA SCHÖB
SMALL ARMS SURVEY



control.¹³

In this regard, participants also highlighted the importance of capacity-development activities that could boost the abilities of national structures on SALW control to integrate gender across the small arms life cycle. Institutions such as ECOWAS and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre have been instrumental in delivering training to national actors. The government of Namibia is setting up an international Women’s Peace Centre, which will also offer gender trainings for security practitioners in Africa.

1.2 Gender Analysis and Data Collection as a Means to Improve Arms Control and Disarmament

The use of gender analysis by policymakers and practitioners was recognized by workshop participants as crucial for understanding the differentiated impact of armed violence, as well as for guiding

the development and implementation of arms control and disarmament policies and programmes.

Gender analysis is a critical examination of how differences in gender roles, activities, needs, opportunities and rights/entitlements affect the relationships between genders and their access to and control of resources and the constraints they face relative to each other. When it comes to arms control, gender analysis can be useful to identify and respond to underlying gender norms and their relationship to weapons and armed violence.¹⁴

Through a gender lens, workshop participants discussed the conflict and subsequent disarmament programme carried out in the Karamoja region of Uganda in the 1990s and early 2000s. Most of the arms-related casualties reported were men and boys. This affected the gendered structure of the communities during and after the conflict. Women became widows and heads of the households and young

¹³ Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, *Continental Results Framework: Monitoring and Reporting on Implementation of Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa (2018–2028)*, African Union Commission, 2019, https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/35958-doc-continental_results_framework_wps_.pdf.

¹⁴ Mia Schöb and Emile LeBrun, “What and Why: Gender-responsive Small Arms Programming”, in Emile LeBrun (ed.), *Gender Responsive Small Arms Control: A Practical Guide*, Small Arms Survey, 2019, p. 24, <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/Q-Handbooks/HB-07-Gender/SAS-GLASS-Gender-HB.pdf>.



In the Karamoja region, where I did research on disarmament, it was mostly women who were carrying the weapons to the disarmament stocks. The men feared to be identified. Being a patriarchal society, the women were required to transport the illicit arms to the disarmament centres.”

– **DAVID OBOT**
 NETWORK OF UGANDAN
 RESEARCHERS & RESEARCH
 USERS

girls became caretakers of their families. Girls education was negatively affected, as the rates of child marriages for family survival increased.

When the Ugandan government decided to set up a programme to collect weapons from civilians, it was aware of the importance of including women, due to their roles in society. According to a participant, many women in Karamoja were the caretakers of guns and, thus, they knew the number of guns in the manyattas (villages).

The government encouraged voluntary disarmament through churches, but there were also forceful raids where armed civilians as well as soldiers died. In view of the high number of deaths suffered, many women tried to convince the men to stop resisting the government’s campaign in order to prevent further loss of lives. In some cases, women also gave information to the government about the whereabouts of the firearms to save their husbands from prosecution. In other cases, women would surrender firearms to the government surreptitiously, often hiding them in firewood. Local peace committees were also established in Karamoja where

women were active peace agents. A major challenge, though, was that the leadership of most peace committees was comprised by men.

In addition to understanding gender roles, participants emphasized the importance of gender-disaggregated data collection to improve evidence-based policies on SALW control and disarmament. A regional mapping of illicit small arms flow in Africa, published by the AU and Small Arms Survey in 2019, had already called attention to a knowledge gap in this area.¹⁵ Participants corroborated this finding asserting that, while African States may have put in place legislation on SALW control, challenges persist with respect to data collection and evidence-based policies.

¹⁵ Small Arms Survey, *Weapons Compass: Mapping Illicit Small Arms Flows in Africa*, 2019, p. 62, <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/U-Reports/SAS-AU-Weapons-Compass.pdf>.



“Who owns data? Data is a new currency today and is the most valuable asset available to nation states. In Africa, we do not own our data. How prepared are we for this new state of affairs in relation to our security?”

– **ZAINAB ALI-KOTOKO**
COMMITTEE OF
INTELLIGENCE AND
SECURITY SERVICES IN
AFRICA



2. Beyond SALW: Gender Mainstreaming in the Fields of Cyber Security, Artificial Intelligence, and Weapons of Mass Destruction

Although SALW is the main focus of arms control and disarmament in Africa, workshop participants also discussed the relevance of gender perspectives to other types of weapons technology. For instance, in relation to cyber security, they considered the possibility that an attack on critical infrastructure, like hospitals, would potentially have gendered impacts, disproportionately affecting pregnant and nursing women, for example. Other cyber issues that were listed as relevant from a gender perspective were online harassment and unequal access to digital technology.¹⁶

In order to improve their cyber capabilities, African States need to overcome

challenges related to the costs of cyber security infrastructure, the lack of early warning systems and the shortage of cyber professionals in certain parts of Africa. Some participants observed that African countries have often been importers of cyber technology, as most of the solutions are engineered by developed countries. They worry that this can make the continent vulnerable to cyber threats.

Gender dimensions of artificial intelligence were also a topic of discussion. A participant shared the experience of the campaign against autonomous weapons systems, that is, weapons systems that, once activated, can select, track and engage targets without any further human

¹⁶ See, for example, GSMA Connected Women, *The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2020*, March 2020, <https://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/GSMA-The-Mobile-Gender-Gap-Report-2020.pdf>; and Ashnah Kalemera, *African Women's Safety Online in the Sustainable Development Goals Era*, 22 February 2016, <https://cipesa.org/2016/02/african-womens-safety-online-in-the-sustainable-development-goals-era>.



It is important to produce research and generate gender-disaggregated data that can better inform the development of arms control and disarmament. Otherwise, there is a risk that gender-blind measures will inadvertently reinforce existing gender inequalities.”

– **RENATA H. DALAQUA**
UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR
DISARMAMENT RESEARCH



intervention.¹⁷ The campaign “Stop Killer Robots” is present in Cameroon as well as in other parts of Africa. Its main objective is to inform stakeholders about the dangers of so-called killer robots, which, according to the campaign, could be programmed to commit GBV.¹⁸

On weapons of mass destruction, participants discussed findings from research on gendered impacts of nuclear and biological weapons. They noted that, in recent years, references to the disproportionate impact of ionizing radiation on women and girl’s health have featured in multilateral meetings related to nuclear weapons.¹⁹ Debates on biological weapons, however, have not systematically examined the relevance of

gender-disaggregated data on the effects of these weapons.

Seeing that weaponized disease would likely spread and follow similar patterns of natural disease outbreaks, the Ebola epidemic could provide a relevant case study for understanding how biological weapons affect women and men, girls and boys differently. In most societies recently affected by Ebola, women are usually responsible for the provision of care and often play an important role in burial practices, including washing the bodies of the deceased. As a result, women faced a greater risk of exposure to bodily fluids or blood of infected individuals. This social configuration can, in part, explain the disproportionate number of female Ebola

¹⁷ US Department of Defense, *Autonomy in Weapon Systems*, Directive 3000.09, Glossary, Part II—Definitions, 21 November 2012, <https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodd/300009p.pdf>.

¹⁸ Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, *Gender and Killer Robots*, <https://www.stopkillerrobots.org/gender-and-killer-robots>.

¹⁹ Studies with survivors from nuclear bombings in Japan have showed that the risk of developing and dying from solid cancer due to ionizing radiation exposure was nearly twice as high for women as for men. Women were also stigmatized, deemed ‘contaminated’ and treated with fear and suspicion by some others in Japanese society. See Renata Hessmann Dalaqua, James Revill, Alastair Hay, and Nancy Connell, *Missing Links: Understanding Sex- and Gender-Related Impacts of Chemical and Biological Weapons*, UNIDIR, 2019, p. 6, <https://unidir.org/publication/missing-links-understanding-sex-and-gender-related-impacts-chemical-and-biological>.



cases in some countries.²⁰

This shows the relevance of gender roles in response strategies, which have the potential to minimize the spread of infection in the event of a disease outbreak or a biological weapons use. Participants also noted that bringing gender into a conversation on weapons of mass destruction can be useful to remind governmental officials about the human suffering caused by these weapons, which do not only affect combatants, but also have an impact on different groups of society.

MISSING LINKS

Gender analysis can be a useful analytical perspective to examine the impact of particular means and methods of warfare. Multilateral debates on chemical and biological weapons, however, have not systematically considered the relevance of sex- and age-disaggregated data on the effects of these weapons, nor knowledge of gender dynamics.

Our Missing Links report analyses possible sex- and gender-specific effects of chemical and biological weapons. It proposes a gender-responsive approach to assistance, which can help States and their populations to become more resilient to and recover more rapidly from chemical or biological incidents.

Read more in UNIDIR's 2019 Report, *Missing Links*, at: unidir.org/MissingLinks

²⁰ In Guinea, the WHO reports that women, who are the principal caregivers, are disproportionately affected. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the WHO estimated that “females accounted for 62% (280/450) of overall cases where sex was reported”. In Liberia, “75% of those who have been infected or killed from Ebola are women”. See WHO, *Barriers to Rapid Containment of the Ebola Outbreak*, 2014, <https://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/overview-august-2014/en/>; WHO, *Ebola Virus Disease—Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 2018, <https://www.who.int/csr/don/06-December-2018-ebola-drc/en/>; Tooni Akanni, *Confronting Ebola in Liberia: The Gendered Realities*, Open Democracy, 2014, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/confronting-ebola-in-liberia-gendered-realities-0>.



Women are key players in arms control and disarmament processes. Although Uganda has supported reforms to bring more women into security structures, women are still few in hierarchy. More should be done to support their participation in decision-making."

– **FLORENCE KIRABIRA**
 NATIONAL FOCAL POINT
 ON SALW - MINISTRY OF
 INTERNAL AFFAIRS, UGANDA

3. Women's Participation and Leadership in Arms Control and Disarmament

There is a need to interrogate and consider the multiple roles that women can play in international security: as victims, perpetrators, members of the armed forces, combatants, peace activists, agents of security, policymakers, arms controllers, etc. In Plateau State in Nigeria, for instance, women keep watch over their land and communities after the men are killed in conflict. In that region, women also trade weapons to earn a living and to protect their communities. In some West African countries, women are involved in craft production of SALW, which is the second largest source of illicit SALW in Africa.²¹ These shifting gender roles challenge stereotypes and limited gender constructions that see women solely as victims.

In Mali, where farmers, traders, and pastoralists have easy access to SALW, women have felt the dire consequences of insecurity exacerbated by weapons

availability. They came together to form a movement to fight weapons proliferation in the country. Civil groups comprised of women and young people were formed in the 1990s to participate in peace-making and conflict resolution processes. Women got involved in peace missions. They learned about the arms trade, proliferation, and procurement of arms. Women from different sectors became part of sensitization campaigns and got involved in the security reforms, even when they had not been officially invited by the State. They asserted their right to participate and contribute to peace-building efforts.

The Mali experience demonstrates the importance of including various stakeholders such as community members, civil society, women's organizations, media, and political actors in the discussions on conflict resolution and peace-building for sustainable peace and development to be achieved. These discussions and processes

²¹ African Union Commission and Small Arms Survey, *Weapons Compass: Mapping Illicit Small Arms Flows in Africa*, 2019, p. 55, <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/U-Reports/SAS-AU-Weapons-Compass.pdf>.



In-country discussions on small arms and light weapons control should include all key players from government, civil society, leaders in affected communities, young peoples' representatives and women of course.

Nobody should be left behind."

– FLORENCE
ENIAYEHOU

WOMEN INITIATIVE FOR PEACE
AND SECURITY, BENIN



should not be left to the military or security sectors alone.

Across Africa, there has been an increase in women in decision-making positions over the past few decades. For example, as of January 2020, Rwanda is the State with the highest number of women in parliament, with women accounting for 61.3% of the Chamber of Deputies and 38.5% of the Senate. In South Africa, Senegal, Namibia and Mozambique, women hold more than 40% of seats in the respective parliamentary structures.²² However, when it comes to issues considered as 'hard security', women are severely under-represented, as most of these positions tend to be occupied by men.

In 2020, for the first time, a woman was appointed to the rank of Controller-General of Police in Côte d'Ivoire. Mali's SALW Commission has had two consecutive women in the leadership. In Uganda, the National Coordinator on Small Arms Control is a woman who was appointed in 2019. She is the first woman

to lead this office in its history and the only woman heading a National Focal Point on SALW among the 15 States in the Great Lakes region's umbrella structure known as the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States (RECSA). This shows that, while there have been encouraging examples of women in senior leadership positions in the security sector, these cases remain the exception.

At the continental level, the AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality (2004) asserts the principle of gender parity in all AU appointments. Currently, the organization has achieved gender parity at its topmost decision-making level, with five women and five men acting as AU commissioners. However, the overall proportion of women working in AU organs and institutions is just above one third, which means that more efforts are required to enforce the quota policy.²³

A good example of adherence to the principle of gender parity acknowledged

²² Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women, *Women in Politics: 2020*, 2020, <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/infographics/2020-03/women-in-politics-2020>.

²³ For more information about the current status of gender parity in the AU, see Sankofa Magazine, no. 25, January–March 2020.



It is important to create a strong network of women from the African continent to discuss and share experiences of arms control and disarmament. A strong knowledge base and collection of women experts will support individual women's efforts in their respective countries.

– **ANGELINE KAIGAMA KEL**
FEMMES LEADERS POUR LA LUTTE
CONTRE LA PROLIFERATION DES
ARMES, CAR

during the workshop was the inaugural AU Cyber Security Expert Group, which met for the first time in December 2019. The Group is made up of ten experts, five men and five women, and its main purpose is to advise the AU on cyber security issues and policies. Participants highlighted the particular relevance of this case, given that the cyber domain has been characterized by low levels of women's participation. They noted that persistent gender stereotypes can make it difficult for women and girls to pursue education and career opportunities in STEM fields. Civil society groups in Africa have been working to change this by creating online and offline communities for women professionals and enthusiasts in cybersecurity, including SheSecures, Cyber In Africa, Shehacks Ke, Women in Cyber Nigeria.

Participants stressed that the challenges to women's participation and leadership in the security sector stem from a myriad of barriers—from gender stereotypes and sexist attitudes towards women, to gender bias in recruitment and promotion, and to legal and administrative barriers to women in national security and military structures. To overcome these inequalities, it is important to remove the legal, administrative and institutional impediments to women joining the security

sector. Supportive programmes, including mentorship and coaching, should also be instituted to empower women in their professional development.

Participants emphasized the importance of documenting the experiences of women in the security sector as a way to challenge gender stereotypes and to encourage younger women to participate in the sector. They also highlighted the role of the media in agenda setting on gender perspectives in disarmament and SALW control. It is useful to partner with media at community and national levels and to highlight women's voices by featuring them as experts in the field and media sources on the topic of SALW.

Finally, acknowledging that patriarchy is still strong in Africa, there is a need to engage men as advocates for gender equality in the security sector. Participants from Uganda shared how the country has replicated the "He For She" strategy, initiated by the United Nations to encourage men to be agents of change and take action to promote gender equality.²⁴ This type of initiative can have positive impacts on women's professional development, especially if it leads to specific, measurable commitments in favour of gender equality and it is accompanied by accountability tools.

²⁴ HeForShe, <https://www.heforshe.org/en>.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Gender

Gender refers to the roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate or as a 'norm' for women and men and girls and boys, as well as non-binary or gender-fluid persons.

Gender norms are socially constructed differences—as opposed to biological differences (sex)—and they function as social rules of behaviour, setting out what is desirable and possible to do as a male or female in a given context.

In most societies, gender norms have resulted in differences and thus, inequalities between women and men in terms of their socially assigned responsibilities, roles, access to and control over resources, and decision-making opportunities.²⁵

Gender Analysis

Gender analysis is a critical examination of how differences in gender roles, activities, needs, opportunities, rights and entitlements affect men, women, girls, boys, non-binary or gender-fluid persons in certain situation or contexts. Gender analysis examines the relationships between genders and their access to and control of resources and the constraints they face relative to each other.

Gender analysis can be integrated into all sector assessments or situational analyses to ensure that gender-based injustices and inequalities are not exacerbated by interventions and that, where possible, greater equality and justice in gender relations are promoted.²⁶

Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed gender differences, including homophobic and transphobic violence against those who defy gender norms. GBV encompasses violence against women and girls, violence against men and boys, and violence against persons with other gender identities.

It can include sexual, physical, verbal, psychological and socio-economic violence. The nature and extent of specific types of GBV vary across cultures, countries and regions. Examples include rape, forced pregnancy, sexual exploitation, abuse, enforced prostitution and sexual slavery.²⁷

Gender Equality

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys, as well as non-binary or gender-fluid persons. Equality means that a person's rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on their gender. It implies that the interests, needs, and priorities of everyone—men, women, girls, boys, non-binary or gender-fluid persons—are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups.²⁸

25 UNIDIR, "What is Gender?", *Gender & Disarmament Hub*, <https://unidir.org/gender-perspective>.

26 This is an expanded definition based on UN Women Training Centre, "Gender Analysis", *Gender Equality Glossary*, <https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/showentry.php?eid=49>.

27 International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group and Control Arms, *Gender in the Arms Trade Treaty*, factsheet, 2018, <https://unidir.org/publication/fact-sheet-gender-att>.

28 This is an expanded definition based on UN Women Training Centre, "Gender Equality", *Gender Equality Glossary*, <https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/showentry.php?eid=54>.

Gender Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men, girls and boys, as well as non-binary or gender-fluid persons of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a way to make everyone's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that men, women, girls, boys, non-binary or gender-fluid persons benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.²⁹

Gender-Responsive Small Arms Control

Gender-responsive small arms control means that relevant programmes and projects take into account specific gender dynamics—including dominant social and cultural expectations and roles of people based on their gender identities—in a given society, time, and place. Gender-responsive small arms control programming may be gender sensitive or gender transformative depending on whether it seeks to change underlying gender norms in order to achieve sustainable reductions in small arms violence—and to achieve gender equality.³⁰

Small Arms and Light Weapons

Small arms are, broadly speaking, weapons designed for individual use. They include, inter alia, revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, sub-machine guns, assault rifles and light machine guns.

Light weapons are, broadly speaking, weapons designed for use by two or three persons serving as a crew, although some may be carried and used by a single person. They include, inter alia, heavy machine guns, hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-aircraft guns, portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles, portable launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket systems, portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems, and mortars of a calibre of less than 100 millimetres.³¹

Security Council resolution 1325

Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction. It stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. It urges all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations peace and security efforts. It also calls on all parties to conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict.³²

²⁹ This is an expanded definition based on UN Women Training Centre, "Gender Mainstreaming", *Gender Equality Glossary*, <https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/showentry.php?eid=61>.

³⁰ Mia Schöb and Emile LeBrun, "What and Why: Gender-responsive Small Arms Programming", in Emile LeBrun (ed.), *Gender Responsive Small Arms Control: A Practical Guide*, Small Arms Survey, 2019, p. 24, <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/Q-Handbooks/HB-07-Gender/SAS-GLASS-Gender-HB.pdf>.

³¹ International Tracing Instrument, 2005, http://www.poa-iss.org/InternationalTracing/ITI_English.pdf.

³² Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, *Landmark Resolution on Women, Peace and Security*, <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/>.

WORKSHOP AGENDA | 25 FEB 2020

09h30 – 09h45

Welcome remarks

Renata H. Dalaqua, UNIDIR
Robert Kotchani, OHCHR

09h45 – 11h30

Plenary 1 “Gender-responsive arms control and disarmament: moving from words to action”

This session will focus on measures to tackle the gendered impacts of conflicts and violence in the region. Speakers will offer diverse perspectives on gender-sensitive approaches to security, including insights from regional initiatives on SALW control and from the implementation of Women, Peace and Security agenda at regional and national levels.

Panellists

- Commissioner Angela Nakafeero, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Uganda
- Colonel Major Nema Sagara, National Commission on SALW, Mali
- Onyinye Onwuka, Economic Community of West African States

Moderator: Renata H. Dalaqua, UNIDIR

11h45 – 13h15

Brainstorming Session 1 “What can be done to strengthen the gender component of policies and programmes that aim to curb illicit small arms transfers and armed violence in the region, including ‘Silencing the guns’?”

Participants will break into two groups to take stock of current gun control efforts and propose ideas to make them more gender-responsive.

Facilitators: Fairlie Chappuis, Pathfinders
Mia Schöb, Small Arms Survey

Discussants: Florence Kirabira, Ministry of Interior, Uganda
Marie Ahou Assoumou, National Commission on Small Arms, Côte d’Ivoire

14h30 – 16h00

Plenary 2 “How to promote women’s participation in arms control and disarmament?”

The discussion will address the relationship between gendered violence and women’s participation in arms control and disarmament. Trying to overcome the limited articulation of women as victims, speakers will share insights from their work in the fields of defence policy, national security and diplomacy.

Panellists

- Josephine Habba, West African Action Network on Small Arms, Nigeria
- Margaret Arach Orech, International Campaign to Ban Landmines, Uganda

Moderator: Helen Nambalirwa Nkabala, Makerere University, Uganda

16h15 – 17h45

Brainstorming Session 2 "What is inclusive leadership? What can be done to promote it in security structures?"

Participants will break into two groups to discuss aspects of inclusive leadership and their relevance to achieving inclusive security. They will also share concrete proposals to advance this type of leadership within national and international security structures.

Facilitators: Florence Eniayehou, Women Initiative for Peace and Security, Benin

Joana Ama Osei Tutu, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Ghana

Discussants: Bintou Founé Samake, WILDAF, Mali

Silungile Hlongwa, Centre for Peace Dialogue and Mediation, South Africa

WORKSHOP AGENDA | 26 FEB 2020

09h00 – 10h30

Plenary 3 "Applying a gender lens to policies on weapons of mass destruction and new weapons technology (artificial intelligence, cybertechnology)"

The discussion will examine international security problems through a gender lens, with a special focus on types of weapons that are commonly perceived as part of a 'distant reality', e.g. nuclear weapons, autonomous weapons systems, cybertechnology.

Panellists

- Armelle Tsafack, Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, Cameroon
- Elizabeth Kolade, Cyber Security Experts Association of Nigeria
- Renata H. Dalaqua, UNIDIR

Moderator: Nomsa Ndongwe, James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies

11h00 – 12h30

Closing Session "Strengthening gender perspectives in the Global South"

Presentation of the outcomes of the brainstorming sessions, followed by an open discussion in which participants share their conclusions and recommendations to strengthening gender perspectives in the Global South.

Facilitator: Erly Munoz, UNREC

Sustainable peace is inextricably linked with gender equality.

How have gender perspectives informed disarmament measures? What can be done to advance gender mainstreaming in arms control processes?

These were some of the main questions guiding the discussions at a regional workshop organized by UNIDIR in Entebbe, Uganda. Drawing on the expertise and experience of diplomats, military officers, civil society practitioners, and academics, this report offers ideas to promote gender perspectives in arms control, as well as to improve women's participation in international security.

@UNIDIR
www.unidir.org