



**UNIDIR**

**GENDER & DISARMAMENT**

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**PROGRAMME LEAD**



## **AGENDA**

**INTRODUCTION**

**GENDER BALANCE**

**GENDER  
MAINSTREAMING**

**CONCLUSIONS &  
DISCUSSION**

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# About UNIDIR Gender & Disarmament Programme

We work to support the policy community in bridging gender and disarmament frameworks. Through expert analyses and practical tools, we contribute to gender equality in disarmament fora and promote the effective integration of gender perspectives into arms control processes.



<https://unidir.org/programmes/gender-and-disarmament>

# A 'gender turn' in WMD non-proliferation & disarmament?

- UN SG Disarmament Agenda (2018) included gender parity among its goals.
- The International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group set up in Geneva.
- Gender Champions in Nuclear Policy set up in Washington, D.C.
- Gender issues increasingly reflected in nuclear scholarship, new research on gender & CBW.
- Growing number of side events on gender & WMD issues.

# What is gender?

- Gender is “a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes” (Joan Scott, 1986).
- It points to a relational view of male, female, and trans categories as contextually and relationally defined.
- 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 man, woman or non-binary person.

# Gender norms and gender analysis

- “As organizers of social relationships, gender norms are power-laden both in terms of defining the roles and expectations of men and women and in terms of distributing social power and prestige between different gender roles” (A. Towns and B. Niklasson, 2017).
- Gender analysis is a critical examination of how differences in gender roles, activities, needs, opportunities and rights/entitlements affect men, women, girls, boys, non-binary or gender-fluid persons in certain situations or contexts. It seeks to ensure that gender-based injustices and inequalities are not exacerbated by interventions and greater equality is promoted.

# Gender in arms control & disarmament

- Two main avenues through which gender perspectives have been addressed in arms control and disarmament.
- Track 1 focuses on promoting gender equality and improving women's meaningful participation and agency in arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament fora.
- Track 2 involves applying a gender analysis (or 'gender lens'); that is, to consider how gender norms – the attributes, opportunities, and relationships associated with a gender identity – shape how weapons are seen and used in society, as well as the impacts of weapons and violence.

# Why it matters

Applying a gender lens can:

- Understand different needs and improve response strategies, help to increase resilience and to aid recovery following a CBRN incident;
- Uncover associations between gender and power;
- Help to reduce gender inequalities or at least avoid exacerbating them;
- Ensure that policies deliver for all;
- Unlock professional opportunities for women and have a positive impact in their lives and in their communities.





# **Gender balance in arms control and disarmament**

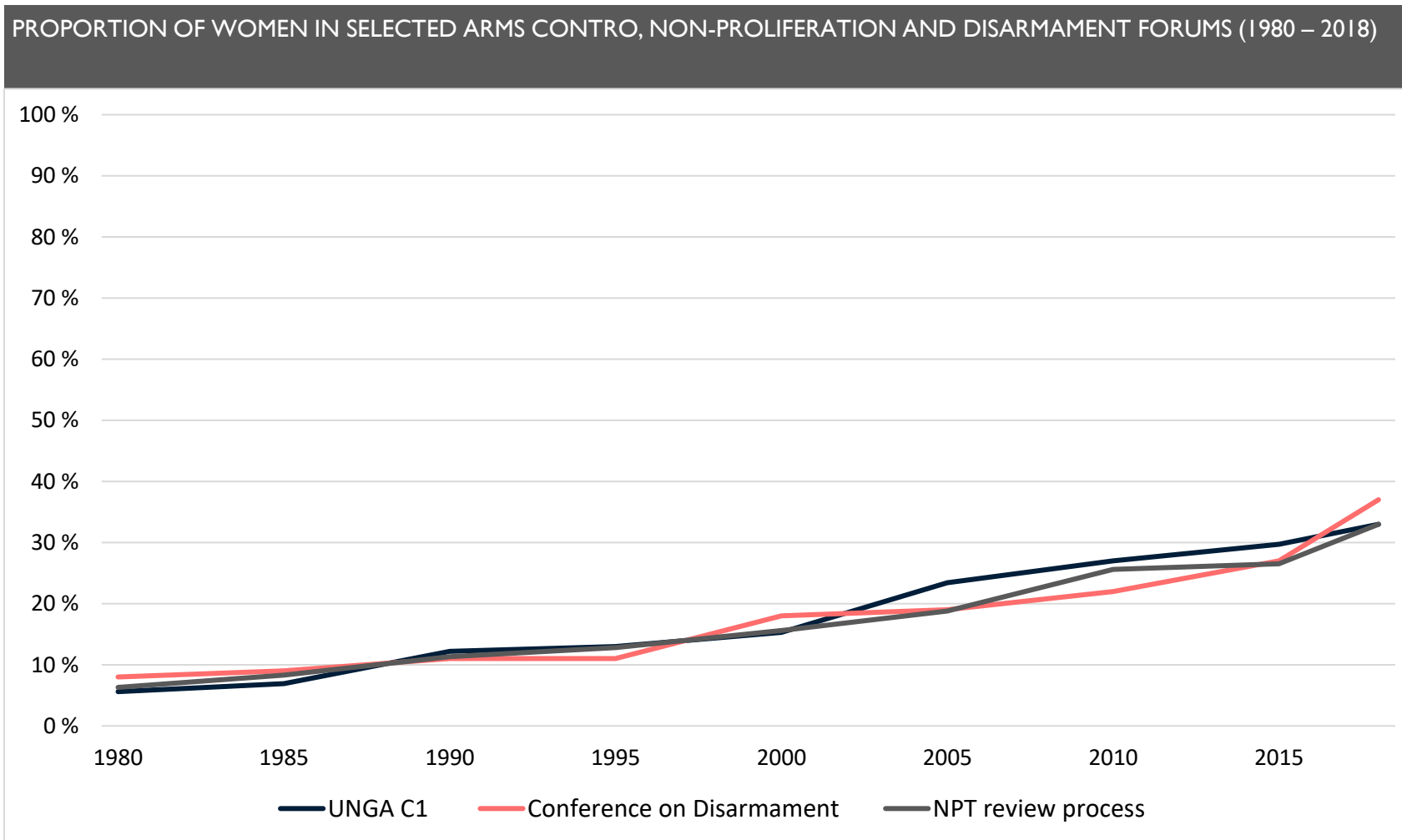
# Gender balance in arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament diplomacy

- Women comprise only  $\frac{1}{3}$  of diplomats accredited to arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament forums.
- In smaller, more specialized forums, the average proportion of women drops to 20%.
- The heads of delegations are mostly men (approx. 80%).
- Disarmament and international security forums attract fewer women than forums dealing with aid, labour issues and climate.
- This can alienate diversity and prevent innovation.

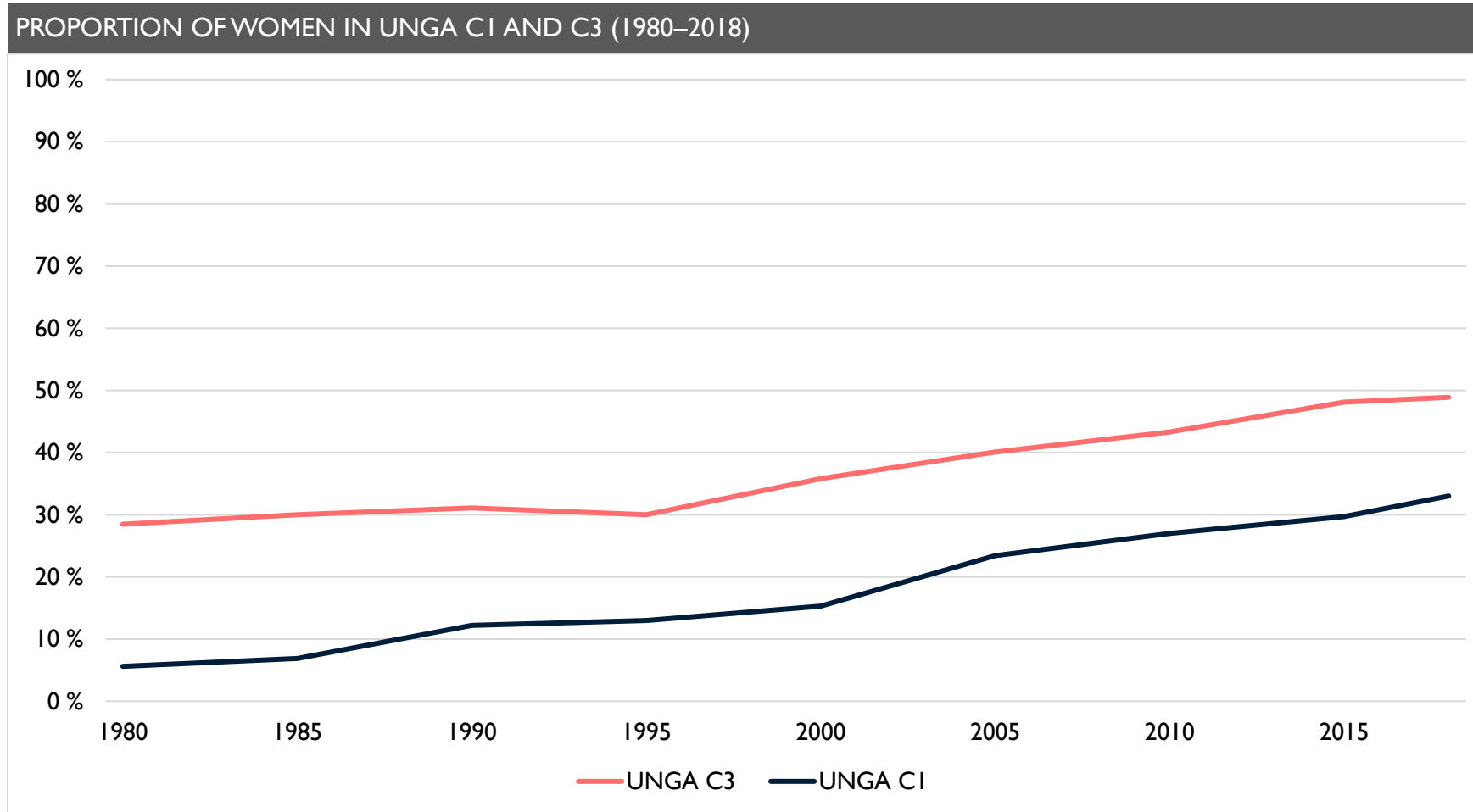


<https://unidir.org/publication/still-behind-curve>

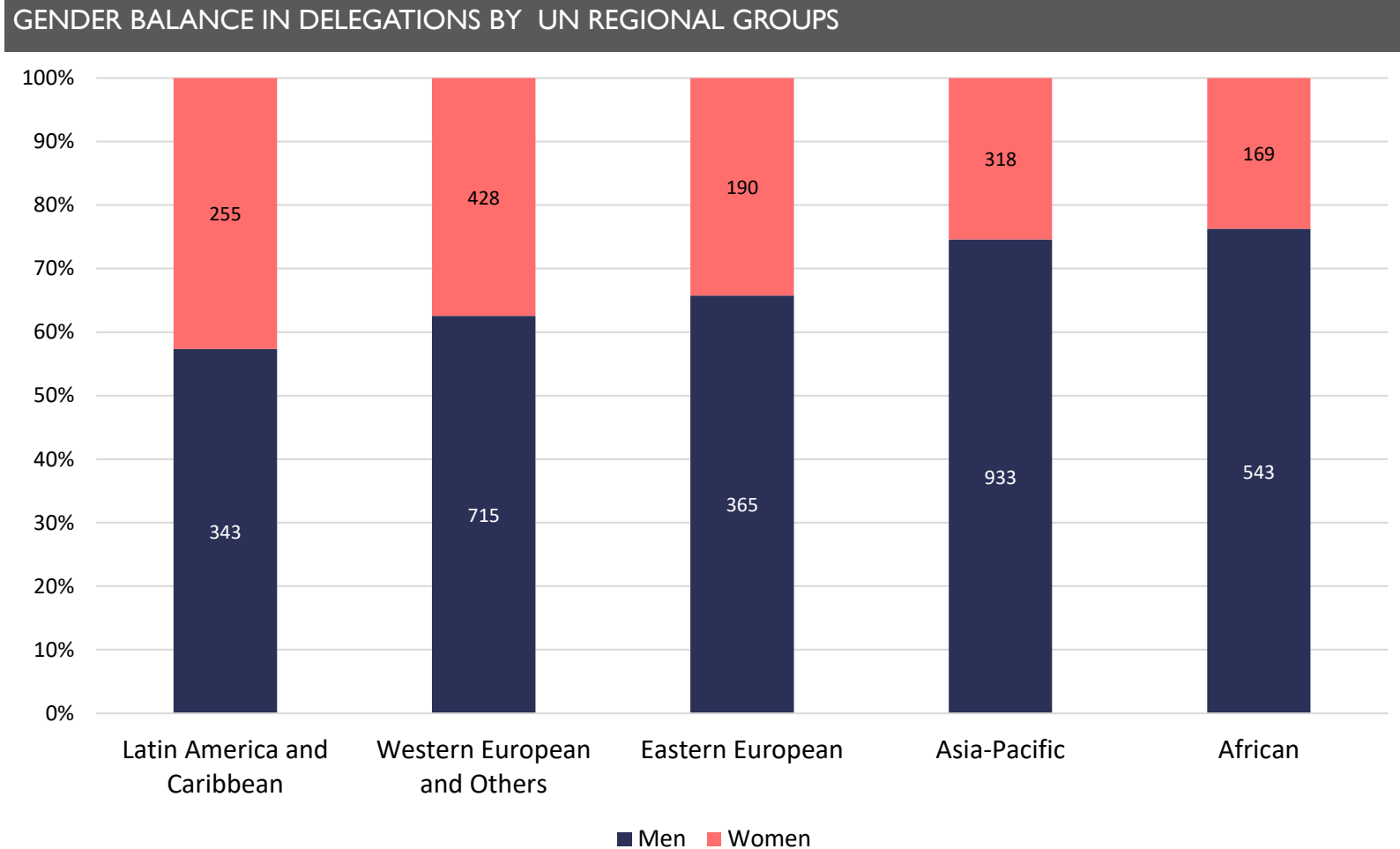
# Historical trend of increasing participation of women



# Women's underrepresentation in disarmament is not simply a consequence of their late start in diplomacy

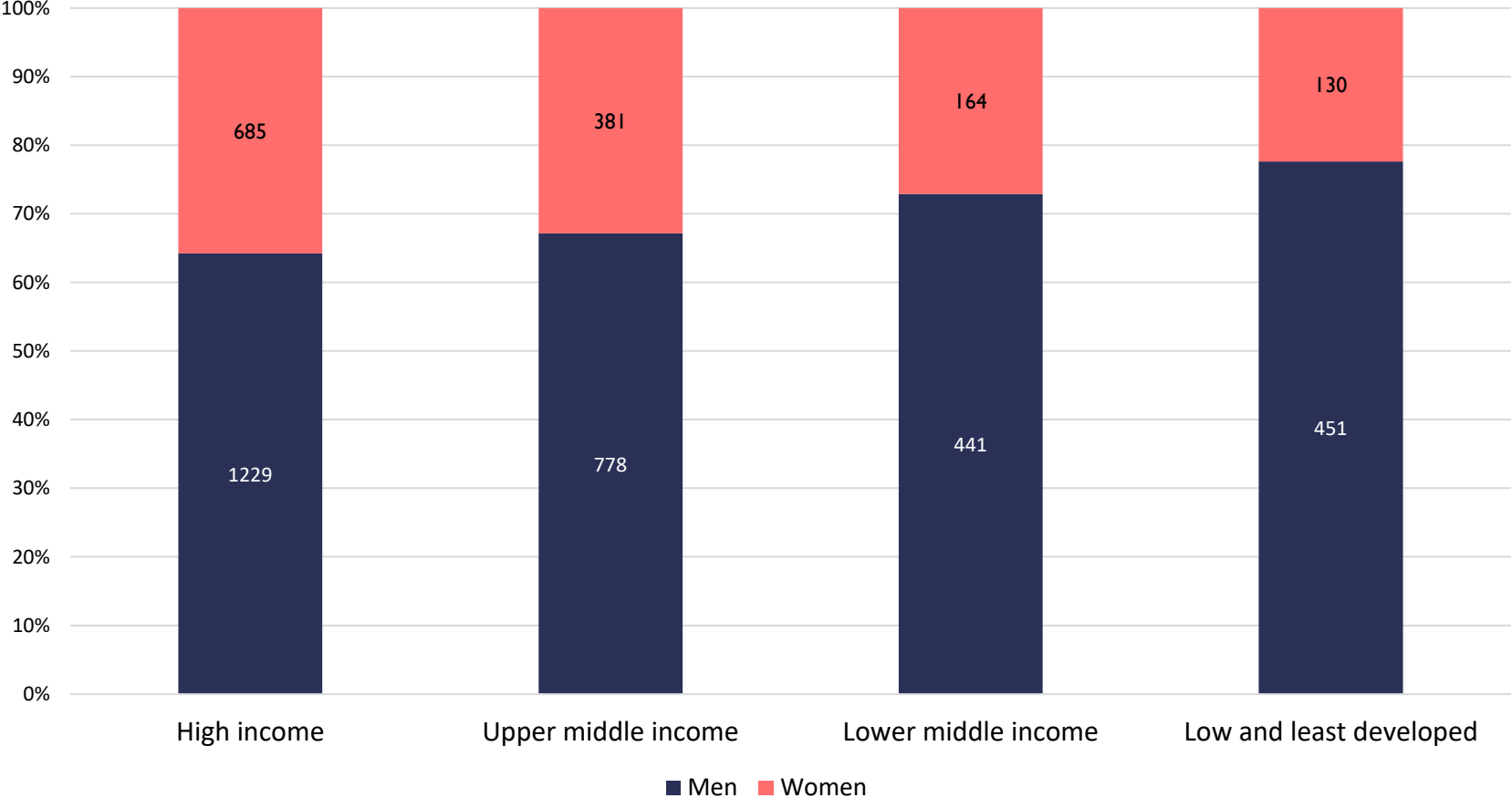


# Gender distribution varies across UN Regional Groups

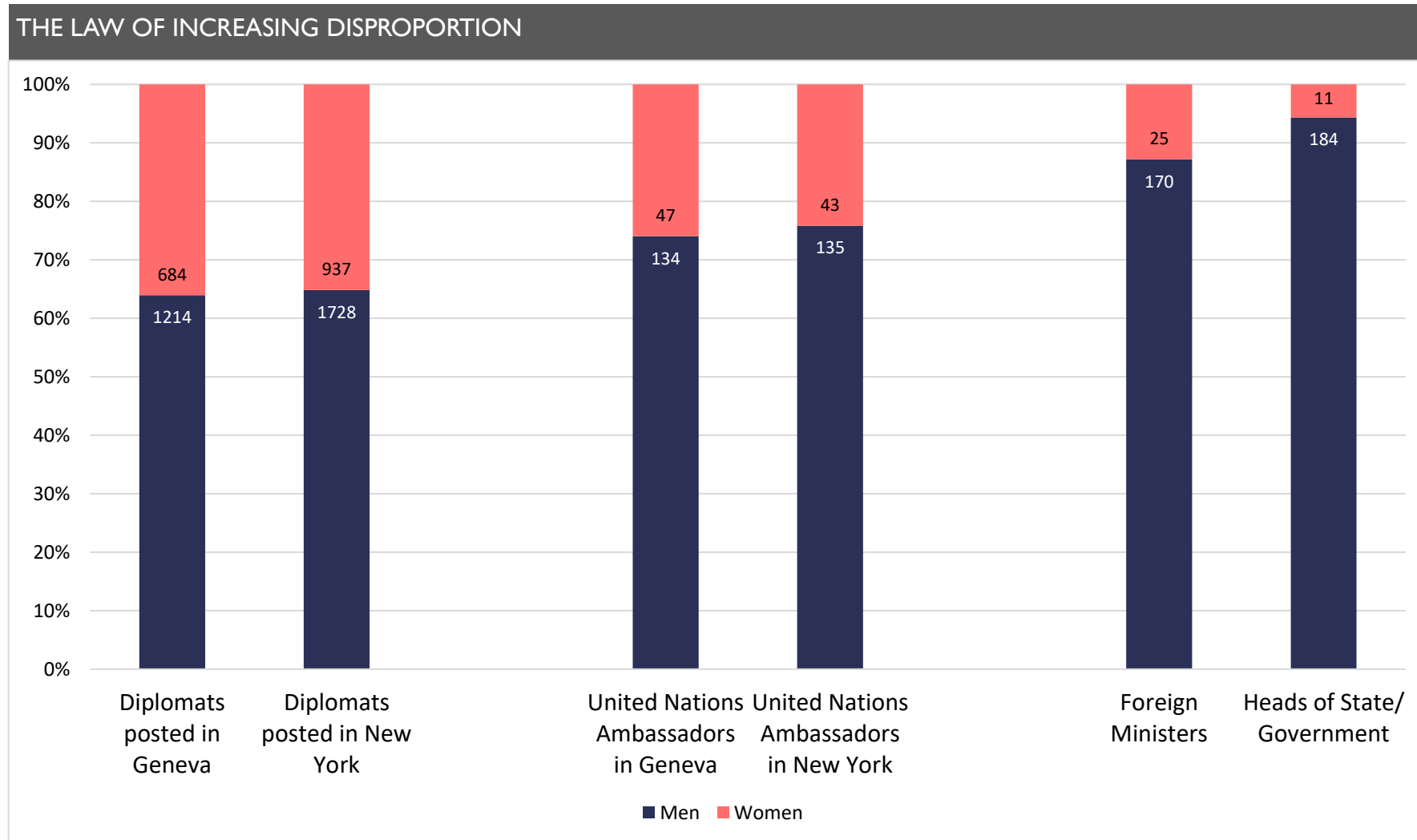


# High income States tend to send more gender-balanced delegations than low income States

GENDER BALANCE IN DELEGATIONS BY INCOME STATUS



# The proportion of women declines as the importance of the position increases





# Views from diplomats



# 'Soft' vs 'Hard' portfolios

Noting that arms control and disarmament is considered as a 'hard' policy field, some diplomats argued that this area of work has tended to reward characteristics, expertise, and experience that are more commonly associated with men (e.g. toughness, seriousness, risk-taking, and military training).

# Gendered divisions of labour

An unequal division of family tasks can place a heavier burden on women and lead them to being held back in their career.

- Recruiters may choose not to hire married women and/or those who have children.
- Women may choose not to take up a lengthy assignment out of their country of residence due to family reasons.
- Colleagues may advise against a trip if a given country is considered to be a hostile place for women.



# **Gender mainstreaming in WMD non- proliferation and disarmament**

# Sex-specific and gendered impacts of ionizing radiation

- The risk of developing and dying from solid cancer due to ionizing radiation exposure was nearly twice as high for women as for men (Japan).
- Pregnancy related complications comprise another set of sex-specific effects, heightened risk of malformations, spontaneous abortion and stillbirth (Japan).
- Loss of fertility has been reported in men who worked in the clean-up of the Chernobyl nuclear accident.

# Sex-specific and gendered impacts of ionizing radiation

- Women faced intense social stigma after being exposed to radiation (Japan and Marshall Islands).
- Men were hurt by the restrictions placed on fishing and gathering food, which challenged their traditional roles as food providers for their families and impacted their economic and social status (Marshall Islands).

# Applying a gender lens to CBRN threats

- Sex-specific and gendered impacts of ionizing radiation, toxic chemicals and infectious pathogens.
- Gender and exposure to risk.
- Gender, access to information and capacity-building.
- Gender and access to medical assistance.
- Gender and stigma.

 <https://unidir.org/publication/missing-links-understanding-sex-and-gender-related-impacts-chemical-and-biological>

# Uptake in multilateral fora: NPT

- 2018 NPT PrepCom Chair's factual summary observed that States Parties noted the disproportionate impact of ionizing radiation on women, and that this issue should be factored into the discussions in the current review cycle.
- The 2019 Chair proposed, among other recommendations, that the 2020 NPT Review Conference should recognize the disproportionate impact of ionizing radiation on women and girls.

# Gender analysis in the NPT

- In 2019, a working paper submitted to the NPT PrepCom addressed the relevance of gender analysis to the three pillars of the Treaty. It is useful for understanding how gender affects issues such as exposure to nuclear risk; the impact of ionizing radiation resulting from nuclear weapons use; the ability to benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy; and access to education and training in the nuclear field.
- The paper presented a sample framework, including questions that could be considered during policy development, implementation and review.



# Gender Analysis in the NPT

## Questions for consideration

- Have sufficient time, resources and expertise been allocated to address gender considerations in the proposed policy?
- Are systems in place to collect, track and publish relevant sex-disaggregated data and statistics?
- Do women and men have equal access to education and/or technical and military training?
- Did women and men benefit from the services and technologies provided by the policy?

# Uptake in multilateral fora: TPNW

- The TPNW includes a clause mandating States Parties to provide age- and gender-sensitive assistance to individuals under its jurisdiction who are affected by the use or testing of nuclear weapons, including medical care, rehabilitation and psychological support, as well as provide for their social and economic inclusion (Article 6).
- The preamble of the Treaty acknowledges that nuclear weapons have a disproportionate impact on women and girls, including as a result of ionizing radiation.



# Conclusions & Discussion

# Gender balance in nuclear diplomacy

- Clear trend of **increased participation of women** delegates in multilateral disarmament fora throughout the past four decades.
- Obstacles remain, as women are severely **underrepresented in leadership positions.**
- It appears that **women's role** in this field has not progressed at the same pace as their **nominal representation.**

# Lessons from gender mainstreaming in arms control and disarmament

## Enabling factors

- Civil society engagement;
- Availability of data and analysis;
- Evidence of results / Impact in the field;
- Political commitment from a group of Member States.

## Challenges

- Limited space for NGOs in diplomatic negotiations;
- Lack of comprehensive datasets and analysis;
- Varying views on the importance of gender equality.

**QUESTIONS?**

**THANK YOU!**

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