GENDER IN CYBER DIPLOMACY

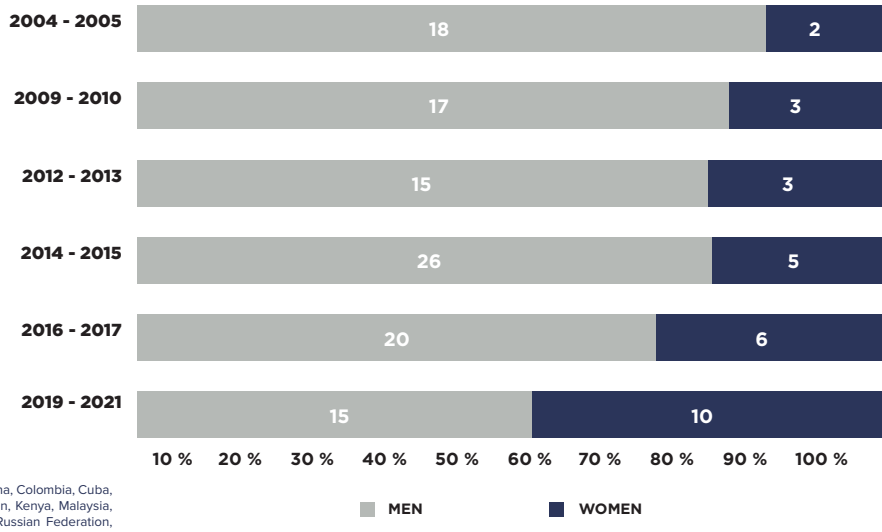
GENDER BALANCE IN THE GROUPS OF GOVERNMENTAL EXPERTS

Over the past fifteen years, six Groups of Governmental Experts (GGEs) have been established with the purpose of discussing "Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security." Although the composition of the GGEs followed the principle of equitable geographical distribution, the nomination of experts has not been balanced in terms of gender representation.

» From the first to the fifth group, the average proportion of women increased at a slow rate. **This changed after the UN Secretary-General launched the Agenda for Disarmament** in 2018. It includes a commitment to achieve gender parity on all panels, boards, and expert groups established under his auspices in the field of disarmament (Action 37).

» On average in the six GGEs, women have represented only 20.2% of participants. This proportion is consistent with what UNIDIR research has found for other specialized forums dealing with arms control and disarmament. **When States can only send a single representative, they almost always send a man.**

Gender balance in GGEs on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security



* Countries represented in GGE (2004-2021): Argentina, Australia, Belarus, Brazil, Botswana, Canada, China, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay.

* Even though GGEs have fixed composition (15, 20, 25 members), participating countries are allowed to replace experts from one session to another, thus increasing the overall number of experts involved.

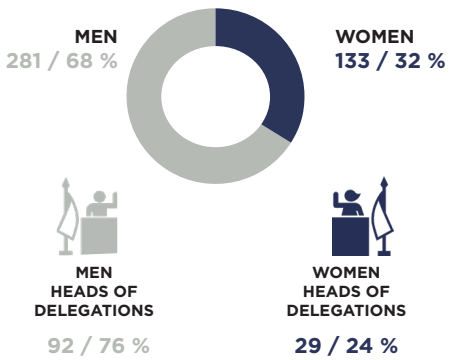
GENDER BALANCE IN MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY

The UN Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security held its first meeting in September 2019.

Out of 414 participants in the OEWG, 32% were women and 68% were men. **The gender imbalance is even more pronounced in leadership positions**, with only 24% of delegations led by women.

Following a recurrent pattern in arms control and disarmament diplomacy, men were overrepresented as head of delegations to the OEWG to an even greater degree than would be expected given the overall proportion of men in a meeting.

OEWG, Delegation Gender Balance



GENDER BALANCE IN CYBERSECURITY AND STEM

- According to the World Economic Forum, more than 3/4 of cybersecurity and AI professionals are men. A similar proportion can be found in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) and related fields.

- Women's underrepresentation in these areas reinforces existing biases and threatens gender equality in cyber security.

- Women are underrepresented in this field even in countries that score high in gender equality indexes.

- Achieving gender equality in 'meeting rooms' may prove insufficient, if there is no support for women's aspirations for scientific jobs in labs or 'behind a screen'.

"THE BARRIERS THAT KEEP WOMEN OUT OF GOVERNMENTS OR THE BOARDROOM MAY NOT BE THE SAME BARRIERS THAT KEEP THEM OUT OF SCIENCE"

- DAKOTA McCOY& ADAM MASTRIONNI, 2018

WHY THIS MATTERS

- Cybersecurity is an issue that impacts everyone, but women do not have equal opportunities to participate in these debates and shape the outcomes of decisions.

- Longstanding patterns of discrimination against women in STEM can lead to technologies that amplify gender inequalities.

- Gender diversity can be a means to increase diversity of perspectives. Several studies have demonstrated that diversely composed decision-making bodies can make group prediction and problem solving more effective as they trigger more careful information processing that is absent in homogenous groups.

"BIAS IS NOT JUST IN OUR DATASETS, IT IS IN OUR CONFERENCES AND COMMUNITY"

- STEPHEN MERITY, 2017

IDEAS FOR ACTION

Design specific initiatives aimed at giving more women speaking roles in cyber negotiations and promoting women in leadership positions.

Engage in initiatives that combat harmful gender stereotypes in sciences and promote gender equality in STEM.

Support research that promotes a better understanding of the linkages between gender and cybersecurity, addressing issues such as access to technology, data literacy, and online harassment.

Improve data collection processes, making women more visible in open, gender-disaggregated datasets.

Integrate gender analysis in the development of standards and technical regulations for cybersecurity, ensuring standards are gender-responsive in their content and implementation.

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