



**FORCES OF CHANGE IV**  
LATIN AMERICAN AND  
CARIBBEAN WOMEN PROMOTING  
DISARMAMENT, NON-PROLIFERATION  
AND ARMS CONTROL

# TENTH ANNIVERSARY

OF UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 65/69







UNLIREC

United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament  
and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

## FORCES OF CHANGE IV

# LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN WOMEN PROMOTING DISARMAMENT, NON- PROLIFERATION AND ARMS CONTROL

## TENTH ANNIVERSARY

OF UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 65/69



### Copyright Notice

This document is the intellectual property of the United Nations. It may not be reproduced, stored in a data recovery system or transmitted by any means, in whole or in part or, for any purpose, without the prior written permission of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC), which acts as the representative body of the United Nations. This document is not for sale.

### United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC)

Av. Jorge Chavez 275, Floor 3  
Miraflores  
Lima  
Peru

**E-mail:** [programme@unlirec.org](mailto:programme@unlirec.org)

**Phone:** (+51) (1) 625 9114

©UNLIREC 2020 - All rights reserved

## *IN MEMORIAM*

GIOCONDA UBEDA RIVERA  
(1959 – 2020)



—  
While this publication was being drafted, on 21 October 2020, regrettably, Ambassador Gioconda Ubeda Rivera, a Costa Rican diplomat and the first and only woman to date to have been elected as Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), a position she held from 2010 to 2013, passed away.

Ambassador Ubeda was known for promoting disarmament with great passion. Her contributions and the strength of her leadership in mobilising Latin America for nuclear disarmament have been widely recognised internationally. In recent years, she advised the presidency — held by Costa Rica — of the United Nations Conference to Negotiate the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which was adopted in 2017, thus marking a milestone in the history of nuclear disarmament.

UNLIREC dedicates the 4th edition of the Forces for Change publication to Ambassador Ubeda, who - through her professional career and personal commitment - embodied the spirit of Resolution 65/69 on Women, Disarmament, Non-proliferation and Arms Control.

Thank you for paving the way for us, Ambassador Ubeda, and for being a Force of Change.

Rest in peace.

# FOREWORD

United Nations Secretary General, António Guterres, launched his landmark Agenda for Disarmament in 2018 entitled 'Securing our Common Future'. The Agenda seeks to generate fresh perspectives and bring disarmament to the heart of our

common efforts for peace and security. It is framed around four key pillars: "disarmament to save humanity" focused on weapons of mass destruction; "disarmament to save lives" through stronger control over conventional arms; "disarmament for future generations" examining challenges posed by new technologies; and "strengthening disarmament partnerships."

The Agenda also prioritizes the equal, full and effective participation of women in all decision-making processes related to disarmament with provisions on supporting the disarmament community in translating gender awareness into practical action. The Secretary-General recognizes gender parity as "a moral duty and an operational necessity." **It is through women's meaningful participation in decision-making that productivity and effectiveness are fortified and new perspectives and solutions are brought to the table.** While the world has witnessed a positive trend to engage women in disarmament and arms control processes on equal terms, women continue to remain seriously underrepresented in United Nations multilateral disarmament meetings. The General Assembly First Committee has been chaired by only one woman in 74 sessions and only one quarter of the participants are likely to be women at any given intergovernmental meeting on disarmament. The continued marginalization of women in these discussions is a loss for all.

**IZUMI NAKAMITSU**  
High Representative for Disarmament Affairs



Recognizing the need for women to be rightfully involved in revitalizing disarmament discussions across the globe and to promote the valuable contribution of women to disarmament, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 65/69 on Women, Disarmament, Non-proliferation and Arms Control for the first time in 2010. It has now been 10 years since this ground-breaking resolution set the stage for empowering and fully engaging women as powerful agents for promoting disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

In honour of the tenth anniversary of this milestone resolution and of

related effort to support women in disarmament processes, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) Regional Centre in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) is launching the fourth edition of the publication 'Women as Forces of Change'. **This edition spotlights the valuable work being undertaken by Latin American and Caribbean women** in the field of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. Women who serve as the motor behind

regional momentum towards women's empowerment in the security field.

I invite you to read the stories of regional women working in the field of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation and find out first-hand what drives these women. **I applaud each of them for not only being the torchbearers of modern-day disarmament, but also for lighting the cauldron for future generations of empowered women.** I hope these pages inspire others to carry this powerful message forward so that we can fulfill our collective moral duty towards gender equality and securing our common future.

# PREFACE

## FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Honourable Minister  
**AYANNA WEBSTER-ROY**  
Office of the Prime Minister (Gender  
and Child Affairs) Republic of Trinidad  
and Tobago



The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GoRTT) has long recognized that international peace and security must be supported by a robust international legal system, inclusive of criminal justice. The GoRTT acknowledges the importance of the role of women in addressing the issues of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control; and promote their inclusion into legislative, policy and programme design and implementation.

As the country with lead responsibility for matters relating to Crime and Security in the Quasi-Cabinet of the Heads of State and Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Trinidad and Tobago - in recognition of the challenges faced in the CARICOM region in countering the scourge of gun violence - called for the international community to focus more on the vulnerability of women in situations of armed violence and armed conflict. In 2010, Trinidad and Tobago led the biennial Resolution on **'Women, Disarmament, Non-proliferation and Arms Control'**, now known as General Assembly Resolution 65/69, to encourage women's participation in the disarmament decision-making process. **This milestone Resolution represented the General Assembly's initial formal acknowledgement of the integral connections between women and disarmament;** and was also born in recognition of the 10th Anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace and Security. Both resolutions have helped raise awareness

on the importance of engaging women in peace, security and disarmament efforts.

Globally, Trinidad and Tobago fully subscribes to the Arms Trade Treaty, which regulates the international trade in conventional weapons. Though we are not manufacturers nor large scale importers of small arms and light weapons, the illicit arms trade in Trinidad and Tobago, and by extension the wider Caribbean region, remains a threat to our socio-economic structures.

The trade of small arms light weapons is also associated with other transnational organized crime, such as drug and human trafficking. It places a tremendous burden on women, economically, socially and psychologically and threatens the fabric

of family life, undermines the rule of law and challenges our efforts for a peaceful, equitable and sustainable society. In this regard, Trinidad and Tobago has taken a stand and prioritized this issue at the national, regional and international levels.

The GoRTT has utilized substantial resources to address this pervading issue and acknowledges the vital role of women. In 2018, a **'Pilot Study on the Role of Women in Communities: The Case of**

**East Port of Spain'** was conducted by the Women's Institute for Alternative Development; a non-governmental organization based in Trinidad and Tobago and the National Drug Council of Trinidad and Tobago with financial support from the United Nations Development Programme. This Study was commissioned to examine armed violence and leadership in relation to women's security, community safety and national development. It also made specific recommendations for amplifying women's voices and protecting women and girls in communities plagued by violence. As best stated by Mr. Kofi A. Annan (former Secretary-General of the United Nations, 1997-2006): **"When women thrive, all of society benefits, and succeeding generations are given a better start in life."**

In this regard, Trinidad and Tobago is honoured to be amidst those at the helm of integrating women into dialogues on peace, security, disarmament and non-proliferation. The issues of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control remain a threat to the pursuit of Trinidad and Tobago's Vision 2030: The National Development Strategy of Trinidad and Tobago 2016-2030 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago congratulates UNLIREC on its fourth edition of the 'Women as Forces of Change' publication series. This edition also serves to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the United General Assembly Resolution 65/69. We support this year's continued focus on women's dedication to the advancement of disarmament and security matters in the region. The special focus that is placed on honouring this Resolution is momentous to Trinidad and Tobago, the region and globally.

---

**TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO IS HONoured TO BE AMIDST  
THOSE AT THE HELM OF INTEGRATING WOMEN INTO  
DIALOGUES ON PEACE, SECURITY, DISARMAMENT AND  
NON-PROLIFERATION.**

---



# TABLE OF CONTENTS



INTRODUCTION	15
A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE	23
<b>PILAR I.</b> DISARMAMENT TO SAVE HUMANITY	<b>24</b>
<b>PILAR II.</b> DISARMAMENT TO SAVE LIVES	<b>56</b>
<b>PILAR III.</b> DISARMAMENT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS	<b>92</b>
<b>PILAR IV.</b> STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS FOR DISARMAMENT	<b>118</b>
UNLIREC'S TEAM OF WOMEN	155
THE WAY FORWARD	167



# INTRODUCTION

# PART OF OUR QUEST IS TO GIVE FACES AND VOICES TO THESE FORCES OF CHANGE

C. MÉLANIE RÉGIMBAL,  
UNLIREC Director

It is my pleasure to introduce you to the most recent edition of UNLIREC's iconic Forces of Change publication. I had the honour of serving as UNLIREC's Director during the previous three editions in which we championed the significant contributions to and leadership in achieving sustainable peace and development by the growing body of exceptional Latin American and Caribbean professional women. The more than 200 women represented in previous editions came from a rich variety of backgrounds, countries, and areas of expertise, ranging from parliamentarians, ministerial officials, security and justice officers to academia and civil society representatives.

Whilst their professional vantage points may differ, their mission to advance the disarmament agenda and improve the lives of both women and men in the region is shared.

As you are aware, Latin American and Caribbean women help to make up the growing proportion of women participating in arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament diplomacy at the international level; however, women from our region remain underrepresented. This holds true despite the fact that there was 40% female representation between the years 2017 and 2018 in disarmament forums across the region (United Nations, 2019). I would go a step further to claim that the number of Latin American and Caribbean women working in disarmament and arms control in the field is - in all likelihood - even higher. Precisely in order to promote the participation of women in the fields of disarmament and arms control, UNLIREC has a gender quota policy in place for all its training activities, in line with the Office of Disarmament Affairs Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan (2016). It is a great pleasure for me to see that at ten years after the passing of Resolution 65/69, there is an evident increase in the participation of women in our activities, illustrating the growing interest of the States of the region and

their institutions in promoting the role of women in these fields.

Part of our quest is to give faces and voices to these Forces of Change.

The other element of our pursuit is to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Resolution 65/69 on Women, Disarmament, Non-proliferation and Arms Control by highlighting the triumphs and progress in its implementation by the protagonists from our very own region: the women of Latin America and the Caribbean. We hope we have likewise succeeded at showcasing the mutually-enforcing nexus between this ground-breaking resolution and the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda; the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament.

In line with the recognition by the General Assembly in resolution 65/69 of the valuable contribution women can make to practical disarmament measures, UNLIREC is implementing a multi-year, capacity-building project to help States to implement the resolution. Thanks to funding from the Government of Canada, UNLIREC - through this project - is working to encourage a gender-sensitive approach by national and regional arms control and regulating authorities (law enforcement bodies, the judiciary



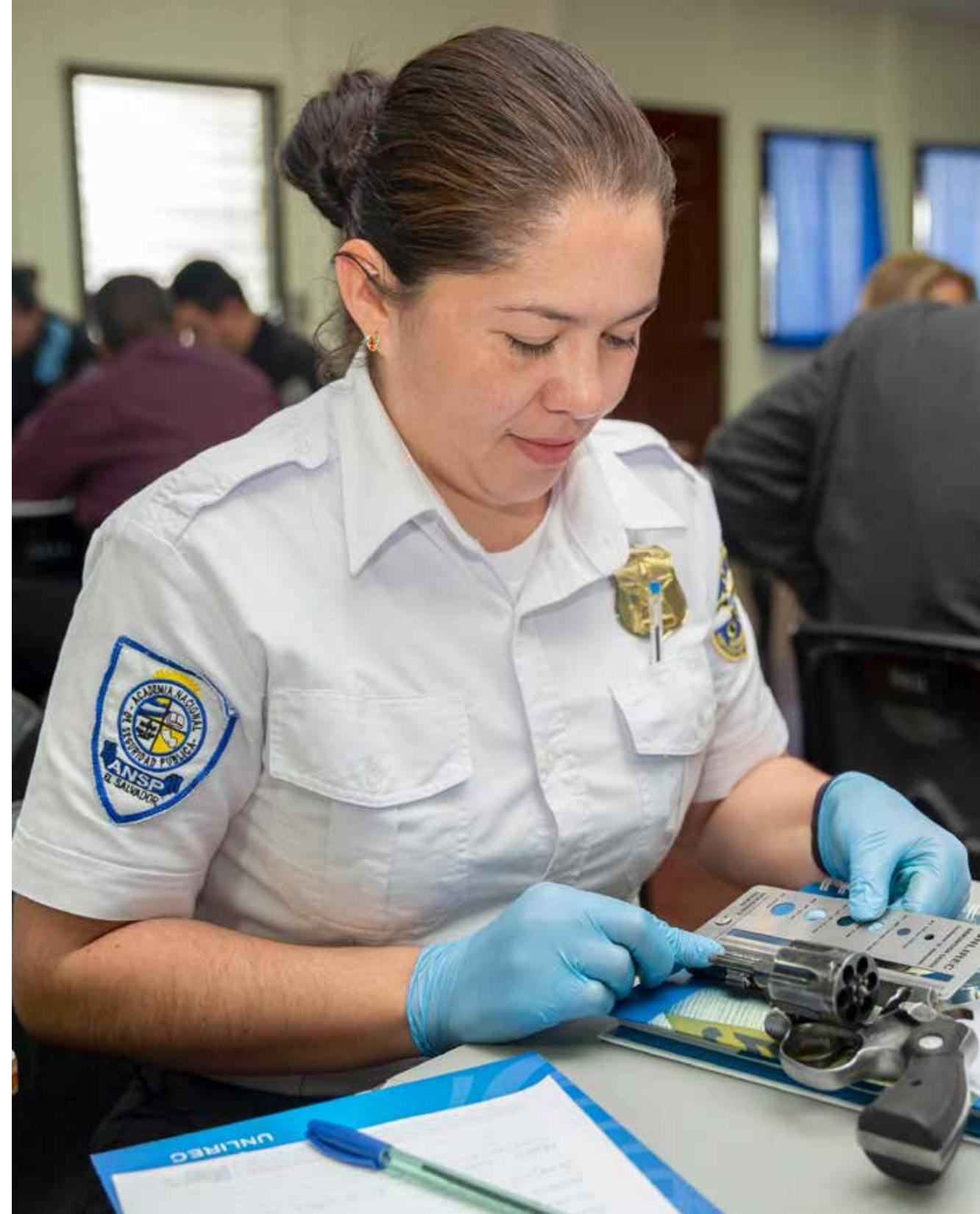
C. Mélanie Régimbal

LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN WOMEN HELP  
TO MAKE UP THE GROWING PROPORTION OF  
WOMEN PARTICIPATING IN ARMS CONTROL, NON-  
PROLIFERATION AND DISARMAMENT DIPLOMACY AT  
THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

and legislators) to reduce armed violence and to empower women who are dedicated to advancing the disarmament and arms control agenda. Sweden and the European Union are also supporting UNLIREC in the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in disarmament measures and promoting the active participation of women in this field.

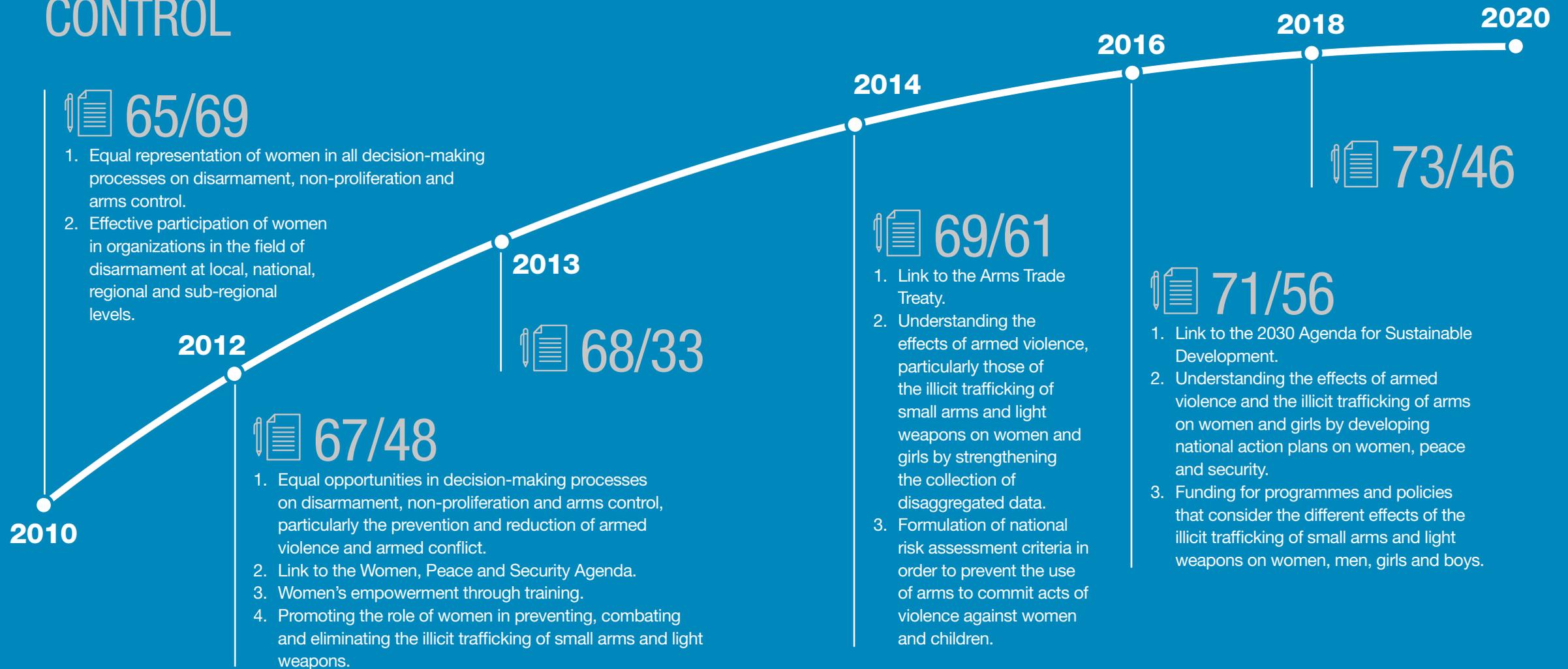
In closing, in this edition you will meet more the 80 women who have contributed to the four pillars of the Secretary General's Agenda: Disarmament to Save Humanity, Disarmament that Saves Lives, Disarmament for Future Generations and Strengthening Partnerships for Disarmament. You will meet women from all walks of life, pioneers who have cracked the proverbial glass ceiling representing their countries, heading ground-breaking diplomatic non-proliferation negotiations and some that are just starting out, exploring how connectivity can be both a disarmament safeguard and challenge at the same time. Women with a lifetime of law enforcement and public service joining forces with peacemakers, artists and community leaders.

May you find motivation in the women found among these pages for it is thanks to their individual and collective journeys and accomplishments that we find ourselves ever nearer to gender parity and women's empowerment. And with parity and empowerment comes the ability to attain the sustainable peace and security that all of us – women and men – deserve.



Specialized Course on Evidence Management of Small Arms and Ammunition (CEMAF), San Luis Talpa, El Salvador, 2019.

# A DECADE OF THE RESOLUTION ON WOMEN, DISARMAMENT, NON-PROLIFERATION AND ARMS CONTROL



On 8 December 2010, for the first time, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on the role of women in processes of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. Since then – annually or biannually – during the session, the General Assembly approves a resolution on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. Over time, this series of resolutions has been evolving and encouraging States to take further action on the subject.

# A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

## THE FOUR PILLARS OF THE AGENDA



### DISARMAMENT TO SAVE HUMANITY

Reduce and eliminate weapons of mass destruction



### DISARMAMENT THAT SAVE LIVES

Reduce and mitigate the impact of conventional weapons



### DISARMAMENT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Remain vigilant regarding new and emerging weapon technologies



### STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS FOR DISARMAMENT

Reinvigorate disarmament institutions and partner with Governments, experts, civil society, women and youth

## PILAR I

## DISARMAMENT

TO SAVE  
HUMANITY

*One of the main goals in the Charter of the United Nations (UN) after World War II was the pursuit of the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, and, particularly, the elimination of nuclear weapons.*

At this time, when the devastating consequences of the use of nuclear weapons became known with the launch of two atomic bombs that devastated the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, resulting in more than 300,000 victims, efforts for the total elimination of nuclear weapons have not ceased. The first resolution of the UN in 1946 — Resolution 1 (I) — created a Commission charged with making specific proposals “for the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction.”<sup>1</sup>

Within this framework, in addition to enforcing the commitment to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons, international efforts have sought to prevent the devastating consequences of the use of other weapons of mass destruction, such as chemical and biological weapons, as well as to prevent the emergence of new areas of strategic competition and conflict, such as the arms race in outer space. The SG’s Disarmament Agenda reaffirms these efforts and includes lines of action aimed at eliminating nuclear weapons, respecting the norms on chemical and biological weapons and preventing the emergence of new areas of strategic competition and conflict.

<sup>1</sup> Resolution 1(I) “Establishment of a Commission to deal with the problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy” at <https://undocs.org/es/A/RES/1%28I%29>

## TOWARDS THE ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

*Elayne Whyte Gómez and Gioconda Ubeda Rivera shared their experiences and reflections on their work towards prohibiting nuclear weapons at the global level and the role of women in this area.*

Both women are diplomats and Costa Ricans who are committed to the issue and who have represented their country in historic events that marked milestones on the road towards total and general nuclear disarmament. **They form part of Costa Rica's legacy in international efforts towards the elimination of nuclear weapons** as a country “with a strong line of work in nuclear disarmament”, as Elayne shared with us.

Moreover, they represent models of pioneering women who created opportunities to generate transformations. For instance, Elayne Whyte was the first Costa Rican diplomat to assume the responsibility of chairing a major UN conference, such as the “United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument

to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards their Total Elimination” in 2017; while Gioconda Ubeda Rivera was the first and only woman to date to have been elected Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) in 2010.

Let us then delve into the history of these two amazing Costa Rican women, who, as Gioconda indicated, “carry the belief in disarmament in their DNA.”

**ELAYNE WHYTE**, a current member of the Strategic Prospecting Task Force in the Costa Rican Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship, was elected chair of the “United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards their Total Elimination” in



**Elayne Whyte. Costa Rica**  
Credit: UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

**efforts to advance nuclear disarmament and strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime.**

Conceptually approaching the issues of security and disarmament from the perspective of democratic consolidation and putting the individual at the centre of all action taken by the State, Elayne shared that her involvement in nuclear disarmament issues acquired special interest and passion when she was the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations Office in Geneva. In 2016 in Geneva, she began to participate in the Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals aimed at advancing multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament with the goal of achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons. It was there that she became aware of the role that Latin America and the Caribbean were playing in this area, “with a very important agency and leadership.” That was when she understood how human knowledge had become so democratised that “any kind of conceptualisations that were previously given to us” were being questioned — referring to traditional international positions on nuclear disarmament, such as the doctrine of nuclear deterrence and the state-centric view of international relations. When she took over the chair of the Conference in 2017, Elayne told us how she let

2017, when she served as Costa Rica's Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. She assumed this role throughout the negotiating process, which included a first substantive session at the beginning of the year, the drafting of the proposals for the treaty text that were submitted for negotiation, as well as a second session, which led to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 7 July of that year. **The adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) marks a global milestone in the international community's**

conviction or what she called “the strength to carry the process forward” prevail in her actions.

Elayne shared the contributions she made to the Treaty negotiation process in her role as Chair. Her experience as an academic led her to seek a role for scientists and academics in the negotiations. **Convinced that “an external perspective often helps to make decisions”, she chose to introduce an innovation at the Conference that consisted of generating a space for conceptual discussion among specialists, activists, scientists and delegates.** As president of the Conference she surrounded herself with a group of academics who were at the Conference to provide a different perspective to that of the diplomats, which ended up being a very valuable exercise to help “break down the discussion components” and build consensus. She was also responsible for developing the proposed texts that were submitted for negotiations and final adoption.

**In addition, a point that Elayne emphasised as central to the process was the ethical purpose and sense of justice that the negotiations gained from addressing the human consequences of nuclear weapons, and from the presence of the hibakusha<sup>2</sup> throughout the conference period.** On a personal level, the moral purpose was further strengthened by sensing the human havoc that nuclear weapons could wreak after attending the International Committee of the Red Cross Conference in Nagasaki that year. According to Elayne, this allowed the rigidity of state positions to be subordinated to a more humane objective, and, at the negotiating

## TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS (TPNW)

The TPNW is an international instrument adopted on 7 July 2017 by 122 United Nations Member States. It will enter into force in January 2021. The Treaty aims to establish a legally binding instrument on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, with a view to their total elimination.

<sup>2</sup> Hibakusha is the term used to describe the survivors of the atomic bombing of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945.

table, during the most difficult moments, the positions of countries were softened.

The Treaty was adopted by the UN General Assembly with 122 votes in favour on 7 July 2017, and while it is considered one of the essential steps toward the total elimination of nuclear weapons in the world, it presents several challenges ahead. Elayne mentioned that 2020 has brought new momentum due to the existential challenge to humanity posed by the global health crisis. In October 2020, the TPNW was ratified by the 50th State, a necessary condition for the Treaty to enter into force, which is expected to happen in January 2021. Its implementation entails a technical challenge, which,

according to Elayne, has to do with continuing to develop the prohibition regime of nuclear weapons on the basis of derived protocols, as well as the definition of some issues that could not be resolved at the time of negotiation and which will have to be resolved at the meeting of Member States or when a nuclear country raises its accession to the Treaty. This meeting, Elayne said, will have to be “informed, technical, thoughtful and solid, from a technical point of view” and will present an opportunity to discuss central issues, such as international verification of nuclear disarmament from a multilateral perspective or maintaining a new security scheme without nuclear weapons, she added.



Opening of UN Conference on Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, 2017. Credit: UN Photo/Rick Bajornas

**Another invaluable measure to promote the elimination of nuclear weapons and thus foster peace and stability at the regional and international levels has been the establishment of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZs)** under arrangements freely entered into by States within a geographical region. In this regard, Latin America and the Caribbean stands out for having been the first region in the world to establish a NWFZ in a densely populated territory in 1967, through the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, better known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

In this context, we spoke with **GIOCONDA UBEDA RIVERA**, former Vice Chancellor of Costa Rica, who was elected Secretary-General of OPANAL in 2010, a position she held until 2013. Gioconda has been the first and only woman to date to hold this position. Also, because of her experience and regional and international background, she was called to support the chair of the United Nations Conference as an advisor for the negotiation of the TPNW in 2017.



**Gioconda Ubeda. Costa Rica**  
Credit: UN Photo/Amanda Voisard



**Three women from the region (LAC) have been Vice-Chairs of the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly between 2010 and 2019.**

Ayesha Borland in 2011 (Belize), Maria Soledad Urruela Arenales in 2016 (Guatemala), Marissa Edwards in 2018 (Guyana). The First Committee of the General Assembly addresses disarmament and other international security issues. It meets every year between October and November.

Gioconda arrived at OPANAL as Costa Rica's Ambassador to Mexico from 2006 to 2010. It was at this time that she got her first taste of the Agency's work, even though it was facing a financial crisis, which basically raised questions about its relevant existence in the political context of those years. **By 2010, OPANAL had achieved relative financial stability. Upon assuming her leadership role that year, Gioconda was convinced that the time had come to "advance the nuclear disarmament agenda."**

At the helm of the institution, Gioconda concentrated on building a strategic agenda that clearly demonstrated to OPANAL Member States that both the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Agency had full political relevance and validity. She explained that this was the beginning of a second phase in the history of OPANAL; the first was the creation and consolidation of the NWFZ, inspired by the spirit of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which states in its preamble that the creation of NWFZs is not an end in itself, but a means to achieve total and complete disarmament at a later stage." "The time for further progress had begun for OPANAL and for the 33 States Parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco," she stressed.

The revitalisation of OPANAL and the appropriation of the new agenda by its Member States had an intense and participatory maturation process. A new

## AGENCY FOR THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (OPANAL)

OPANAL is an international organisation made up of the 33 States of the Latin American and Caribbean region, established in 1969 to ensure compliance with the obligations of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco). This Treaty prohibits nuclear weapons in this region, thereby establishing the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated territory of the planet.

generation of young diplomats, men and women, became involved and demonstrated enthusiasm and commitment at this stage. Gioconda mentioned the negotiation work she undertook with all States Parties to OPANAL to agree on a declaration stating that the Latin American and Caribbean NWFZ was ready to join the efforts of the international community in negotiating a legally binding universal instrument banning nuclear weapons. At the end of 10 months, this declaration saw the light of day and so, in October 2011, it was presented to the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly.

**That same year, Gioconda told us, another milestone was reached with her participation in the Conference on Disarmament,<sup>3</sup> the first time an OPANAL Secretary-General was received at that multilateral forum based in Geneva.**

In November 2011, OPANAL participated in the “Forum of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on the possible creation of a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone in the Middle East,.” which was an opportunity to share good practices and lessons learned from the Latin American and Caribbean NWFZ that could be useful in the creation of a possible new NWFZ, Gioconda said. She emphasised that the references she made in that forum in her capacity as representative of OPANAL were highly valued and stressed “that the process of creating and consolidating the NWFZ in the region was long and complex since it took 35 years for the last State Party to ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco and 20 years for the signature and ratification of Protocols I and II to be completed by the States Parties, five of them nuclear-weapon holders.”<sup>4</sup> She also pointed out that **“dialogue and confidence-building were decisive in concluding the text of the Treaty,** as was the involvement, from the outset of the negotiations, of the nuclear-weapon States and

**THE GREAT CHALLENGE, GIOCONDA SAID, AND AGREEING WITH ELAYNE WHITE, IS TO NEGOTIATE THE ADDITIONAL PROTOCOLS TO THE TPNW WITH THE NUCLEAR-WEAPON STATES**

<sup>3</sup> The Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community.

<sup>4</sup> The Treaty of Tlatelolco contains two Additional Protocols: Additional Protocol 1, addressed to states that de jure or de facto have territories under their international responsibility in the area of application of the Treaty of Tlatelolco; and Additional Protocol 2, addressed to nuclear-weapon states (signed and ratified by China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States).

the States that administered territories within the NWFZ in agreeing on the text of the Additional Protocols to the Treaty of Tlatelolco.”

During her time at the head of OPANAL, all the work carried out was achieved through a joint effort between the Agency and its Member States, under the premise that the NWFZ they created in the 1960s was still one of the most important political assets in Latin America and the Caribbean, Gioconda said. Now the commitment was to move on to the next stage to achieve total and complete disarmament, the *raison d’être* of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, she added. “All this conviction was reflected in declarations of the Presidential Summits of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), in the participation of the States Parties in the Humanitarian Conferences, in the preparatory meetings for the Review of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and in the participation in the United Nations Conference for the Negotiation of the TPNW.”

Finally, with regard to the support she gave to her compatriot and chair of the United Nations Conference that negotiated the TPNW in 2017, **Gioconda Ubeda stressed that one contribution of the TPNW is to raise awareness about the risk that nuclear weapons represent for humanity.** Likewise, and most importantly, this Treaty delegitimises for the first time the possession of nuclear weapons by the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. The great challenge, Gioconda said, and agreeing with Elayne White, is to negotiate the additional protocols to the TPNW with the nuclear-weapon states, for which Gioconda believes it will be necessary to build a new paradigm for international security based on cooperation rather than confrontation.

Having contributed to this process with her experience in the field, forged years ago by leading OPANAL and participating in governments, international bodies and various related fora, Gioconda underscored the importance of the work



In 2017, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) won the Nobel Peace Prize. ICAN is a global coalition of civil society organisations with a presence in over 80 countries. This campaign was led by a woman, Sweden’s Beatrice Fihn.

of civil society in promoting the process that concluded in 2017.

**Both Elayne and Gioconda highlighted the exceptional work undertaken by many women involved in these negotiation and leadership processes that supported efforts towards the elimination of nuclear weapons in the world.** In particular, Elayne mentioned the exceptional role played by colleagues from the region in the process of the Open-Ended

Working Group that operated in 2016 in Geneva, expressing special admiration and recognition for the work of Shorna Kay Richards, Jamaica's Alternate Permanent Representative to the United Nations at the time, who played a very important role in generating a group dynamic, with an exceptional capacity for dialogue and extraordinary eloquence. Elayne also highlighted the work of Carla Rodríguez, Ambassador of Guatemala, who "played an extraordinary role", contributing her



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (2007-2016) meets with Gioconda Ubeda Rivera, Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, OPANAL (2010-2013). Credit: UN Photo/Rick Bajornas

courage and great strength in terms of UN procedural management. Once, during the 2017 negotiations, Elayne mentioned the extraordinary work carried out by other women, such as United Nations officials, members of civil society, and representatives of negotiating countries who led discussions on specific technical issues.

For her part, Gioconda recalled that during her career she has noticed how women have been gaining ground both on disarmament issues and in the exercise of diplomacy. She particularly noted the outstanding work that women have carried out in raising awareness concerning the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. In particular, she mentioned that when she held the position of Secretary-General of OPANAL, there were women leading high-level international bodies with whom she built partnerships. Gioconda shared with UNLIREC that there are pioneers who forcefully opened spaces and saw great crises as opportunities, spaces which - in her opinion - are fundamental to generating far-reaching transformations. **New generations must also take advantage of these gaps to achieve possible utopias, she added, "a place that does not exist, but which we can build together."**

Both Costa Ricans, career diplomats and professors, Elayne and Gioconda, not only share the same professional field, but also the conviction that studying and building one's own vision is essential so that women can gain more space in these areas, as well as the belief that role models are key to inspire new generations.



**In 2015, two Latin American women were part of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) charged with formulating recommendations on aspects that could contribute to a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.** Mariela Fogante (Argentina) y Perla Carvalho (Mexico). This Group was appointed by the Secretary-General in accordance with paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 67/53, ensuring an inclusive membership and as equal geographical representation as possible. They met in Geneva for eight weeks in 2014 and 2015 under the auspices of the United Nations.

## VOICES OF EXPERIENCE

**ANA MARÍA CERINI.** Argentina

Ana Maria served from 2006 to 2012 as a member of the Group of Experts of the Committee established under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540. She participated in the drafting of the implementation of the Convention for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, approved by Law 24.534 of 1995 and implemented internally in her country by Law 26.247 of 2007. Ana Maria is currently working as an independent consultant.

*“While the trend indicates that there is greater involvement of men in disarmament and non-proliferation issues, women have been very successful in this area, demonstrating their skill and precision in their interventions.”*



**VERÓNICA VILLAGRA CARRÓN.** Paraguay

Veronica is Head of the Department of Immunology at the Central Laboratory of Public Health (Departamento de Inmunología del Laboratorio Central de Salud Pública - LACIMET) in Asuncion, Paraguay since 2012. From 2010 to 2014, she worked at the National Institute of Technology, Standardisation and Metrology as the Alternative National Representative to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). In this role, her task was to manage the annual declarations of declarable substances in Schedules 1, 2 and 3 of the Chemical Weapons Convention, as well as of other relevant instruments.

*“I want women to be an active part and to decide to become involved in any of the governmental and non-governmental organisations that are fighting for disarmament in various ways, such as the promotion, drafting and approval of laws and regulations on disarmament, and the drafting of public policies for the chemical, biological and radiological safety of the population, among others, and to work on increasing awareness of the enormous importance of ensuring a world without weapons for our children.”*

**GLORIA ALEJANDRA ZÁRATE PÉREZ.** Chile

Gloria Alejandra has worked for 11 years in the Chilean Nuclear Energy Commission (Comisión Chilena de Energía Nuclear). Due to her knowledge of nuclear law, Gloria has participated in the generation of nuclear regulations in order to incorporate international regulations and instruments into the domestic legal framework.

She has been an advisor to several Latin American countries on nuclear legislation and its peaceful uses.

*“Don't try to do your job as if you were a man, since one of the greatest contributions is to visualise the issues related to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control from a woman's full perspective.”*



**MARTHA MARIANA MENDOZA BASULTO.** México

Martha Mariana has been working in different areas of disarmament as a public official in the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 2013. She was Head of the Department of Biological, Conventional and Nuclear Disarmament from 2015 to 2016. Since 2018, she has been working as an International Relations Officer at the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Organismo para la Prohibición de Armas Nucleares en América Latina y el Caribe - OPANAL).

*“Let us learn from the path taken by other women. Sisterhood is indispensable so that we can continue to help make the world a better place, not only for present, but also future generations of women.”*

## PREVENTING THE PROLIFERATION OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

*As part of the work being carried out by women in the region to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), their means of delivery and related materials, we spoke with **Ana Vanessa Ricardo Acosta**, Agreements Specialist at the Dominican Republic's General Customs Directorate. Ana Vanessa shared her work to support the implementation, in her country, of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (UNSCR 1540), as well as her reflections on her role on the issue.*

Ana Vanessa, who has an academic background in international trade and specialises in environmental trade, told us that since 2014 she has been involved in efforts to prevent the proliferation of WMD, their means of delivery and related materials in her country. In particular, when she was designated as one of the contact points within the General Customs Directorate to work on these issues and on the implementation of Resolution 1540.

With previous professional experience in the private sector, Ana Vanessa indicated that in order to start working on these issues she had to “unlearn in order to learn”, referring to the process of moving away from thinking about the individual, which prevails in the private sector, to “the collective” or the “common good”, which is key thinking in the public sector. Ana Vanessa said that when she started working in the public sector, she learned about the



Ana Vanessa Ricardo Acosta. Dominican Republic

role of the state and the role of civil servants, security issues, as well as how to look at things collectively.

Once settled in the public sector world, **Ana Vanessa shared that the implementation of UNSCR 1540 is not the responsibility of a single person or institution at the country level, but is a “shared responsibility.”** Ana Vanessa has been part of the Multi-sectoral Coordination Commission that responds to the implementation matters of this resolution in her country

since 2014. This is precisely where all the national institutions that contribute in one way or another to this task converge, including the General Customs Directorate, the Ministries of the Environment, Defence, Health, Agriculture, Foreign Affairs, Energy and Mines, among other national entities.<sup>5</sup> From this Multi-sectorial Commission, efforts are coordinated and synergies are created between State institutions to implement UNSCR

## RESOLUTION 1540 (2004) UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

Resolution 1540 (2004) requires all UN Member States to implement measures to prevent non-state actors, including terrorists, from acquiring and using nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery, and to establish domestic controls over related materials to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

<sup>5</sup> Other national entities belonging to the Multi-sectoral Coordination Commission include: National Energy Commission, Dominican Institute of Quality, National Directorate for Livestock, Financial Analysis Unit

**1540. The implementation of this resolution is “cross-cutting”, added Ana Vanessa, as it touches on two interrelated issues, implementation (referring to practical measures) and regulation (referring to legal measures) to prevent non-state actors from acquiring WMD, which is why the involvement of various national institutions is necessary.**

Ana Vanessa has supported the operation and monitoring of the commitments generated in the Multi-sectoral Commission since that date, and considers the creation of this platform to be good practice in this area. From this space, she has been involved in defining national action plans, writing country reports and building her country's 1540 Matrix. The 1540 Matrix is a reference tool built with the Group of Experts of the United Nations Security Council 1540 Committee that serves to map the various actions and measures in which the State in question implements the Resolution at the national level.

Ana Vanessa has been involved in activities that she considers key to preventing the illicit trafficking of materials, equipment and technology that could be used to develop nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, as well as their means of delivery. She thus highlighted the contribution she made from the outset in the formulation and drafting of her country's draft “Law against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction”, which is in the process of being passed. She also mentioned her collaboration in the drafting of the Operational List of Dual-Use Goods, which she considers essential to support customs and border control officials in the identification of strategic goods that are part of the country's legitimate commercial flow, but which due to their characteristics could also be used for the production of WMD. For Ana Vanessa, it is extremely important to share good practices in the region. In this sense she highlighted the work done in 2019 in the peer review exercise between Panama and the Dominican Republic on the implementation of UNSCR 1540, the first peer-to-peer meeting held in the Central American and Caribbean Integration System (SICA) region, the second in the Americas region and the fourth worldwide.



**UNODA's Regional, Information and Outreach Branch (RDIQB) – the operational arm of UNODA at the regional, subregional and national levels – has been headed by a woman, Mary Soliman, since 2015.**

Finally, for Ana Vanessa, the implementation of this resolution in her country is key due to its geographical position. The Dominican Republic can be used as a country for the transit, transshipment, or diversion of material that, eventually, by falling into the “wrong hands”, could be used for the manufacture of WMD. Ana Vanessa added that, as her country has significant import levels of high-level and low-

level activity radioactive sources and chemicals, regulated respectively by the IAEA Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and the Chemical Weapons Convention (1993), the commitment shown by her country in implementing UNSCR 1540 is of paramount importance. The Resolution complemented the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime for WMD.



Ana Vanessa Ricardo meets with members of the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), 2017

Committed to the subject, Ana Vanessa shared that she never thought she that she would be involved or work in this sector, but she is convinced that we all “have the capacity to develop the subjects we propose. It’s a question of disposition and dedication.” Ana Vanessa also mentioned that she believes that problems related to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control are problems that affect men and women alike. For her, security has to be for everyone equally, so it is important that both men and women work together in order to attain optimal results. Having different perspectives makes it possible to obtain great contributions, said Ana Vanesssa, as well as forming good working teams of men and women who are aware that the common good is being sought.

**ANA VANESSA HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN ACTIVITIES THAT SHE CONSIDERS KEY TO PREVENTING THE ILLICIT TRAFFICKING OF MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY THAT COULD BE USED TO DEVELOP NUCLEAR, CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS, AS WELL AS THEIR MEANS OF DELIVERY.**



**Out of 141 women globally, 22 women from Latin America have participated from 2009 to 2019 in the “United Nations Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament.”** This program was launched by the General Assembly in 1978 with the aim of building the capacity and training of member states officials, in order to help them effectively participate in international disarmament deliberation and negotiation forums.

## VOICES OF EXPERIENCE

**ANA IZAR.** México

—  
Ana has been working since 2016 as a Political Affairs Officer for the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) on issues of disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, specifically the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) in Geneva, Switzerland. She has also been collaborating with networks of young scientists, Global South, in order to play an active role between scientific advice and decision-making for the BWC.

*“Many partners still have ingrained stereotypes about the kind of person who can talk about disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control issues. This does not include women. However, the transmission of a strong, fact-based message seems to be the best antidote to these cultural barriers.”*



**EDITH GLADYS VALLES.** Argentina

—  
Edith Gladys Valles is a member of the Group of Experts of the Committee established under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540. Since 2005, she has been working on different issues related to the non-proliferation of chemical and biological weapons in her country, including advising different Argentine ministries on export control issues concerning dual materials and technologies. She also carries out dissemination activities in the industrial and academic fields, among others.

*“I hope that in the coming years there will be even more women participating and showing their convictions on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control issues, in order to demonstrate that the ‘weaker sex’ can be very strong.”*

## PREVENTING THE EMERGENCE OF NEW AREAS OF STRATEGIC COMPETENCE AND CONFLICT

*One of the fundamental areas, considered strategic for the preservation of international stability, and which was included in the Disarmament Agenda, is outer space. As part of the efforts to promote “Disarmament to Save Humanity”, the United Nations established actions to prevent the emergence of new areas of strategic competence and conflict, such as strengthening the commitment to Member States for the practical implementation of confidence-building and transparency measures in outer space activities, as well as the development of effective measures for the prevention of the arms race in this field.*

Within this context, the work being done vis-a-vis the peaceful use of outer space is fundamental. Thus, we talked with Mexican lawyer, **ROSA MARIA RAMIREZ DE ARELLANO Y HARO**, current General Coordinator for International Affairs and Security in Space at the Mexican Space Agency. Rosa Maria has worked in the field of international regulation of

outer space, promoting its peaceful use, through her participation in international bodies, such as the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS).

Established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1959, COPUOS has been instrumental in the creation



Rosa María Ramírez de Arellano y Haro. Mexico

of the five existing treaties and principles on outer space.<sup>6</sup> In June 2018, its 61st session was held, and as part of this, a high-level segment called UNISPACE+50 was held in Vienna, Austria. Both spaces were presided over by a woman: the lawyer, Rosa María Ramírez Arellano y Haro. She first chaired the UNISPACE+50 high-level segment and then the regular session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS).

In the context of this interview, Rosa María mentioned that she considers it an honour to have had the opportunity to hear presidents, ministers and ambassadors speak at UNISPACE+50, an event she

described as “high protocol and diplomacy.” **She stressed that one of the most important outcomes of UNISPACE+50, as a high-level segment, was the adoption of the draft resolution entitled “Fiftieth anniversary of the First United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space: space as a driver for sustainable development.”**

According to Rosa Maria, the importance of this resolution lies in the fact that it calls for work on the “Space 2030” agenda and its implementation plan, which she sees as a link between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Rosa Maria explained to us that the approval of this draft resolution was the result of several months of work and negotiations through which consensus was reached in order to bring it to the General Assembly in October 2018. The Mexican lawyer, as president of COPUOS that year, was in charge of presenting it to the 73rd session of

<sup>6</sup> The five principles in question include legal principles that should govern the activities of States in the exploration and use of outer space, the use of artificial earth satellites for international direct television broadcasting, remote sensing of the Earth from space, the use of nuclear power sources in outer space and on international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space.

the United Nations General Assembly where it would be approved on 26 October that same year.

Within the framework of the work carried out by Rosa María, presiding over COPUOS and UNISPACE+50, she highlighted the eloquence, intelligence and negotiating skills of the women with whom she exchanged ideas within the framework of these types of negotiations and international spaces.

Likewise, she shared as a lesson from her career in this and other international spheres that, when you are going to reach an agreement, in the negotiations, you don't always get everything. It is about balance.

With regard to encouraging the participation of women in these issues, **Rosa María considers it essential to promote training for new generations through specific programmes, as well**



UNISPACE+50. Credit: UNIS Vienna

**as to set an example to encourage young women to dare to seek professional development in this area.** For the lawyer, it is the capacity of each person that pushes her to face the challenges that she proposes, since these are “opportunities derived from what one does.” In her opinion, the important thing is to be proactive, to work and to deliver results.

Rosa María was initiated into the issues of international regulation of outer space through her work, for more than 28 years, at the Ministry of Communications and Transport in Mexico. This experience allowed her to become acquainted with an entire sector that included infrastructure, transport, and satellite communications. Among other experiences, her career includes being the first woman to serve as Vice President of the International Astronautical Federation for six years. Rosa María is also a professor and has a special appreciation for sharing her knowledge and experiences. As an expert in treaties regulating outer space, in her view, the five existing international outer space instruments play a key role in promoting the peaceful use and prevention of militarisation in outer space.

SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE SPACE AGE, THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR OUTER SPACE AFFAIRS (UNOOSA) HAS ORGANISED UNIQUE GLOBAL CONFERENCES ON THE EXPLORATION AND PEACEFUL USE OF OUTER SPACE. THESE GLOBAL CONFERENCES – UNISPACE I (1968), UNISPACE II (1982), UNISPACE III (1999), A FOLLOW-UP CONFERENCE TO UNISPACE III+5 (2004) AND UNISPACE+50 (2018) – HAVE HAD AS THEIR MAIN OBJECTIVE THE PROMOTION OF GREATER COOPERATION AMONG MEMBER STATES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN THE PEACEFUL USE OF OUTER SPACE.

# THE PROTAGONISTS AND THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS

IN THIS SECTION, WE FOCUS OUR ATTENTION ON REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENTS OF OUR FORCES OF CHANGE TO ACHIEVE PEACE, THROUGH DISARMAMENT INITIATIVES, IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REGION



*“To have been part of the Colombian delegation to the Fourth Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (2019). For one year, we worked in a collaborative environment, managing to strengthen the documents we adopted, especially the Oslo Action Plan, which integrated concrete commitments for States Parties on gender issues and the diverse needs of communities affected by anti-personnel mines. Additionally, I was chosen by the Committee for the Strengthening of Cooperation and Assistance as a gender focal point to maintain the relevance of the issue within the framework of the Convention.”*

**DIANA ESPERANZA CASTILLO CASTRO.** Colombia

—  
Diplomat, Second Secretary at the Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations and other International Organisations in Geneva, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia.



*“To have participated as a “one-woman” delegation in the second session of the Open-ended Working Group responsible for developing proposals to advance multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament in 2016. I represented my country and the region in crucial discussions to identify legal, concrete and effective measures and provisions to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons. I participated wholeheartedly in these deliberations, ensuring that the position of Small Island Developing States was represented in a strong manner and that women’s voices were heard.”*

**SHORNA-KAY RICHARDS.** Jamaica

—  
Diplomat, current Director of the Bilateral Relations Department. Alternate Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Jamaica to the United Nations in New York (2012-2016), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Jamaica.

*“To have contributed to keeping Brazil’s federal firearms and ammunition law in force through years of congressional and lobbying disputes to deregulate arms control. I achieved this through the analysis of bills and communication campaigns in order to translate technical aspects of the arms control agenda into more accessible language to facilitate evidence-based debates in the National Congress and to raise public awareness.”*

**MICHELE GONÇALVES DOS RAMOS.** Brazil

—  
Special Advisor to the Igarapé Institute.





*“To have represented my country in agencies related to disarmament and non-proliferation, such as the Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as having been part of the Chilean delegation during the Third Preparatory Committee for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 2019. Having the backing and support of my authorities to be able to take care of these issues is also a main source of my pride.”*

**CARLA ANDREA MOLINA CORRAL.**  
Chile

—  
Diplomat, Officer in Charge of the Disarmament and Nuclear Non-proliferation Desk, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile.

*“To have been Costa Rica’s chief negotiator for the Arms Trade Treaty (2010–2015). It took five years of tireless work to consolidate a principled position and an independent voice that resonated at the five preparatory meetings, the two Diplomatic Conferences and the First Conference of States Parties. Throughout this process, Costa Rica raised its voice to demand the highest possible common standards to regulate the conventional arms trade, which - until then - operated without any international regulation.”*

**MARITZA CHAN.** Costa Rica

—  
Diplomat, Alternate Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the United Nations in New York, Ministry of Foreign and Religious Affairs of Costa Rica.



*“To have contributed — together with the Education for Sustainable Development Institute (Instituto de Enseñanza para el Desarrollo Sostenible - IEPADES) team — to the approval of new legislation on arms and ammunition, after a series of setbacks and many years of unconditional institutional effort. Likewise, I consider it an achievement to have been able to incorporate new criteria and methodologies to address the issue of disarmament in Guatemala, disassociating it exclusively from the issue of security, including other elements, such as the viewpoint of the justice system, generating knowledge, and fostering the generation of a new institution with more information and capabilities to respond to the phenomenon. As Team Coordinator, I consider it a great achievement that my whole team pursues the same ideals.”*

**MAYDA DE LEÓN WANTLAND.** Guatemala

—  
Coordinator of the Human Security Programme, Education for Sustainable Development Institute, Guatemala.

*“To have contributed to the drafting of Grenada’s 2013 Chemical Weapons Act in order to ensure that our legal framework and regulations are soundly based and comply with our international obligations. I also provided my government with legal assistance to facilitate the adoption of legislation for the effective implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 on effective measures against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction”*

**CHRISTINE BOWDEN.** Grenada

—  
Former Crown Counsel in the Attorney Generals Chambers, Ministry of Legal Affairs.





*“To have traced firearms recovered through the ATF eTrace system, the acquisitions and comparison of cartridge cases and bullets in the IBIS system, and the presentation of my findings in court”*

**TEREAH THOMAS.** Bahamas

—  
Senior Firearms Technician, Royal Bahamas Police Force.

*“To have established the combating of trafficking in small arms, as a key element to the security strategy of Central American countries, and to ensure that the problem was addressed from a gender and women’s rights perspective”*

**EVA SACASA.** Nicaragua

—  
Former Executive Director, Central American Programme for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (CASAC).



*“To have contributed to the United Nations Disarmament Commission’s achievement in 2017 — after 18 years — of adopting recommendations by consensus. It was a shared achievement of all delegations, which I am proud to have facilitated together with the accompaniment of two Working Group Chairs and with the invaluable support of the Secretariat. I also had the satisfaction of negotiating the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel mines. It was very moving to adopt it, because its implementation would have an impact on the daily lives of people in many places around the world”*

**GABRIELA MARTINIC.** Argentina

—  
Diplomat, Director of International Security, Nuclear and Space Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Religious Affairs of Argentina.

*“Having served as Facilitator of Resolution 65/69 on Women, Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Arms Control, spearheaded by Trinidad and Tobago, I shepherded the resolution through the First Committee of the General Assembly until it was adopted by consensus by UN Member States”*

**CHARLENE ROOPNARINE.** Trinidad y Tobago

—  
International Relations Officer, Ministry of Foreign and Caribbean Affairs, Trinidad and Tobago.





*“To have contributed, as Vice Minister of the Security Coordination Ministry, to the creation of Ecuador’s Technical Team for Arms Control, serving as its first President since its creation in 2011”*

**GLORIA POLASTRI.** Ecuador

—  
Zone 8 Coordinator in Guayaquil, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility

*“To have contributed, along with colleagues from other civil society organizations, to the formulation of the firearms legislation, as well as the creation of the National Firearms Commission, which includes the active participation of civil society”*

**YENNY VILLALBA.** Paraguay

—  
Centre for Judicial Studies (CEJ), Paraguay.



*“To have been the commanding officer of a patrol in control of operations in the fight against illicit firearms trafficking with more than 30 men under my command”*

**MARÍA LOURDES BONILLA.** Ecuador

—  
Ecuadorian Air Force.



*“To have contributed to the destruction process of more than 700 obsolete and surplus weapons of the Armed Forces of my country”*

**CLARITIA M. EILLIOTH.** Suriname

—  
Ministry of Defense.

*“To have been the lead negotiator for the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) at the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons in 2014”*

**BIBI SHELIZA ALLY.** Guyana

—  
Multilateral Affairs Specialist



## PILAR II

## DISARMAMENT

THAT SAVE  
LIVES

*Pillar 2 sets out the ambitious and noble goal of attaining “disarmament that saves lives” through the reduction and mitigation of the impact of conventional arms.*

This goal is based on the fact that already two decades into the 21st Century, armed violence remains disturbingly prevalent in many parts of the world, and the world remains grossly over-armed. Furthermore, there is a prevalent lack in understanding on the many areas where the successful attainment of disarmament objectives would benefit the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These are just a few of the more salient reasons why we need to focus more on “disarmament that saves lives.”

In order for Pilar 2 to come to fruition, we are in need of effective action to protect civilians from the growing urbanization of armed conflict - including securing excessive and poorly maintained arms and ammunition stockpiles and reducing the impact of arms in conflict management -, as well as from the pervasive use of improvised explosive devices. It also requires a more intense effort to reintegrate disarmament into the main peace and security pillar of the Organization. This is the only means by which the UN can effectively assume its central role in helping to prevent violent conflict and reduce large-scale human suffering. And nowhere in the world are the objectives of this pillar more relevant than in Latin America and the Caribbean. A region with the highest firearms-inflicted homicide rates in the world. A region where the connection between disarmament and development and how the illicit proliferation of arms can impact the well-being and prosperity of its citizens has long been understood.

## LEGISLATIVE AND PUBLIC POLICY WORK ON ARMS CONTROL

*Daisy Tourné, Uruguayan and current president of the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons, shared the experiences and challenges she faced in order to put the issue of controlling the carrying and possession of firearms among civilians on the public agenda and in political debate.*

After a long career as a parliamentarian in her country, author of the Firearms Law (adopted in 2014) and the first woman to head the Ministry of the Interior (2007-2009), Daisy reflected on the contribution of civil society organisations, women's participation and gender perspectives in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. From her approach as a feminist and activist for women's rights, she states that, "I always advocate for participation in issues considered to be spaces reserved for men." As far as firearms are concerned, Daisy draws attention to the fact that, **"It is very difficult to break the patriarchal mentality of power through weapons."**

Regarding her experience as a minister, Daisy shared that while this was very enriching, it was not easy, as it was an "especially masculinised place." She told us that to gain courage she recalled some words that the then President of Chile, Michel Bachelet, shared in a meeting, "Women have to deal with difficult issues, issues that are not meant for women, which are the strongholds of men." In this regard, Daisy highlighted that **during her years at the head of the Ministry of the Interior, the police learned to work under a woman** and that the citizenry realised that women could play roles other than those established by the patriarchy. During her administration,



Daisy Tourné. Uruguay

the Directorate of Gender Policy was created, which was fundamental in generating statistical information and making the problem of domestic violence against women visible, although she warned that despite the progress that has been made, "Even today in Uruguay, the home continues to be the most dangerous place for women."

On the role of the legislature in disarmament and arms control issues, Daisy noted several issues. Firstly, **the low level of involvement of parliamentarians in these matters is the result of a deep-seated logic in some**

**countries, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean, which tends to associate defence, security and disarmament issues as "men's business, and - in particular - men in uniform"**, referring to the armed and security forces. She recalled that few parliamentarians were involved in the Arms Trade Treaty negotiation process despite the fact that it is up to them to ensure that the Treaty is approved in their countries' parliaments. She also stated that parliamentarians have a fundamental role in several ways: in legislating, in approving international treaties and also as opinion leaders.

With regard to the participation of women parliamentarians in these issues, she stressed that their role is fundamental, because they have a different logic and can contribute a great deal to the struggle "for disarmament, for peaceful, inclusive, non-authoritarian societies." Daisy said that, "We have to raise our voices because our opinion is very important . . . let's not leave the issues in the hands of men alone; we make up the majority of the world's people, so we have to make the decisions. We have to take the floor. We have to make our voices heard. We have to say what is happening to women in the world, because of arms proliferation, what is happening in societies where there

is armed conflict and where weapons are used for the sexual abuse and rape of women at gunpoint.”

Daisy is optimistic that the awareness and participation of organised women is increasing, an essential condition for achieving peace. “Without us, there is no scope for peace. I believe that we are the ones who will bring about peaceful paths, us, the women.” Among the actions to increase the participation of women parliamentarians, Daisy pointed out the quota systems or positive discrimination systems towards the inclusion of women, and clarified that, although this has not solved everything, it is a tool that has helped to open up spaces. “If we treat unequals equally, all we are doing is increasing inequality. We have to favour those who have less. And those who have the least in the distribution of power are women and we must open up channels for participation.”

“WITHOUT US THERE IS NO SCOPE FOR PEACE. I BELIEVE THAT WE ARE THE ONES WHO WILL BRING ABOUT PEACEFUL PATHS, US, THE WOMEN.”

As the author of the current firearms law in Uruguay, Daisy recalled that the first bill was presented in 2004, and a decade later, in 2014, Law No. 19.247 on the Possession, Carrying, Marketing and Trafficking of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials was finally passed. The process was not easy. Firstly, because traditionally the issue of arms was dealt with by the police and the military, not the legislature. This was a paradigm shift. She also recalled that in the beginning, she was very lonely and that the first supporters were social organisations, such as the Association for the Fight against Civil Disarmament (Asociación de Lucha por el Desarme Civil - ALUDEC) and the Institute of Legal and Social Studies of Uruguay (Instituto de Estudios Legales y Sociales del Uruguay - IELSUR). In that regard, Daisy emphasised the importance of communicating with civil society and generating spaces for participation. “We had more than a legislative and civil buffer from civil society organisations. However, these civil society organisations, by collaborating and carrying out activities, were able to reach the will of parliamentarians,” she said, noting that it was women parliamentarians who first joined this initiative and that their strategy was to include voices from the entire spectrum of Uruguay’s political parties. **“We had to be able to partner with parliamentarians who were sympathetic to the issue, across the board, and we succeeded in doing so.”**

For Daisy, the approval of this law involved an important prior process of awareness raising and training of parliamentarians on the importance of regulating firearms for civilian use. It was precisely this awareness about the issue that led to the adoption of other laws also related to the subject, such as legislation on private security services. This law determined the type of weapon that these individuals may carry, while also stipulating that, once their working hours are over, the weapon must be deposited at the headquarters of their organisation, that is, they may not carry or take it home. The latter contributes to the prevention of domestic violence with firearms. In this regard, Daisy reminded us that a comprehensive law to combat gender-based violence against women was also subsequently adopted, which establishes that those who are prosecuted for the crime of femicide or for acts of gender-based violence are forever denied the possibility of possessing or carrying weapons.

By way of reflection, Daisy believes that, with the adoption of the 2014 Arms Law,

it is not only a matter of having a general law in place that governs firearms, but also considering mainstreaming them into other issues, such as gender-based violence. For her, a cross-sectoral approach is key, as is the inclusion of differences, diversity and the participation of populations in security decisions. As a parliamentarian, it is very important for Daisy that “we legislators don’t forget that we need to have a very strong alliance with civil society organisations, whether they are NGOs, cooperatives, women’s or youth organisations. It is very important to discuss these issues with the population and to become allies in seeking the paths towards more peaceful societies that we want to build. **Real progress has been made where there has been a strong alliance between parliamentarians and their constituents, with active social organisations, also fighting for their rights and needs.** That for me has been the best strategy.”

Daisy highlighted the importance of maintaining channels for the exchange of experiences with legislators from



**Only one Latin American woman has chaired the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) in the last 10 years.** Gabriela Martinic in 2017 (Argentina). The Disarmament Commission was created by the General Assembly in 1952 with a general mandate to deal with disarmament issues. The Commission meets every year for a period of three weeks between April and May.

different countries and regions, and recalled the experiences of other countries from which she learned and took as a reference, countries, such as Brazil and its arms control law, and the experiences of the Nordic countries in the area of security. As the current President of the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Daisy describes this space as a place of support for parliamentarians that provides tools, information, exchange of good practices and mutual learning. As a result of the regional activities promoted by the Forum, “framework

laws have emerged that benefit countries when parliamentarians bring them to implementation in their own parliaments.” Equal gender participation within the Forum includes both the Board of Directors (with regulated equity), and the number of members. This is regulated in the statutes. “We do not undertake any activity where there are only men on a panel. We would not allow ourselves.”

In conclusion, Daisy welcomes the fact that there are now a growing number of international initiatives to specifically

## PARLIAMENTARY FORUM ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

The Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons is the only international organisation of Members of Parliament specifically concerned with the issues of reducing and preventing violence related to small arms and light weapons (SALW). The Forum brings together more than 230 members of different political parties from parliaments in more than 80 countries around the world.

The overall objective of the Forum is to contribute to more peaceful and developed societies through parliamentary action against armed violence to enhance human security. Since the official opening of the Forum in Madrid in 2002, the organisation has provided a much-needed platform for parliamentarians to meet, exchange knowledge and best practices, build parliamentary capacity, propose policy and create common ground to address the uncontrolled proliferation of SALW.

discuss gender and arms control issues, such as the Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control (GENSAC). The fact that this network includes many young women is remarkable, because “There is strength behind the change we want.” As an experienced politician, Daisy’s advice to the new generation of women who want to work on these issues can be summarised as follows, **“Lonely struggles hardly win. Increasing women’s organisation by recognising their diversity is key.** Providing a more humane vision and voice denouncing the cruelty of a system that only relies on violence as a solution to conflict is the only dignified way forward. We have to keep on fighting, and we have to do it with joy too! We are fighting for something beautiful, not something horrible.”



Daisy Tourné with Board members of the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons

## VOICES OF EXPERIENCE

**ARABESKA SÁNCHEZ FÚNEZ.** Honduras

Arabeska is one of the leading forensic ballistic experts in the region who has devoted her professional career to enhancing justice and security in Honduras and the Central American region. In Honduras, she has contributed to the development of firearms legislation and to numerous academic research investigations on armed violence in the country. She is a long-time collaborator of UNLIREC and formed part of the Center's Forensic Ballistic project.

*"I believe that incorporating the gender perspective into arms control, strengthens women's access to justice, especially women who have been victims along with their families, this will lead to reducing the impunity gaps that are currently present in different parts of the world."*



**NILCE SIBAJA ZAMORA.** Costa Rica

Nilce has accumulated 20 years of service with the Judicial Investigations Agency of the Costa Rican Police Force. She is one of the leading instructors on the management of evidence and chain of custody of arms and ammunition. UNLIREC's evidence management training modules were modeled on Nilce's expertise and teachings. Nilce has been a guest instructor in several UNLIREC courses across the region.

*"When I started my career at the Judicial Investigation Agency, I knew from the get go that it was not going to be easy, since this was a male-dominant area and despite this -little by little- I was able to break ground. Over the years, thinking has evolved and the integration of female personnel has grown while the institution has recognized the invaluable capabilities that we, as women can contribute to this area."*



**LUCÍA GOMÉZ CONSOLI.** Argentina

Lucia spent more than 20 years working for Argentina's National Arms and Controlled Materials Agency (Agencia Nacional de Materiales Controlados - EX RENAR). Over the years she occupied various posts within the institution contributing to arms control and the combat of illicit arms proliferation in Argentina. She now forms part of UNODC's Global Arms Programme where she serves as a regional programme coordinator and shares her expertise with the Latin American and Caribbean States.

*"One of my main career achievements was to design and implement Argentina's National Voluntary Surrender of Arms and Ammunition Program, through which more than 200,000 firearms were received and destroyed and forever taken out of circulation, this was achieved by raising awareness on the dangers of weapons proliferation. I am proud that this program was internationally recognized, but even prouder of the recognition it received from the families of victims of armed violence."*



**BIBI HANIFF.** San Vicente y las Granadinas

As a Forensic Technician, Bibi has contributed to armed violence reduction by creating replicas of bullets and cartridge cases in her country, which can be sent to other countries without altering the original sample, thus allowing the exchange of ballistic intelligence, both regionally and internationally.

*"Females are disproportionately affected by armed violence. Their experiences of victimization allow for a deeper understanding of ways of resolving conflict and healing the wounds to prevent reoccurrence. They provide insight into the effects of conflict and the needs of communities to ensure lasting peace."*

## VOICES OF PEACE

*Undoubtedly, the most significant peace and security accomplishment of the past decade in the Latin American and Caribbean region was the end of the more than 50-year conflict between the Colombian government and the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC-EP). The ceasefire and laying down of arms process resultant of the 2016 Peace Agreement certainly led to the most emblematic disarmament process in the region.*



Cache extraction operation, 2017. Credit: UN Mission in Colombia

It has long been said that women are national peacemakers and the lynchpins to achieving sustainable peace. Four years into the peace process, it has become more than evident that this is true. Women continue to safeguard the peace accords and oversee the reintegration process.

Women fulfilled a key role from the onset, in the negotiating rooms, pushing for the inclusion of gender perspectives determined to have women occupy roles in every step of the process. **Women were instrumental in safeguarding the ceasefire and laying down of arms process and forging the vital**

**dialogues necessary to embrace and sustain peace in Colombia.**

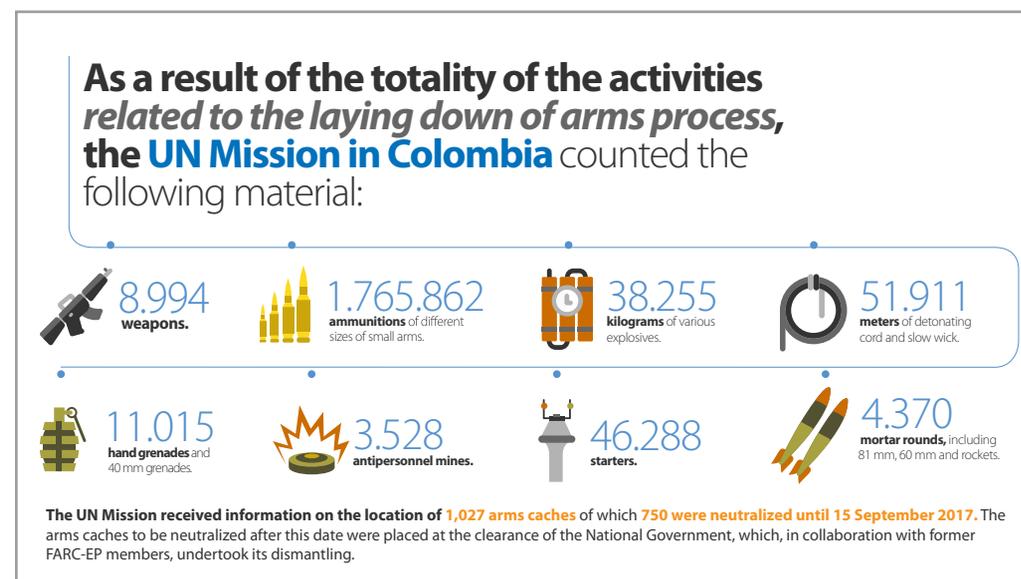
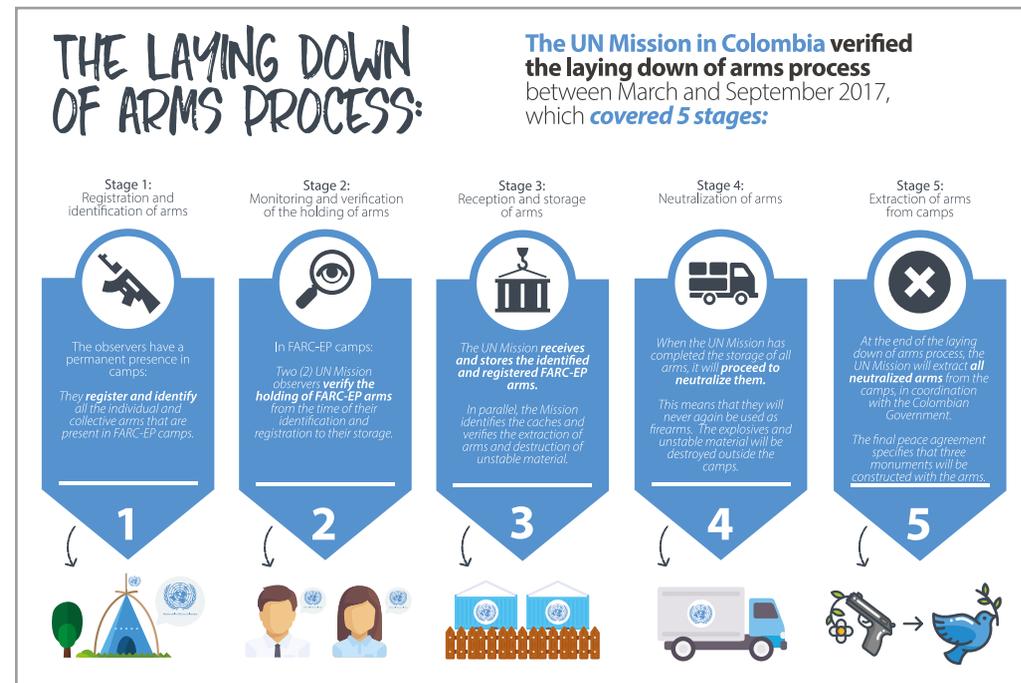
The five women presented in this section are pioneers and embody the essence of the United Nations Security Council Resolution on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325). These five women could not come from more distinct walks of life, yet they all strive to secure a peaceful future for Colombian women, men, boys and girls.

The importance of dialogue and the recognition that women have a unique voice and capacity to generate the required, yet at times, intangible

## FINAL AGREEMENT FOR ENDING THE CONFLICT AND BUILDING A STABLE AND LASTING PEACE (2016)

Peace Agreement signed between the Government of Colombia and the FARC-EP in November 2016. It includes the following points:

1. Comprehensive rural reform;
2. A democratic opportunity to peacebuilding;
3. End of the conflict - including the bilateral and definitive ceasefire and cessation of hostilities and the laying down of arms;
4. Solution to the problem of illicit drugs;
5. Agreement on the victims of the conflict; and
6. Implementation, verification and public endorsement.



confidence that come from these dialogues was a common thread in all the interviews.

Perhaps the most significant element echoed in all the interviews was the inherent support and recognition that each woman had for the role played by their female peers. The women also agree that the swift timetable established and met for the laying down of arms process was pivotal to the implementation of the peace agreement. They unanimously agreed that women played a fundamental role in its implementation and in conveying and understanding both the symbolic and very tangible value of this collective accomplishment.



Juanita Millán. Colombia

Colombian Lieutenant Commander **JUANITA MILLÁN** served as an adviser to the Office of the High Commission for Peace in Colombia between 2012 and 2020. She is currently Senior Advisor to the Support Team of the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. During the Havana negotiations, she was a member of the Technical Subcommittee Ending the Conflict, as well as the Gender Subcommittee. She also took part in the tripartite Monitoring and Verification Mechanism for the ceasefire and laying down of arms after the signature of the Peace Agreement in 2016.

Lieutenant Commander Millán recalls how at the beginning of the Peace Process, when she was with the Office of High Commission for Peace that she was one of only two women to form part of the initial designated group of advisors. Lieutenant Commander is adamant that had **women not formed part of the negotiating delegations, gender perspectives would never have been incorporated into the agreement and women would not have had an active participation in its implementation.**

She stated that “It would not have been included, not because men did not want it too, but because it never would have occurred to them that it was necessary to include it.”

**Juanita explains that the inclusion of gender perspectives into the accords, the subsequent ceasefires, the monitoring and verification mechanism, as well as the laying down of arms process were a result of the joint and coordinated efforts of women from both the FARC and the Government.** However, she recognizes that the high participation of women in the implementation of the peace accord, in particular the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (MVM) of the ceasefire, occurred naturally in the FARC, while convincing the majority of their male military colleagues about the importance of women’s participation in the MVM was a constant struggle.

She went on to explain that women represented more than 30% of the FARC-EP forces, and - in turn - of the FARC. Hence, it was only right that at least 30% of those participating in the negotiations and the implementation of the different components of the agreement include at least 30% women. Lieutenant Commander Millán recalls that it was much harder to convince the Government of this need. Even the creation of the women’s sub-

commission, of which she eventually became a member, was somewhat of an afterthought for both delegations.

All the women interviewed highlighted the importance of symbols, Juanita Millan anecdotally recalled what she characterized as “one of the most hurtful symbolic blows to women in the peace negotiations” was an article that came out in a weekly magazine headlined “Los Caballeros de la Paz” (The Gentlemen of Peace) featuring the contribution of the six leading male negotiators. She was quick to state that the recognition was well-deserved, but was also indicative of just how much women’s contribution to peace was invisible.

**DURING THE HAVANA NEGOTIATIONS, SHE WAS A MEMBER OF THE TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE ENDING THE CONFLICT, AS WELL AS THE GENDER SUBCOMMITTEE. SHE ALSO TOOK PART IN THE TRIPARTITE MONITORING AND VERIFICATION MECHANISM FOR THE CEASEFIRE AND LAYING DOWN OF ARMS FOLLOWING THE SIGNATURE OF THE PEACE AGREEMENT IN 2016.**



Liliana López. Colombia

Ms. **LILIANA LOPEZ** alias Olga Marin, a former FARC-EP combatant and member of the FARC for more than 30 years, was designated as a member of the innovative gender subcommittee in Havana and continues to be a leading female peace instigator. Ms. Olga Marin coincides with Lieutenant Commander Millán’s opinion that the successful incorporation of gender perspectives into the peace process is attributed to the actual participation of women at all stages of the process. It is the achievement of Colombian women, those of the government and of the FARC-EP.

Olga Marin goes on to state that **the success of the agreement did not come about by having gender inclusive language, but rather from the recognition by both FARC and the government that peace would never be complete if you did not take into consideration women not as a “group”, but rather as 50% of the problem, the cause, and the solution.**

She factually states that women represent 50% of humanity, “Women are not just a group, we are half of humanity and that half is heterogenous. Women are black, indigenous,



**Since 1999, only one woman from the region has chaired the Group of Governmental Experts on the UN Register of Conventional Arms in 2019.** Mariella Fogante from Argentina.

campesinas, transgender, lesbians, poor rich, young, old” and since the beginning of time, women have been grouped as one, but no, we are half of the population and our differences have been diminished, relegated, invisible and even “humiliated”. She reports that the women designated to form part of the gender subcommittee, understood this and conveyed it to the negotiating teams.

She went on to say that “It was only once the FARC and the government understood and recognized this that gender incorporation was achieved. We were allowed to speak, and were listened too, when the accords became serious, inclusive, real and - most of all - equal.” Olga considers that this is perhaps the reason why women are successful at achieving peace, because “we understand that women, representing 50%, are not all the same. It was ....women. We are not invisible.”

“IT WAS ONLY ONCE THE FARC AND THE GOVERNMENT UNDERSTOOD AND RECOGNIZED THIS THAT GENDER INCORPORATION WAS ACHIEVED. WE WERE ALLOWED TO SPEAK, AND WERE LISTENED TOO, WHEN THE ACCORDS BECAME SERIOUS, INCLUSIVE, REAL AND - MOST OF ALL - EQUAL.”

According to Olga Marin, women were also able to understand and explain the intimate relationship between the combatants and their weapons. Because Women understood this, they knew that when the FARC-EP committed to laying down their arms in less than 180 days after peace agreements were reached, peace was possible.

Olga stated that for her it was not “dramatic” when she had to give up her arms, “because I never liked them. I was indifferent to them. Although, I was a good shooter, I had accurate shooting skills. Maybe that is why I take such sharp photographs, because before the digital pictures, you had to focus on what you wanted to take a picture of... the same as when you shoot a target.” **“A lot of my male and female comrades were very attached to their weapons, it was their tool, their instrument, their livelihood, their security. This needs to be understood.”**



María Paulina García. Colombia

Ms. **MARIA PAULINA GARCIA**, a Colombian national and political officer of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (UNVMC) has dedicated her professional UN career to the construct of peace in Colombia. Maria Paulina, who now serves as the first female Special Adviser to the Special Representative of the Secretary General in Colombia, had her first approximation to the Peace Process while providing support to the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Colombia during the peace negotiations in Havana.

During that time, the UN provided discrete technical assistance upon request. Although Maria Paulina did not participate in the Gender sub-committee, she recognizes the value of this innovative structure and how, even today, it continues to influence how peace is being implemented across the country. The peace process and particularly the architecture of the ceasefire and the laying down of arms process were defined by the negotiating parties taking into account international experiences. Garcia concurs with Millán and Marin that **the agreements were reached by Colombians for Colombians and that women played an important role both within and outside the negotiations, stating that women were particularly active in disseminating the principles and values behind the peace process, particularly in the regions.**

According to Maria Paulina, it was the Colombian women who succeeded in securing buy-in and ownership over the process. They are the ones who continue to showcase exemplary commitment and to actively lead the reintegration process. The women include both those working formally within the process, as well as those contributing to peacebuilding outside of the process itself. Women were the first to speak openly and collectively about peace, women were the first to successfully convey the intentions of what had been discussed in Havana to Colombia. “Women’s groups



Delivering laying down of weapons certificates, 2017. Credit: UN Mission in Colombia

and national NGOs were the ones who brought the island negotiations to the rural communities” of Nariño, Antioquia and Meta. Numerous national- and community-level workshops were held and - through these - the message of peace was disseminated. **Women were also naturally more inclined to push their communities and towns to embrace the ex-combatants and, by doing so, they not only reduced the likelihood of violence, particularly in the 26 Transitional Village Zones of Normalization (TVZN), but also laid down the foundations for reconciliation.** This was reassuring

during the first phases of the process, and pivotal during the ceasefire and the laying down of arms.

With respect to the laying down of arms, María Paulina specifically expressed the importance this had on confidence-building in the Colombian society towards the Peace Agreement. The process of laying down arms gave the Agreement legitimacy and set in place "the necessary conditions to implement it...in its absence, progress in the more substantive aspects of the Agreement would have been difficult," she added.

Women officers within the UNVMC also played and continue to play a fundamental role in carving out and sustaining women’s contributions to the peace process. Garcia reflects upon the fact that although the UN is naturally inclined to champion the incorporation of gender perspectives into its work and - by extension - support to the peace processes, it too requires that women be included in all levels of the institutional makeup. **“To effectively enforce and embody gender perspectives, you need diversity in both participation and representation.”**

She went on to note that over the years, the UNVMC has made significant efforts to place women in senior positions at both the Headquarters in Bogota, as well as in the field, they remain the minority in the senior echelons. In contrast, women make up more than 70% of the field liaison officers. Young women professionals are team leaders in the heart of the dialogues and the action working side by side with the International Observers from all corners of the Latin American and Caribbean region liaising on a day by day basis with the community leaders, ex-combatants, public forces, local government authorities and women’s groups, among others.



Angelita Peña. República Dominicana

Lieutenant Commander **ANGELITA PEÑA** of the Dominican Republic Navy and - two tour International Observer of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.

During her first mission, Lieutenant Commander Peña was deployed to the Department of Cesar, in the northwest region of Colombia. She was designated as both gender and personnel focal point, as well as to support the laying down of arms in Cesar and in the department of Tolima, in the center of the country. Lieutenant Commander Peña was one of the only female

International Observers in these TVZN and recalls that initially her male counterparts appeared unsure if she would be able to positively contribute to this process. She

recalls that even if they were the “Senior observers” in these TVZN, rather than wait for them to assign her tasks, she took initiatives and quickly became one of the de facto camp/transitional zone managers.

She also recalls that when the ex-combatants started to arrive at the transitional zones and brought their weapons to be stored prior to their final handover, she had not yet been assigned a clear role, however she chose to mirror the actions of the FARC and insert herself into every step of the process. “The FARC always moved around in pairs, women and men, so I decided we should do the same. This motivated me to act the same way within the local TVZN, taking advantage of the functions I had to perform, always seeking to implement equality and equity and thereby reduce the initial discrimination from my colleagues

towards female personnel. **Even though it was always the men who had the greatest participation, the female presence firmly maintained their engagement, delivering very positive results for the Mission.”**

Today, Lieutenant Commander Peña is one of the 31 Women international observers from 10 countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region to have contributed to the Colombia peace process. Angelita fulfilled her lifelong dream to serve in an international political peace mission and be part of the Colombian peace process. She described with great emotion about the sealing of the last UN container carrying the laid down weapons of the Former FARC-EP combatants that left the San José de Oriente Camp to go to Bogota where the weapons would meet their final fate.



**When assessing exports, Article 7.4 of the Arms Trade Treaty (2014) requires states to consider “the risk that conventional arms (...) being used to commit or facilitate serious acts of gender-based violence or serious acts of violence against women and children.”**



Doris Salcedo. Colombia

Ms. **DORIS SALCEDO**, Colombian Artist and Sculptress converted and forever silenced the instruments of conflict into a visual reminder and symbol of peace. Sculptress Salcedo was tasked to create the Bogota-based peace monument, the erection of which was embedded into the 2016 agreement.

Doris outlines that art is long-lasting and thus can play an important role in building a stable and lasting peace. Given this, **she wanted to ensure that her work would incorporate and symbolize the voices and participation of the victims rather than celebrate the**

**actual weapons themselves. To do this, she decided that the weapons could not be seen, she did not want to glorify them, they needed to be silenced and transformed into a counter-monument. Doris wanted to convert the weapons into a symbol where disarmament was visible the voices of the victims would be heard and seen.**

Sculptress Salcedo recalls that when she was first commissioned for the project defining and agreeing on the concept of the monument was a complex, but cordial process, which in the end was accepted by all the parties to the Agreement.

She was adamant that she did not want to do this transformation on her own and solicited the help of victims of sexual violence during the conflict. She states that “the smelted weapons were hammered and transformed by women who needed to claim their voices, their bodies” into a new gallery floor.

Salcedo’s self-described anti-monument is called ‘Fragments’ and was inaugurated in December 2018, two years after the longest running conflict in Latin America and the Caribbean came to a standstill and weapons were laid down.

These remarkable women continue to work, day after day, in their quest to achieve peace. Each in their own way and from - what may appear on the surface - polar opposite perspectives are the true incarnation of resolution 65/69.

Thank you for raising your voices and enabling all of us to be heard.

## COUNTER-MONUMENT 'FRAGMENTS' (2018)

The first of the three monuments contemplated in the 2016 Peace Agreement. It is a collective work of art made from the 37 tons of weapons laid down by 13,049 ex-combatants of the FARC-EP converted into a commemoration space to celebrate art in the center of Bogotá.



## VOICES OF EXPERIENCE

AGUSTINA ÁLVAREZ VICENTE. Argentina

—  
Since 2005 Agustina has contributed to disarmament and non-proliferation as a career diplomat representing Argentina in a multitude of regional and international multilateral fora covering the entire gamut of disarmament matters. Most recently she formed part of the UN Group of Governmental Experts on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus.

*“Having access to specialized training and capacity building on these disarmament topics is fundamental given its technical nature. I also believe that the creation of networks, such as Women in Nuclear Global, that foment the interaction of women with other female professionals from different countries is vital. It unites us, empowers us and makes our work more visible and contributes to gender solidarity or sisterhood.”*



DIEDRE MILLS. Jamaica

—  
Diedre was first introduced to disarmament matters in the year 2000 when as a young diplomat she participated in the UN Disarmament Fellowship Programme. Since then, she has represented the Government of Jamaica in numerous disarmament and non-proliferation fora. As the Deputy Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the United Nations, Diedre currently serves as Jamaica’s focal point to the UN Disarmament and International Security (First) Committee. She is also one of the 9 women that serve on the 2020 UN Group of Governmental Experts on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus

*“I expect to see that women’s role in disarmament processes will be fully mainstreamed without limit to the responsibilities that they can undertake. I also expect that there will no longer be a need to make a case for women’s engagement in this field.”*



SHYRLEE LINO. Belize

As a Forensic Analyst, Shyrlee's duties include the examination and testing of firearms at the National Forensic Laboratory. The ballistics equipment, such as the Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS), allows her to examine the expended bullets and cases recovered from crime scenes to be captured in images, facilitating connections between specific firearms and crimes committed. This system greatly facilitates the intelligence work undertaken during police investigations. Shyrlee has also assisted the laboratory in the coordination of several workshops to allow the collaboration with police, crime scene investigations personnel, and legal operators to confront the growing scourge of armed violence plaguing the country.

*"Firearms-related crimes cannot be eliminated through segregated approaches. This can only be done through coordinated efforts by the police, crime scene and forensic practitioners, legal personnel and other relevant bodies in collaboration with the government. These national authorities – in partnership with countries from the region – must develop frameworks to combat illicit arms trafficking."*



ARACELLY CASANOVA. Panamá

Aracelly is a lawyer with broad experience in security issues. She is the founder of the National Committee on Criminal Statistics (CONADEC) in Panama. She has been a leading voice in the region in the mapping of organized crime, including illicit trafficking in small arms.

*"Illicit small arms trafficking makes territorial control more difficult for States."*



NATOYA BENJAMIN. Guyana

Within the Guyana Police Force, Natoya has been responsible for the training of police personnel on the use and handling of firearms. She has also been responsible for the marking of firearms in accordance with international standards and best practices. Natoya has worked in the training department of the Guyana Police Force's Technical Services Unit, which is responsible for stockpile management and training on the safe and correct use of firearms and ammunition.

*"Crime in my country is increasing every day. I am proud to be part of the plan to eliminate and decrease firearms-related crimes. The marking of weapons is a very important part of ensuring that guns can be traced, and crimes can be prosecuted."*



PATRICIA LAURA MERCEDES VÁSQUEZ.

República Dominicana

As a career public servant, Patricia has served the Ministry of Interior and Police for more than a decade where she has specialized in arms control. Her successes include contributing to the elaboration of the Firearms Control and Regulations Law (Ley No. 631-16 sobre Control y Regulación de Armas de Fuego). She also oversees many aspects of the Dominican Republic's implementation of international arms treaties, such as the UNPoA and the ATT.

*"I hope to see more women empowered, at all institutional levels. Empowered, united, recognized for their true value, capacity and ability to contribute to the disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons. Only in a world where effective arms controls are in place can we develop and prosper as humans, economically and socially, without leaving anyone behind."*

## RAISING CARIBBEAN VOICES TO SAVE LIVES

*Within Pillar 2, “Disarmament that Saves Lives”, we highlight here yet another group of phenomenal women, this time from the Caribbean Region.*

The three women presented in this section, contribute daily towards the reduction and mitigation of the impact of conventional arms. Each from their own realm of expertise. **JUDITH MOWATT** from Jamaica, for example, occupies the role of Executive Director of the Institute of Forensic Science and Legal Medicine. **MERRELYNN JOEROEJA-HASSELBANK** from Suriname is the Policy Adviser to the Minister of Defense; while **TONYA AYOW** is the Assistant Director of CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) in Trinidad and Tobago.

Their contributions to Pillar 2 of the Disarmament Agenda are all the more essential given the fact that armed violence remains disturbingly prevalent across the Caribbean region where

the average homicide rate is nearly three times the world average. **By occupying influential roles in their respective fields, these women are in a position to bring about change and save human lives thanks to the decisions and power they exert.**

The fact that these women are protagonists in their professional realms helps to fulfill the call in UNGA resolution 65/69 for “equitable representation of women in decision-making roles with regard to matters related to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control”, yet their contributions go beyond meeting a quantifiable benchmark. It is the quality, substantiveness and effectiveness of their participation that is positively influencing the disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control agenda across their region and beyond. Their daily work and the passion behind it are



Judith Mowatt. Jamaica

what make these women a living testament to the spirit behind UNGA resolution 65/69. Without a doubt, each of these women share the commonality of occupying influential positions and have had to assume the additional responsibility that comes with high-level roles, nonetheless their respective journeys are rich in uniqueness and individuality. From the island country of Jamaica, Judith began her scientific career in the private sector before delving into the field of forensics. Now, she has thirty years of forensic experience and criminal intelligence gathering under her belt. While Tonya – interested from a young age in the security field thanks to her father, a former member of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force (TTDF) – pursued her academic career in the United States and returned to the region to begin her professional career as a Project Officer at CARICOM Secretariat eventually working her way up the ranks. Whereas Merrelynn – from the coastal Caribbean state of Suriname – began her profession as a young staff member at the Bureau of International Affairs at the Ministry of Defense, deciding that this is where she would like to settle in professionally. She has been with the Ministry for more than 15 years now.

Today, each of them can feel proud about their achievements and the tangible impact they have had in making their nation a safer one. Their accomplishments are many. **Judith, for her part, took it upon herself to surpass the challenges the Jamaica forensic institute was facing in 2006 and spearheaded a plan to modernize it.** And modernize it she did. She lobbied to update equipment and upgrade her staff’s skill sets by engaging both national and international partners, so much so that her institute is now considered one of the best equipped in the region. And to top it all off, Judith made a case for her government to pass legislation in the form of the DNA Evidence Act. In passing this Act, it bestowed upon the forensic institute the legal framework

to set up the very first national DNA database. A database that is being used to solve crimes, by prosecuting offenders and exonerating the innocent. This contribution is nothing short of “monumental.” When asked about her achievements, the first words out of Judith’s mouth was to thank the women from her unit that had helped her along the way.

Meanwhile in Suriname, Merrelynn - during her tenure as Head of International Affairs - was leading her country’s involvement on issues related

to the latest addition to the arsenal of conventions, such as: The Arms Trade Treaty. Suriname ratified the Treaty in 2018 thanks, in large part, to Merrelynn’s unrelenting efforts. However, her professional energy and passion were not restricted to the confines of conventional arms; on the contrary, The Bureau of International Affairs - headed by Merrelynn - led their country’s efforts to conclude the national bill on the Chemical Weapons Convention and is currently leading the process of elaborating the implementation bill on the Biological Weapons Convention.

## CARIBBEAN FIREARMS ROADMAP

The Caribbean Firearms Roadmap is a guiding and consensual document developed and owned by CARICOM Member States and the Dominican Republic to bolster States’ efforts to prevent and combat the illicit proliferation of firearms and ammunition in the region by 2030. This will be achieved by adopting sustainable solutions, consistent with international norms and the Caribbean context, to control, eradicate, prevent and prosecute the illicit possession, proliferation and misuse of firearms and ammunition.

Prevention-based actions to reduce armed violence, including both gender and youth components, form part of the Roadmap. All four core objectives of the Caribbean Roadmap (reinforce regulatory frameworks, reduce illicit flows of firearms and ammunition, bolster law enforcement capacity, decrease the risk of firearms diversion) include key performance indicators on gender mainstreaming and women’s participation.



Merrelynn Joeroeja-Hasselbaink. Suriname

And finally, as if this weren’t enough, Merrelynn got her country back on track in terms of its obligations under the UNSCR 1540 by submitting a Voluntary National Action Plan to the UN 1540 Committee in 2019. **Today, she continues to advise the Defense Minister on how Suriname can better live up to its obligations under these treaties and thus has a pivotal role in safeguarding her country’s responses to security threats and challenges.**

Tonya considers herself fortunate to have had and continue to have the opportunity to contribute to the development of regional security. In 2007/08, Tonya worked on regional cyber security policy recognizing that it was and would become an even more palpable threat across the Caribbean. In 2016, the region adopted the CARICOM Cyber Security Action Plan. The legwork for such a regional plan had begun almost a decade earlier. Tonya continues to work with her colleagues to implement the 2013 CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy and the 2018 CARICOM Counter Terrorism Strategy among other mandates. The latter is of significant interest to her, which led her to pursue and complete a Masters Degree in Terrorism Studies.

The recently concluded week-long virtual security conference, hosted by CARICOM IMPACS, which was hailed by all as a verifiable success, was a testament to the work being done by the Agency and its many partners. **According to Tonya, it was wonderful to work with the IMPACS team to ensure that practitioners and the public alike understood the security requirements and the work being undertaken at both the national and regional levels.** Tonya humbly accepts the accolades, while at the same time praising the efforts of the bright young energetic women and men that make her job possible.

She credits her success to former female bosses and women who gained respect as civilians in the security field, including former Permanent Secretary Joan Massiah and the now Prime Minister of Barbados, the Hon. Mia Amor Mottley, who back then successfully led the region in establishing the security arrangements for the Cricket World Cup in 2007 and whose success was so indelible that the regional security architecture as it stands today is a legacy of her work during the CWC. These women, by example, taught Tonya to work hard and to always research and ensure that any piece of work be well written and thorough.



Tonya Ayow. Trinidad and Tobago

However, it wasn't always easy sailing for these women. In fact, one of the interviewees remembers attending meetings in which she was the only female in a room packed full of men. She noted the differences in treatment when her interventions were made and, in many cases, there is the added pressure of having to work harder to attain the same respect as their male counterparts.

This pressure to constantly perform above average is not uncommon among female professionals working in the male-dominated fields of security and arms control. When asked about the "why" of integrating gender perspectives into these fields, Merrelynn opined that "Not having equal women's participation in negotiations and discussions related to the international security agenda will lead to biased outcomes. Women need to be engaged in issues that have an impact on their way of living."

Tonya went on to acknowledge the fact that "agency-wide" there is nowadays much more recognition of women and what they can do and rightfully boasts that her boss, who is male, is more "sensitized about gender, ensuring gender equity, and reinforces the need for gender considerations in CARICOM security programming."

When Judith was queried as to whether or not, in her opinion, women brought something unique to the security and arms control "table", she opined that one of the most notable features she has experienced is that "as women, we are very focused. We want to get things done. We execute and we deliver." And "delivered" they have.

There is no doubt that they will continue to do so in their role as Caribbean Forces of Change, not only because they are in influential positions to promote the incorporation of gender perspectives into their work from either a technical, political or coordination standpoint, but – most importantly – because they feel it is their duty to themselves and to all the women wishing to pursue a career in disarmament and arms control. In fact, we asked them if they could impart some final "words of wisdom" to this future generation of female professionals. Their insightful and deep-felt responses ranged from Judith urging women to **"view this work as an opportunity.** An opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to their society, something that will make a real difference; and it does." To Merrelynn recommending newcomers to "try to be successful and to be the best at what you do, but also **include others in your work in order to ensure the continuation of successful security policies...** furthermore, it is good to

have an opinion, but also listen to and learn from others. There is always room for improvement and sometimes there is need for adjustment." And finally, to Tonya imploring women to "grasp opportunities, work very hard and ignore the distractions. As women, we need to support each other. Too often, we see women put down others rather than encourage them. I would like to say to the younger women...make sure you pursue your education, whatever you decide to do, do it well, and as my mother always said to me from childhood, remember that your work is a reflection of you. Do it as you would want to be seen. **Grasp opportunities to reach your potential and never let being a female be a hindrance."**

# THE PROTAGONISTS AND THEIR CHALLENGES

WITH PRIDE, OUR FORCES OF CHANGE SHARE WITH US THE MOST DIFFICULT CHALLENGES THEY HAVE SUCCESSFULLY FACED.



*“Knowing the discrimination that exists against women who decide to start a family. In other words, the security and disarmament field of work has been characterised by motivating both men and women to lead a life where there is almost no time to develop a family. In the case of women, the decision to continue working or not working in this field, where there is no room for reconciliation between career and family, means that many have to make drastic decisions, abandoning this field of work on disarmament”*

**PILAR REINA.** Colombia

—  
Project Manager, Saferworld. She has served as a researcher and advisor to the Small Arms Survey, Bonn International Center for Conversion and the UN SaferGuard Programme on ammunition management.



*“At the outset, generate the confidence needed to build a strong and lasting relationship by working with institutions that are military in nature and mostly made up of men. As a young woman working in coordination positions, I have often had to make double the effort to capture the attention of government leaders, gain recognition from work colleagues and fight for access to spaces that are often limited to me, because of the assumption that my contributions are probably not valuable enough”*

**ERLY MUÑOZ.** Venezuela

—  
Regional Coordinator of the Gender and Small Arms Project in Africa, United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC)

*“Dealing with the fact that people in positions of authority gave men (often younger than me in experience, rank and age) my work to “be reviewed” or “corrected”, or to evaluate opinions that I or other women had given on some matter. That’s when I started to realise the effect of being in teams where there is no gender parity”*

**MARÍA ANTONIETA JÁQUEZ HUACUJA**

México

—  
Diplomat, Political Coordinator at the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations in New York. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico.





*“To come to terms with the fact that it is disconcerting for men - who are counterparts in government, in the legislature, in business and in the field of security in general with whom one has to negotiate and where men make up the majority - to deal with a woman. On many occasions, we women activists encounter condescending attitudes from male decision makers. Many heard the demands for firearms control as if it were an occurrence, rather than public policy”*

**MAGDA COSS.** México

—  
Interinstitutional Relations Coordinator at the National Women’s Institute and Co-chair of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) Women’s Network.

*“As a woman, the greatest challenges came to me in my relationship with uniformed police from different countries in the region and in the public service in Argentina when they sought to promote the rational use of force and not to allow the possession of legal firearms in police homes. When we promoted the Voluntary Weapons Collection Programme on behalf of the Argentine Network for Disarmament (Red Argentina para el Desarme) we had to face the de-legitimation of our position and even some grievances for being women, young people and activists in civil society”*

**ALEJANDRA OTAMENDI.** Argentina

—  
Coordinator of the Reports and Records area of the Women’s Office of the Supreme Court of Justice of Argentina, professor and researcher at the University of Buenos Aires. She has published extensively and participated in various disarmament and arms control initiatives.



*“Having experienced situations — during negotiation processes — in which I perceived certain gender prejudices which, in turn, created additional challenges to overcome: I am a woman, I am from Latin America, from a developing country, a non-nuclear-weapon country, and perceived by some as stubborn and even foolish. Getting colleagues to respect and take my work seriously and certainly turning a deaf ear to anything that might affect my professional goals required a lot of effort and patience”*

**MÓNICA BOLAÑOZ PÉREZ.** Guatemala

—  
Diplomat, current Guatemalan Ambassador to Morocco. For 15 years, she worked at the Permanent Mission of Guatemala to the United Nations in New York, where, for most of the period, she served as a delegate to the Disarmament and International Security Committee.

*“Because this field is male dominated, it is difficult to prevent a lot of people from looking through me when I am presented as an armourer or firearms examiner, since they were naturally expecting a man. I sometimes have a hard time getting their attention to cooperate. So many challenges manifest in those interactions. My skill and professionalism eventually win them over, but wow! What a climb!”*

**TARA CHARLES.** Trinidad y Tobago

—  
Police Armourer.



## PILAR III

# DISARMAMENT

# FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS



*Pillar 3, “Disarmament for Future Generations”, aims to assist States to set in place the building blocks to address and mitigate new and emerging threats.*

It calls on the international disarmament machinery to prepare and adjust to these new and evolving security risks and the paradoxical impact that scientific and technological advances have on world order. The field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control is not immune to their impact.

The rapid advances in science and information technology have forever changed the human landscape. It has changed the way we live and the way in which the international community safeguards peace and security and deters conflict. Throughout the Latin American and Caribbean region, science and technology have fomented development, enabling States to modernize their governments and globalize their economies, which - in turn – contributes to stabilizing States and the region. In addition to facilitating globalization, the rapid growth of information technology has also changed the way diplomacy is conducted. It has united us in our quest to achieve peace and banded us together in our vulnerabilities. Yet, technological developments are also contributing to increased risks, such as introducing a complex layer to warfare, enabling us to fight wars 100 miles away from where the orders are given and followed.

With these new risks, comes the need to develop new sets of international norms and protocols, including enhanced accountability and adherence to emerging norms in

cyberspace. And while scientific advances have allowed us to be more readily able to detect and prevent biological and chemical warfare, it has also enabled criminal networks to launch more sophisticated attacks. Hence, we must remain vigilant of new and emerging weapon technologies that could imperil the security of future generations. And the women of our region – as you will see - have already stood up to the plate to ensure that we, as humans, maintain control over the use of force and not let potentially perilous automation control us.

IT CALLS ON THE INTERNATIONAL DISARMAMENT MACHINERY TO PREPARE AND ADJUST TO THESE NEW AND EVOLVING SECURITY RISKS AND THE PARADOXICAL IMPACT THAT SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES HAVE ON WORLD ORDER.



Campaign to stop killer robots, 2019. Credit: United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA)

## RESPONSIBLE INNOVATION AND APPLICATION OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES

*The scientific and technological advances that humanity has witnessed in the last century have accelerated exponentially, resulting in a critical need to involve different actors in the discussion and thus promote their responsible use. These actors include those involved in the development of new technologies, scientific advances and innovation, and those responsible for their national and international regulation.*

With this need in mind, embodied ever since the world's population heard about the discovery of atomic energy through the tragic news of the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, the Disarmament Agenda established as one of its lines of action, "to engage and work with scientists, engineers and industry to encourage responsible innovation of science and technology, to ensure its application for peaceful purposes, as well as the responsible dissemination of knowledge."

The role played by the scientific, engineering and industrial community

is key to international peace and disarmament. The contributions of this community include raising awareness about the humanitarian impact and consequences that any type of innovation, new technologies and scientific advances can have, as well as generating approaches and techniques to safeguard and verify that chemical, biological or nuclear activities are not used for warlike or unethical purposes. Finally, these communities have served to investigate allegations of the use of prohibited weapons and ensure compliance with arms control and disarmament obligations.

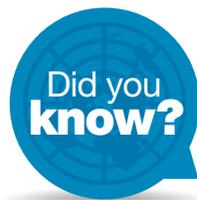
In this hard work, Latin American women scientists have made deep inroads. Throughout this section, we would like to share the experience of young scientists from the region who represent the new Latin American generations convinced of the need to recognise diversity and equity in societies, as well as the capacity and the inalienable right of people to become what they have always dreamed of being.

**Through their work, they are helping to reduce the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction and the risks inherent in the development of new technologies and innovations.**

Both young women scientists, one in mid-career and one in the early stages, have profiles that combine “hard science” with “social science”,

thus reinforcing their holistic view of public challenges on the development of innovation, new technologies and scientific advances. They also agree on the prevailing need for the world of politics and science to come together to try to speak the same language, in order to establish lines of action, identify risks and thus form a common front to promote the responsible use of new technologies, scientific advances and innovation.

It goes even further. They agree on their commitment to generate bridges for exchanging knowledge not only between these seemingly separate worlds, but also to establish links with other sectors of the population, since, in the end, humanity as a whole will benefit or suffer from the impact of new technologies, scientific advances and innovations.



**Currently, 10 out of 25 members of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security are women.**

**CLARISSA RÍOS ROJAS** is currently a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Centre for the Study of Existential Risk at the University of Cambridge in the UK. With a PhD in Molecular Biology and experience in science diplomacy, she has provided government scientific advice in her country, Peru, and in Europe.



Clarissa Ríos Rojas. Peru

Clarissa recalled that she had a particular interest in the development of her skills in the scientific world from a very young age, when in the midst of books at home she came across one on embryonic development. That “window into the unknown”, that first childhood memory, has served as a thread for the development of her professional career, she told us.

Clarissa shared that currently, she forms part of a team of researchers from the Centre for the Study of Existential Risk who analyse and evaluate global catastrophic risks that could endanger the existence of humanity and the environment. These events could be a pandemic that can be created in a laboratory, a virus that could be used as a biological weapon or the inappropriate use of artificial intelligence, she said. The analyses and assessments developed by the team are aimed at developing innovative public policy solutions to prevent disastrous risks, including a boost to biosecurity.

In this context, Clarissa indicated that **as part of the work carried out by scientists and political decision makers, it is important to ask how quickly public policies are being adapted to scientific and technological advances, that is, if they go together or if one advances more quickly than the other.** With a simple example related to new business in human genomics, Clarissa put on the table the ambivalent nature of new technologies and scientific advances if their uses are not regulated. Today, there are companies in charge, for example, of sequencing the DNA of people who pay for it, “Some will give you your genealogy; they will be able to test

you for the 20 most common hereditary diseases; they will be able to identify whether a pregnant woman will have a baby with a specific disease.” However, it is also necessary to question what happens to that genetic information once the general public “hands it over”? What happens to that data if the company is hacked for some reason? Can a biological weapon be made from that information? These questions are key to political action and anticipation of associated risks.

Clarissa added that progress has been so rapid that there has been an overlap of technologies and scientific advances. For example, artificial intelligence combined with molecular biology, which can be seen in the faster development of medicines, or artificial intelligence combined with machine learning and nanotechnology to create vaccines. **“These technologies are already together, working in tandem to generate solutions. The development of new technologies is great in a scientific sense and can**

**be beneficial to society, however problems can arise when there are unethical practices and no regulations vis-à-vis their use, thus resulting in excellent technologies – with enormous potential – being used in a dual manner.”**

Given this scenario, Clarissa insisted on the need to include all the global catastrophic risks of new technologies in the international agenda in order to prepare for the future. In her opinion, the role of the scientific community would be to see the problems from a transdisciplinary perspective, exchanging knowledge with other sectors of the population, and questioning whether the research being carried out will lead to the solution of a global or local problem.

Clarissa stressed the role of education in promoting citizens’ interest in scientific issues and thus also involving them in these matters of public interest. Clarissa believes that there is a pressing need to enhance the school curriculum at primary and secondary levels so

**“THERE IS A LOT OF PROFESSIONAL TALENT IN LATIN AMERICA THAT CAN CONTRIBUTE TO INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS FOR DISARMAMENT, NON-PROLIFERATION AND ARMS CONTROL.”**

that from childhood there is interest in and knowledge about scientific foundations, such as the scientific method. These foundations eventually generate a conscious citizenship that pushes public agendas and political actions to ensure the peaceful use of new technologies, scientific advances and innovations. She also mentioned the essential role that the media plays in making these issues and the associated risks accessible to the general public. Finally, she added that it is also key for the scientific community to establish two-way rather than one-way communication, and dialogue with other actors, in order to build together. In short, a global and holistic vision is needed to find solutions and take action.

For Clarissa, it is essential for women to participate in these issues, and to bring geographic diversity to the table. **“There is a lot of professional talent in Latin America that can**

**contribute to international efforts for disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. We simply need to be part of the conversation and have doors open to us to demonstrate our ideas and work.”**

In order to have truly inclusive relationships, as well as conversations that take into account the entire population, women’s participation in these issues is necessary, she added. How to bring them to the table? Generating references of women, examples to follow that inspire new generations, making it possible for them to dream “since you cannot become something that you cannot dream of she mentioned.” Education is also key, for example, to establish school curricula that include gender issues and help break down stereotypes. Finally, she mentioned government policies as a key factor in promoting women’s participation in these issues.



**A total of 994 women out of 1185 people (84%) have completed the Course on Cyber Diplomacy developed by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA).** This course is based on the assessments and recommendations of the reports of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Cybersecurity. The course promotes a greater understanding of the use of information and communication technologies and their implications for international security.

**GIOVANNA FERRIANI M. PONTES** is a young biochemist of Brazilian origin who has just completed a science policy internship with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). With all the energy of the new generations, she studied biochemistry and combined this academic experience with a Master of Science degree in Science and Technology Policy.

Giovanna participated in the first “Engaging Young Scientists from the Global South in Biosecurity Diplomacy” workshop organised by the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit and the United Nations Office for Disarmament in 2019 and has been selected for the “Emerging Leaders in Biosecurity” 2021 Fellowship Program of the John Hopkins Center for Health Security. This centre’s mission is to protect people’s health in the face of epidemics and disasters and to ensure that communities are resilient in the face of such challenges.

Giovanna coincides with Clarissa in the way they became interested in science, from home and at a very early age. Coming from a family belonging to the medical and research community, she grew up in the midst of conversations about new discoveries, new technologies and stories about situations her relatives experienced in the laboratory. From an early age she was involved in research games, “extracting DNA from a strawberry” for example, which later led her to study biochemistry. In this journey she always found herself in spaces where there were women involved in the subject, from women scientists in her family and in work teams, which she believes is a sign that considerable progress has been made in the inclusion of women in these areas.

Sharing her experience in the OPCW, Giovanna mentioned that as part of this internship she served as a “translator” on chemistry concepts included in the Chemical Weapons Convention in order to make technical information more accessible and approachable to people who do not necessarily have specialised knowledge in these topics and



Giovanna Ferriani M. Pontes. Brazil

who need to make decisions based on scientific arguments. For example, together with diplomatic staff, Giovanna explored how biological concepts of life processes underpin the definition of “toxic chemicals.” All toxic chemicals and their precursors, except where used for purposes permitted by the Chemical Weapons Convention in quantities consistent with the purpose in question, are chemical weapons.

She considers this experience an achievement, having helped technical experts and public policy makers to establish fruitful discussions on scientific issues relevant to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Giovanna mentioned that a great lesson learned from this experience was that, **if we want to promote responsible technological and scientific innovation, the involvement of the scientific community and the social science community is extremely important.** She believes that it is key to promote spaces that allow these two spheres to exchange knowledge and debate.

As a young scientist, she believes that today there is a group of young professionals, scientists, interested in promoting interdisciplinary dialogue, raising awareness about these issues, and points out that she finds it extremely

## GLOBAL SOUTH BIOSECURITY NETWORKS

This is a project implemented by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and funded by the European Union to support the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention (in force since 1975).

The project aims to provide training opportunities to young people from the scientific and academic community in the Global South who are engaged in areas related to the Biological Weapons Convention.

As part of this project, two workshops on biosecurity are being held to bring together young people from the scientific community of the Global South to expose them to concepts of multilateral disarmament negotiations and facilitate their collaboration with diplomats and high-level experts in the field.

interesting that these exchanges take place through new communication technologies. Beyond the traditional forms of communication, such as the dialogues established around a table, they use social networks to make scientific information more accessible, to explain the existing challenges, why they are important and why young people need to be involved.

From her perspective, new generations of young people are more likely to accept diversity, inclusion and equality. Giovanna believes that it is precisely in the traditional environment of the natural and social sciences that **we should begin to think of new ways of incorporating new perspectives, fresh ideas that perhaps come from young people who have not had much professional experience, but who are indeed curious and courageous to push for transformations.**

Thus, for Giovanna, diversity — of age, gender, ethnicity and religion — and its inclusion is key to push the disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control agenda. “Diverse teams are often more innovative and effective at solving problems, so integrating different perspectives is crucial if we are to understand the complex security challenges and resolve the challenges we face.”



Giovanna Ferriani M. Pontes during her internship in the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), 2019

## VOICES OF EXPERIENCE



**WANDA MUÑOZ.** México

Wanda is an international consultant with experience in inclusion, assistance to survivors of violence and humanitarian disarmament. She is currently focusing her efforts on the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots by carrying out advocacy and awareness-raising activities at the national, regional and international levels, focussing on the disproportionate impact that autonomous weapons would have in Latin American contexts, and on historically marginalised populations, such as women, indigenous peoples, people of African descent, people with disabilities and the LGBTI+ population. Wanda was recently nominated by Mexico to join the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence with a view to advocating for the responsible use of artificial intelligence that contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals with an inclusive, gender and human rights perspective, taking into consideration the priorities of the Global South.

*“The issue of autonomous weapons may sound like something distant in time and space, but it is not. Several countries are seeking to develop weapons that would choose their target themselves and whether or not to attack it. In addition to ethical and legal objections, these weapons should be banned, because they would have a disproportionate impact on historically marginalised populations and on countries in the Global South, which themselves suffer the most serious consequences of the use of all types of weapons today. Humanity does not need autonomous weapons. We need greater investment in health, education and social protection and for developments in artificial intelligence to focus on human welfare — where it can make great contributions — and not on another way of destroying human life and security.”*



**HAZEL VILLALOBOS.** Costa Rica

Hazel is the Technical Manager and Researcher at the Foundation for Peace and Democracy (Fundación para la Paz y la Democracia - FUNPADEM) in Costa Rica, from where she has managed several projects and research studies on citizen security and armed violence prevention. Recently, her line of research includes small arms and light weapons and technological innovation, such as the production of weapon parts with 4D and 5D printers, the use of drones for the illicit transportation of weapons and the use of artificial intelligence. Hazel is part of the International Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, which seeks to fully ban autonomous weapons and thereby retain human control over the use of force.

*“Technological innovation applied to the production, transfer and transport of weapons has advanced by leaps and bounds in recent decades. However, regulation, institutional capacity building and prevention have undergone a slower process. In addition, the fields of public security and technology have typically been dominated by men, requiring women to become more involved in these areas by visualising the risks, threats and impacts of technological development on weapons systems.”*



**MARÍA PAZ CANALES.** Chile

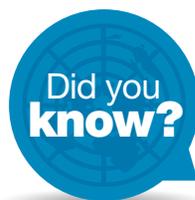
Maria Paz Canales is a lawyer and human rights activist in the digital environment. Her work has been related to the development and use of new technologies, and global and local regulations in cybersecurity. She is currently the Executive Director of the organisation Derechos Digitales (Digital Rights), which aims to develop, defend and promote human rights in the digital environment.

*“I believe it is relevant to raise digital security issues as a central part of cybersecurity strategies, moving discussions away from exclusive notions of cyber defence. As technology increasingly plays a central role in people’s daily lives, if it is not possible to ensure the safe participation of women and non-binary people in the digital space, the possibility for these groups to benefit from the potential of technology is diminished, and they are again marginalised and excluded, as has traditionally been the case in physical spaces. Maintaining the space for participation and communication of groups of women, girls and non-binary people normally impacted double-fold by armed conflict is essential to dismantle networks of fear and repression, and to ensure that the groups that are most vulnerable to conflict are heard and assisted internationally.”*

## DISARMING CYBER THREATS

*It is fair to say that the internet has become symbiotic to virtually all aspects of government, commercial and even inter-personal interaction. The electronic highway has forever changed the landscape of how we communicate, learn, govern and prosper.*

Cybersecurity presents us with two sides of the same coin: where there is opportunity, there is risk. The exponential growth of this technology has reshaped international relations, as well as international threats and crimes. In these unprecedented COVID-19 times when our co-dependency on cyber-technology has become more evident, our vulnerability to cyber-threats has also increased.



**Currently, the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE) of the Organization of American States (OAS) – which covers cybersecurity among other issues - is led by a woman.** Alison August Treppel assumed the role of Executive Secretary in December 2016 to date, making her the longest serving Executive Secretary in its 18-year existence.



Kerry-Ann Barrett. Jamaica

Cyberdiplomacy was introduced to the United Nations roughly 15 years ago in response to emerging international security threats. Since then, experts have carefully studied and crafted international laws, developed and proposed a series of protocols, norms and rules to prevent, mitigate cyber-attacks.

**Recognizing the importance of cybersecurity to world order, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs facilitated a series of Group of Governmental Expert Meetings on Threats**

**to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)** during which UN Member States were tasked with studying and expanding opportunities for international cooperation, assistance and confidence building measures.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, it is the Organization of American States, through its Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE) that has led regional efforts to assist and guide States in adopting measures to prevent and diminish the threats posed by cyber-attacks. At the forefront of these hemispheric efforts is Mrs. Kerry-Ann Barrett, a Jamaican national, who currently supports the implementation of the OAS Cyber Security Programme.

**KERRY-ANN BARRETT**, an attorney-at-law by profession, first entered this field as member of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago (GoTT) national cybersecurity working group. She recalls that her entry was somewhat accidental, as she was working on the legal framework for the Ministry of Trade and Industry Single Electronic Window (SEW) project for the GoTT and was nominated to this working group to represent the Ministry. She believes that it was her input into the SEW Project that led to her designation to the taskforce. Nevertheless, she quickly became fascinated with the topic of cybersecurity

and has since dedicated her professional career to the matter.

She is now proud to be one of the leading voices in the region and hopes that she can serve as role model to other young professionals interested in information and communication technology. She recognizes that the ICT sector workforce is predominantly male, and as a matter of fact, in Latin America and the Caribbean, approximately 8% of the ICT work force is female. Likewise, the security field to combat international crime and counter terrorism is also gender imbalanced. She attributes this mainly to an issue of accessibility and awareness of the subject. "Women are not drawn to this field, because they are often unaware of it."

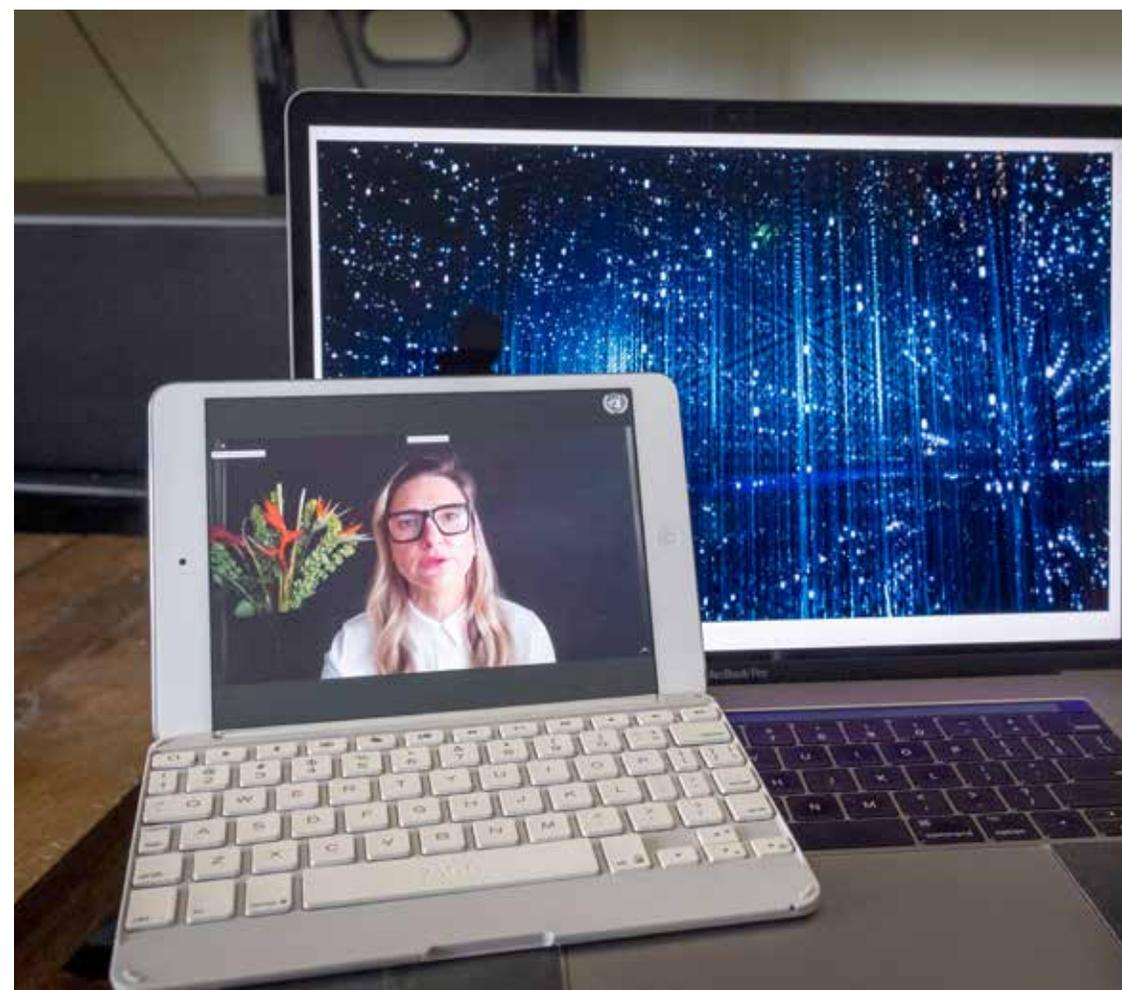
Kerry-Ann believes that cyberdiplomacy is an excellent vehicle to attract more women to this emerging security theme. Women - in many instances - are already sitting at the diplomatic tables and it is incumbent upon them - and the

Ministries they represent - to increase outreach to young professional women to stimulate their interest and to engage them on the international security aspects of their portfolios.

Kerry-Ann also highlighted the importance of promoting fellowship programmes and specifically targeting women to join. As a part of her OAS portfolio, she supported the identification of female delegates from the Latin American and Caribbean Region to be considered as fellows for the Women in International Security and Cyberspace Fellowship, a programme administered in partnership with the Government of Canada. The fellowship focused on providing training to female professionals and diplomats representing their countries geared towards ensuring inclusion and diversity within cyber policy, recognizing the need to build representation by women in the United Nations and within UN processes to promote international peace and security in cyberspace.

**SHE IS NOW PROUD TO BE ONE OF THE LEADING VOICES IN THE REGION AND HOPES THAT SHE CAN SERVE AS ROLE MODEL TO OTHER YOUNG PROFESSIONALS INTERESTED IN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY.**

**Kerry-Ann also highlighted the important role the private sector plays in cybersecurity and how private-public partnership is vital to safeguarding cyberspace.** Kerry-Ann highlighted that the OAS Cyberwomen Challenge, an initiative administered in collaboration with Trend Micro, serves as a great example of private-public partnerships whereby training opportunities are provided to women to take part in real life cybersecurity simulations and promote the entry of women into this field.



Kate O'Sullivan, General Manager of Digital Diplomacy at Microsoft, speaks during the launch of the Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation on the theme "Dialogue on implementation of the Roadmap: The Way Forward: Key Areas III and IV". Credit: UN Photo/Loey Felipe

Kerry-Ann repeatedly stressed the importance of not only getting women into the conference rooms, but also getting them to speak up. When women speak up, they bring their own perspective to the issue, be it gender-based or cultural. “When I speak, I am always a Caribbean woman and I am always representing those in the wider region who may not have this opportunity. Women cannot

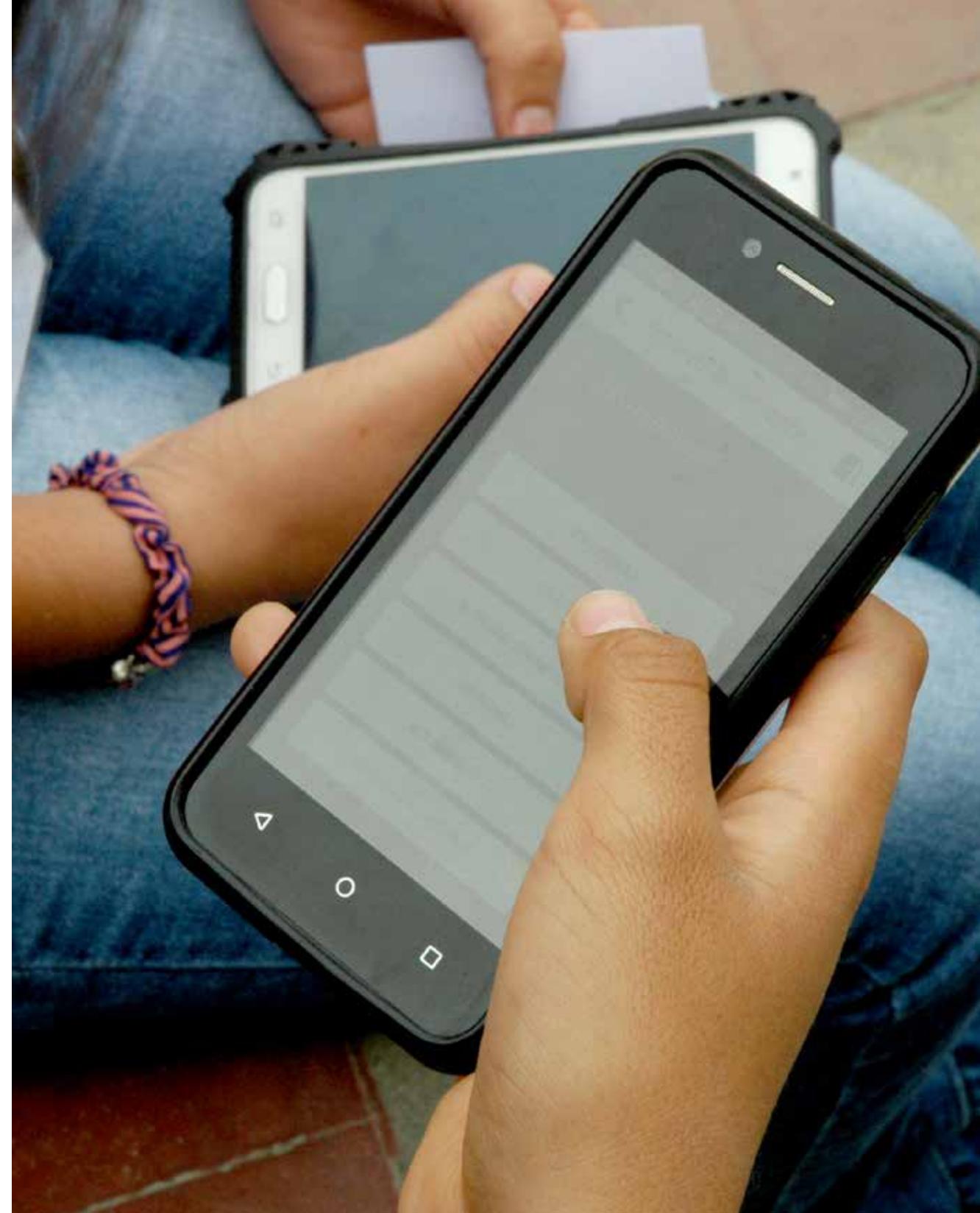
only be a face at the table, we need to be a voice, we need access to the room and we need to be given the opportunity to be fully equipped to take part meaningfully in the dialogue.” UNLIREC believes that the principle authors of UN resolution 65/69 - who also happen to be Caribbean Women - had this in mind and would full heartedly agree with Mrs. Barrett.

## CYBERDIPLOMACY

The United Nations Group of Governmental Experts work to deal with Information and Communications Technology (ICT) threats in the context of international security. Since 2004, five UN Groups of Governmental Experts (GGEs) have made assessments and recommendations on how to deal with the threats posed by the use of ICTs in the context of international security. Three GGEs agreed on substantive reports with conclusions and recommendations that were welcomed by all United Nations Member States. The GGEs have undertaken five pillars of work:

- Existing and emerging threats
- International Law
- Norms, rules and principles
- Confidence-building measures
- International cooperation and assistance in capacity-building

Based on the assessments and recommendations of the GGE reports, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs has developed an online training course on cyberdiplomacy to encourage greater understanding of the use of ICTs and its implications for international security.



Cybersecurity makes reference to the procedures and tools that are implemented to protect the information that is generated and processed through computers, servers, mobile devices, and others.

# THE PROTAGONIST WHO INSPIRES US

**VIRGINIA GAMBA, ARGENTINIAN AND THE CURRENT SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT, IS ONE OF THE LATIN AMERICAN WOMEN WHO HAS HELD ONE OF THE HIGHEST POSITIONS IN THE FIELD OF DISARMAMENT AT THE MULTILATERAL LEVEL.**

Virginia shared her thoughts with us on some of the roles that she has played throughout her career, and which have formed part of international disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control efforts.

Virginia served as Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and Director of the Office for Disarmament Affairs (ODA) from 2012 to 2015, sharing an office with the then United Nations Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Angela Kane of Germany. For the first time in history, the highest multilateral disarmament body was led by two women during this period. **This duo combined Angela Kane's "in-depth knowledge of the United Nations" and robust political**



Virginia Gamba. Argentina

**management, with Virginia Gamba's technical expertise in disarmament issues.** This was an essential element that stood out during her term of office and was reflected in the role these two women played at the political level, exerting influence and breaking down stereotypes.

Thus Virginia accompanied ODA with her expertise in a number of developments in disarmament during her administration, such as promoting an initial rapprochement between North and South Korea when there was not much political space for dialogue and the issue of disarmament served as a channel for promoting it. Among the most significant achievements of this period are the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (2013), the Nuclear Agreement with Iran or Joint Comprehensive Action Plan (2015), the reactivation of the international initiatives that would later lead to the negotiations of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (2017), and the UNODA-led investigation on the first use of chemical weapons in Syria leading to the total destruction of the chemical weapons arsenal in Syria (2013/2014). Another issue promoted by ODA leadership during this period was to emphasise and strengthen cyber security as a space for dialogue to prevent threats to international stability, an extremely important issue.

Later, Virginia served as the first Head of the Joint Investigative Mechanism of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations from 2015 to April 2017, which gave her a critical role in developing innovative international disarmament efforts in the field of weapons of mass destruction, one of the pillars of the UN Secretary-General's recent Disarmament Agenda, Pillar 1 **Disarmament to Save Humanity.**

Virginia described her time in the Joint Research Mechanism as a unique experience with a particular independent character. As an entirely political mechanism, mandated by the United Nations Security Council, it reported directly to this body.<sup>8</sup> Virginia told us that leading this Mechanism meant facing financial, technical, investigative, logistical and, of course, political challenges, one of the most significant being the challenge of investigating during an ongoing conflict and the maintenance of impartiality and

<sup>8</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2235 (2015) See: [https://undocs.org/es/S/RES/2235\(2015\)](https://undocs.org/es/S/RES/2235(2015))

objectivity despite all pressures to the contrary. Having formed a team that worked independently and fulfilled its mandate, is one of her achievements to be highlighted.

As someone who has experienced the evolution of multilateral disarmament, Virginia also drew attention to biological weapons and biological threats of all types, mentioning the vulnerability of humanity to any such effects, and the ease with which the world could be paralysed by a biological problem. Hence, this is an issue that should be taken seriously as now we can see through the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Virginia has also been at the forefront of conventional disarmament, reflected in Pillar 2, **Disarmament to Save Lives**, of the Disarmament Agenda. One of the most significant achievements in her career was the achievement of the Africa Union Common Position for the non-proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons in Africa. This took place between 2007 and 2009 within the framework of the African Common Approach to Combat Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms. In this regard, Virginia recalled some **essential elements that influenced engagement in this**

**process, such as the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa and the process of democratisation and the election of Nelson Mandela as president of that country.** For her, Mandela's pivotal role as a leader in Africa drove regional integration and, "with his moral influence", promoted disarmament and prioritised the issue of arms proliferation in the region. Virginia recalled that Mandela often talked about the need to develop and sustain South Africa's "moral leadership on issues surrounding arms control and disarmament."

This work led to the establishment of regional action plans and action — such as legally binding protocols — to combat the illicit trade in SALW in Africa and to strengthen international cooperation in the region and with other regions in the world. Virginia shared with us that it was a process that "started from the bottom up, with a lot of consultation" with civil society, experts, law enforcers, the judiciary, governments and even victims of armed violence. "What was very important is that national dialogues were developed," she said, consultations that started at the community level and then moved on to the national level, then to the sub-regional levels until reaching the continental regional level. Each

sub-region was very empowered on the issue and fully understood how illegal arms trafficking affected their territory. According to Virginia, this positioning or appropriation of the issue eventually came to the United Nations in the form of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, the political commitment par excellence on the subject that the States approved in 2001.

After reviewing her vast experience of over 30 years working on these issues, we could not leave out Virginia's views on the future of disarmament, which are included in pillar 3 of the Disarmament Agenda, **Disarmament for Future Generations**. In this respect, Virginia shared with us her thoughts on the challenges posed by new technologies or existing technologies. For her, cybersecurity is an issue that is growing in strength, not only in Latin America and the Caribbean, but also in other regions. This ranges from identity theft, fraud and to the spread of ideology of extremely violent groups, an issue of great concern, because it is related to the militarisation of social communication. **Virginia also highlighted as a major concern in this field the militarisation of existing technologies, technologies that were created for peaceful uses that have begun to have military use**, and which "have become real threats to the peace and security of the population", such as unmanned aerial vehicles, better known as drones. In this sense, she pointed out that "it is very important to be able to legislate clearly on its use."

Finally, Virginia made an appeal on the use of two types of weapons: sonic weapons and non-lethal public demonstration control systems. Regarding the former, which were used during the Cold War to "immobilise or confuse the enemy", she said she had observed that they were returning, something the international community should refuse due to their immoral nature. With regard to non-lethal control systems of public demonstrators, she expressed her concern about the militarisation of this non-lethal

AS SOMEONE WHO HAS EXPERIENCED THE EVOLUTION OF MULTILATERAL DISARMAMENT, VIRGINIA ALSO DREW ATTENTION TO BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS AND BIOLOGICAL THREATS OF ALL TYPES.

equipment in public demonstrations, which includes tear gas and rubber bullets, among other devices. Virginia makes us reflect on how tear gas designed for the battlefield has begun to be used in public demonstration contexts.

States are not the only actors involved in disarmament efforts. In Virginia's view, **academics or the "intellectual**

**power of the nation", civil society and legislators are the three fundamental axes that must accompany states in promoting disarmament. Strengthening Partnerships for Disarmament** is precisely the fourth pillar of the UN Secretary-General's Disarmament Agenda. In relation to civil society, in Virginia's opinion, it is very important to encourage networking among NGOs, work with faith-based



Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, visits Mali, 2019. Credit: UN Photo/Harandane Dicko

groups, advocate at the community level and partner with community and other leaders. She also highlighted as important allies the social and news media, religious groups and private companies, which can establish codes of conduct and promote their social responsibility.

Ten years after the adoption of UN General Assembly Resolution 65/69 on Women, Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Arms Control, Virginia highlighted the critical role that women have played in disarmament issues around the world. In particular, during her time at ODA, she noted the great professionalism and expertise of women in Latin America and the Caribbean, both as representatives of civil society who were doing essential work in raising public awareness, and as academics trained in the field who were acting as advisers. Virginia also noted the important work of Latin American women legislators, mainly South Americans, who had a genuine interest in disarmament and promoted international initiatives in this area. Virginia noted that women first started to work directly in the field of defense, peace, security and disarmament in Latin America when democracy took hold of national processes.

Recalling her experience in Africa, Virginia pointed out that she had the opportunity to work intensively at the community level, and mentioned that women, especially middle-aged women in rural areas, were key allies in promoting disarmament, motivated by avoiding violence in their communities. This process of democratisation in Africa led to many women joining the police and the armed forces, with a "very great deal of interest in playing a leading role in this discourse" and spreading the messages. Again, democracy seems to be the single greatest empowerment for women wishing to work in peace and security issues.

Virginia is convinced that democratic **processes have been fundamental in opening spaces and promoting the participation of women in various aspects of defence and security decision making, disarmament included, and in public life in general.** For her, it is equally important to break down gender stereotypes and foster mutual respect — particularly from early education — as essential elements in driving the necessary changes and promoting the equal participation of men and women in the field of defense, peace, security and disarmament.

PILAR IV

STRENGTHENING  
PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR  
DISARMAMENT



*Disarmament initiatives have proven to be more successful when they involve partnerships between different actors, such as governments, civil society, the private sector and independent experts.*

As the United Nations disarmament objectives have become more diverse, there is a pressing need for closer links between the wide range of actors — existing and emerging — that are involved in one way or another in the various processes of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

The disarmament architecture requires revitalisation to adapt to the new international realities and this requires joining efforts to ensure the full and equal participation of different actors. Strengthening partnerships for disarmament must occur at all levels, from multilateral fora to local initiatives that impact ordinary citizens. By listening to the voices of civil society, drawing on the experience of the private sector and benefiting from the knowledge of academia, traditional disarmament actors not only bring these issues closer to their communities, but democratise the debates and empower and invite future generations to take an interest. The Disarmament Agenda reaffirms the need to mobilise public interest at all levels, thus, strengthening partnerships for disarmament becomes a *sine qua non*.

## EDUCATION FOR DISARMAMENT

*Mónica Bouyssede, an Argentinean educator, is the vice-president of the Alfredo Marcenac Civil Association (Asociación Civil Alfredo Marcenac) and a member of the Argentinean Network for Disarmament (Red Argentina para el Desarme), a group of civil society organisations working on the prevention of armed violence.*

Her commitment to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control began in 2006 when her son, Alfredo, was killed with a firearm on the street. From that moment on, she and her family began a tireless struggle to demand justice, greater controls on arms permits and, above all, promote a cultural transformation based on education for peace. In this interview, Monica shared her experience, perspective and reflections with UNLIREC on the role of education for disarmament and a culture for peace.

It is important to note that Monica is a teacher. She has a degree in sociology and has been dedicated to teaching for 25 years, especially to teacher training

and as a member of pedagogical and social support teams. She defined herself as “passionate about education.” She understands that school is an “environment for human coexistence” from its inception, a very important space for socialisation, since not only theoretical content is taught, “but also a way of living.” **She sees education as a strategy to produce cultural transformations, since, through pedagogy, more peaceful modes of connection can be promoted.** In that regard, Monica shared with us that “the problem of firearms was not only an individual problem, but a collective problem, a social, cultural, violent model that wiped out not only my son’s life, but also the lives of many people



Mónica Bouyssede. Argentina

discussing the differences and seeking alternatives. The idea of peace is quite abstract for children; that is why, in the educational proposals, we associate it with the idea of caring for the other, not only as an ethical perspective, but as a concrete form of bonding with the other,” said Monica.

Along these lines, she explained that **including the subject of disarmament in schools “necessarily raises the question of modifying collective behaviour that is strongly linked to violence.”** In this regard, Monica emphasised that it is about violence at different levels: direct violence, cultural violence and structural violence, “fundamentally, the violence of a patriarchal macho culture, where gender differences and inequalities meant that historically, women would not have participated or would have participated very laterally in the decisions that are made socially to resolve conflicts, to decide on policies, to educate, to produce ways of living collectively.”

In relation to women’s participation in these issues, Monica shared with us that she has always been struck by the fact that in the awareness-raising and educational tasks they have carried out, “women adhered to disarmament spontaneously and in greater numbers than men.” She also added that, in Argentina, only 2% of firearms applications are made by women, while many women are victims of weapons in domestic violence situations. Following that analysis, she maintained that there is a **“strong correlation**

and also condemns us to live in a violent world, in a violent, macho society. Education for disarmament and peaceful conflict management can help change this violent social model.”

Both she and the interdisciplinary team of teachers with whom she developed the “Disarmament and Peacebuilding Awareness Education Programme” inform us that it is an educational proposal that promotes a culture of peace in the school environment and that peace is approached in a critical sense. “We do not avoid conflicts, we try to transform them, by analysing and

**between the use of firearms and violence in conflict resolution, with gender issues”** and concluded that in this field “the voice of women is rarely heard, but they have much to contribute in this regard.

For Monica, it is not only a question of achieving greater participation by women, but also of incorporating the gender perspective into the approach and understanding of the problem. In this regard, Monica explained that the use of weapons is always associated with basic social violence, which shows the inability of individuals, groups and institutions to deal with the conflicts that arise in interpersonal relationships and in the community. This violent culture was, in turn, built and consolidated historically from male domination criteria that are still reproduced today and justify the use of force to

## SOME OF THE ACTIONS CARRIED OUT BY THE ALFREDO MARCENAC CIVIL ASSOCIATION

“Educational Programme for Disarmament and Peacebuilding” (2007) in Beginner, Primary and Secondary schools, managed publicly and privately. The programme reached about 2,000 students from the city of Necochea and the Province of Buenos Aires. Also, 730 teachers were trained in Education for Peace.

“Exchange of war toys”

“Street Congresses for Peace” (2012 to 2015) events held in public spaces in which the primary and secondary-level teachers and students of Necochea participated. About 700 children and young people gathered at these events.

“Higher Diploma in Education for Peace and Approaching Social Conflict” which is taught at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the National University of Central Buenos Aires (Universidad Nacional del Centro de la Provincia de Buenos Aires), Quequen campus.

manage conflict. Monica is convinced that in order to make progress in the non-proliferation of weapons, it is necessary to distort their use and expose the domination criteria that legitimise them. And in this respect, she referred again to the perspective of “care for the other” provided by feminist currents. For this educator, “paying attention to the needs of others and the environment in which we live, feeling responsible for them and allowing ourselves to care”, are constituent aspects of care practices that can take shape both in interpersonal relationships and in public policies.

In short, for Monica, **“disarmament and care for others are concepts and practices that can be reflected upon and learned in school socialisation from a gender perspective, offering peaceful alternatives based on dialogue and consensus, to manage conflicts.”**

With regard to the challenges involved in the Disarmament and Peacebuilding Education Programme (started in 2006), Monica mentioned that, “the firearms issue had never been addressed in educational settings, so we had to generate learning resources to be able to adapt it to the different educational levels.” This, in turn, involved training teachers in the subject. As for the strategies used, Monica highlighted the socio-affective method and the use of artistic languages, especially

**FOR MONICA, IT IS NOT ONLY A QUESTION OF ACHIEVING GREATER PARTICIPATION BY WOMEN, BUT ALSO OF INCORPORATING THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE INTO THE APPROACH AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEM.**

in places of high social vulnerability. She explained that the use of art allowed children and young people to express their aggressions, violence, pain or feelings in a different way and as a consequence, the links within the classroom were modified. She also explained that an argument based on statistical data is not enough to change a behaviour or attitude. For that [to happen], “there must also be that emotional involvement and we achieve that with artistic languages.”

Another important issue she mentioned was articulation with other community actors and the role of young people as active subjects. Monica exemplified this with an experience in which they took students to a radio station for them to talk about the work they had done in the school as part of the Disarmament Programme. She explained that this had a multiplying effect in the community; it

was placed in public opinion and generated debate. “The children also felt that they were active citizens in a reality in which they too had a say in how they wanted to live.”

The context was also favourable, since the development and implementation of the association’s educational programme took place simultaneously with the “National Programme for the Voluntary Surrender of Firearms” (Programa Nacional de Entrega Voluntaria de Armas de Fuego) launched by the national government at the end of 2006, and in which the Argentine Network for Disarmament (Red Argentina para el Desarme) participated actively in both the design and the implementation, above all, in giving talks to raise awareness about disarmament and the issue of firearms in different cities of the country.



Exchange of war toys

Monica stressed that her greatest achievement is placed on the subject of disarmament as educational content to be covered in schools. Through the Disarmament Education Programme, “a problem that is apparently external to school, such as the use of weapons, has been introduced, but it has to do with much of what we learn and reproduce in school as a form of violent behaviour and the use of force.” In the same vein, she maintains that **“analysing, arguing and debating this problem in the classroom is an appropriate and necessary strategy, not only to reduce the loss of human life in the present, but also to generate future modes of coexistence that prevent the violation of rights and influence the causes of armed violence.”**

In terms of lessons learned, Monica highlighted the formation of interdisciplinary working groups and breaking with the entrenched logic of individual work in the education system as a positive. “This is a remnant from this way of understanding education precisely from this violent perspective. We live in an individualistic society, so it is violent, it is individualistic, hardly cooperative, it is competitive. Thus, cooperative and consensual work, and shared discussion are methodological tools that have to be implemented in teacher training along with the content that we are going to work on,” she said.

On the other hand, Monica pointed out the importance of coordinating with the universities. “We are now in a university space as well. We have a training course called the “Diploma in Education for Peace and Dealing with Social Conflict”, aimed at teachers and multiple actors in community life, representatives of social organisations, civil servants, councillors. That is also education, education not only in school, but in other community spaces,” she said.

With this extensive background behind her, Monica was optimistic that there is an increasing possibility of discussing these issues with decision makers in Argentina. She added that they are working on partnerships at the municipal and provincial levels for teacher training and insisted that we must work on two tracks, both at the level of public officials in the education sector and at the local level with the institutions dedicated to teacher training “because I think we have to do the work from the top down and also from the bottom up.”

She also highlighted the possibility opened up by the new Ministry of Women, Gender and Diversity, which has shown interest in addressing the issue of firearms in violence against women and which offers a gender and different perspective on conflict management. At the same time, she pointed out that the work carried out by the “Disarmament

Education Programme” should be articulated with the “Comprehensive Sex Education Programme” in her country to introduce the subject of disarmament from a gender perspective. In order to make these issues a reality for the public, Monica invited the formation of women’s networks and groups in the local community to raise awareness about deaths caused by firearms among young people and associated with gender-based violence.

As a recommendation, Monica called for the promotion of spaces for the discussion and exchange of good practices on disarmament education at the regional level. This can be done through meetings of officials from different countries, but above all, meetings of those who are linked to teacher training and who have the capacity to make decisions in this area. She also recommends encouraging the production of texts that are aimed precisely at making peaceful conflict resolution visible, incorporating disarmament and also rejecting or modifying the ways in

which certain content is addressed. For example, “History is always taught from a perspective that is also violent; wars and conflicts resolved with the use of force are learned; the history of transformation processes that were built by peaceful means or stories that recognise the role of women in these transformation processes do not appear in the curriculum.” In this respect, Monica believes that approaching the educational advisors of school textbook publishers to spark their interest in including teaching materials that address “education for peace” can be a strategy that will bear fruit.

Finally, as a specialist in social guidance in the educational area, Monica never tires of promoting training in “Disarmament and Culture of Peace” issues at all levels: for practising teachers, students in teacher training, managers and university students, as all of them will later reproduce these practices in schools. She concludes, **“Education is the tool to produce transformations.”**



**Five Latin American countries have civil society participating in their National Commissions for Small Arms Control.**



Youth volunteering for peacebuilding and disarmament: youth measuring security in their communities through participatory indicators. Trujillo, Peru. Credit: UNLIREC

## VOICES OF EXPERIENCE



**ELVIRA CUADRA LIRA.** Nicaragua

—  
Elvira is a sociologist specialising in conflict analysis, security studies and peacebuilding in Nicaragua and Central America. She pioneered the study of peace processes in Nicaragua during the 1990s, the analysis of rural conflicts and the importance of firearms control for the prevention of violence in peacetime. Through her work, she has contributed to a better understanding of

post-war conflicts in Nicaragua and Central America, promoted the promulgation of legal norms and public policies for the prevention of violence, as well as frank and open dialogue between state institutions and social actors. She is currently an Associate Researcher at the Institute for Strategic Studies and Public Policy (Instituto de Estudios Estratégicos y Políticas Públicas - IEEP), a leading think tank on security studies in Nicaragua and Central America, where she promotes violence prevention and peacebuilding actions.

*“The great challenge of security in Central America is the establishment of systems and policies that respond to both global and specific threats, without undermining human rights or endangering the region’s recent democracies.”*

**CARINA SOLMIRANO.** Argentina

—  
Carina is the Coordinator of the Arms Trade Treaty Monitor at Control Arms. She has also served as coordinator of the Arsenal Management Programme of the Ministry of Security of Argentina; senior researcher for the Military Expenditure and Arms Production Programme of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI); and researcher in arms control for the Association for Public Policy (Asociación para Políticas Públicas (APP) in Argentina).



*“It seems to me that one of the ways in which women can assume major roles in these issues is by generating working and publicity networks, joining new ones and participating in existing initiatives in the region. For women in the diplomatic and political world, I suggest they get involved in the committees that deal with disarmament and arms control issues in the ministries of foreign affairs, ministries of security and defence and parliamentary committees . . . I hope to see new generations of women engaged in these issues. Just as when I started out encouraged by a woman, my role today is to support all women who want to participate.”*

**MARÍA JOSÉ GARCETE.** Paraguay

—  
Action Manager in Amnesty International Paraguay. She led several popular campaigns to prevent the carrying and possession of firearms, such as, “Celebrate Football...Not Guns!”, “Control Arms”, “Having a gun in your house does not protect your family, it puts them in the spotlight” and “Guns are not a game”, among others. She succeeded in getting the “Control Arms Campaign Support Declaration” passed in Parliament.



*“Reducing the proliferation of firearms in society is indispensable for building a safer society.”*

## THE ROLE OF THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY IN ARMS CONTROL POLICIES

*Carla Álvarez Velasco, Ecuadorian professor and researcher, spoke with UNLIREC about her professional experience in the field of arms control from an academic perspective.*

Carla, who currently works for the Institute of Advanced National Studies, a postgraduate university in Ecuador, has carried out research, several publications and presentations on the impacts of armed violence and arms control policies in her country, including her doctoral thesis on the process of small arms securitisation on Ecuador's agenda.

Carla shared how she made her way in this field. At the beginning of her career, not only were there very few women engaged in disarmament and arms control research, but this was an area that few civilians (men and women) studied. In fact, it was concentrated in the police and military, "almost completely closed to the outside world." One of

the questions Carla asked herself at the beginning of her career as a researcher was, "How would the impacts of armed violence or arms proliferation be visible in Ecuadorian society if greater links between civil society and women were not promoted?" For Carla, this "inbreeding in the handling of issues", convenient for some, definitely had to be rethought

"It was a difficult road, because it was lonely; because I did not have a community of experts to consult, I had to resort to experts from other countries," Carla said. However, the goal was to disseminate results and to put on the table the suffering of Ecuadorian society due to this problem, which is invisible to many decision makers. Carla told us that



Carla Álvarez Velasco. Ecuador

she proposed to carry out research projects to obtain resources, present papers, open discussion panels, go to radio stations, and so, little by little, she generated a space that allowed more people to become interested in the subject. "I am still in this active campaign of putting the issue on the table, because I think there is a lot to be said, a lot to be researched and a lot more to be done. That's my battle."

Carla explains that although there are very good profiles of women researchers in some countries in the region, the participation of women in the academic field dedicated to the study of arms control is still modest and it would be risky to speak of the

existence of a community of women experts. "Precisely, because of this vacuum, it is so important to provide spaces for meetings, discussions, debates, research and publications, so that this community can strengthen and flourish."

According to Carla, the processes of sharing and obtaining consensus on research findings often attract more attention from civil society than from politicians or decision makers who sometimes prefer to remain on the side lines. In this regard, the dissemination of research results has mainly served to raise awareness among the population, which - in turn - could demand more action from its political representatives.

For this researcher, **academics has played a fundamental role in raising society's awareness about the impacts of firearms proliferation.** The accumulation of research and subsequent discussions and debates have made realities that were previously unknown in Ecuador and in various countries visible, and "which, until the 1990s, had gone almost unnoticed." In some countries, this research raised the awareness of decision makers, which succeeded in influencing debates in international organisations to endorse the Programme of Action and the Firearms Protocol. In fact, the then United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said - at the time - that small

arms could be considered as “weapons of mass destruction”, because they were the ones that were killing thousands of people in the world, silently.

This is how the Academy, with its studies, field research and reflections, put the problem of arms proliferation, as well as the absence of control measures on the table. This, added to the interest and openness of some decision makers, generated a positive alliance between expert knowledge and decision-making capacity, which enabled the first steps to be taken and, in an appropriate context, results to be generated.

Carla illustrated the importance of generating evidence-based data with some of her research findings. One of them was to investigate non-lethal injuries with firearms in Ecuador (2018-2019). **This research was very enriching, because it showed an unknown face of non-lethal armed violence.** For example, non-lethal firearm victims are not registered in most public health systems, making it impossible to determine how many people have been shot in a society, an essential indicator of armed violence. A public policy that includes an adequate system of registration and classification of firearm injuries would not only make it possible to obtain statistical data, but also serve as a basis for the adequate allocation of budgets for their treatment, taking into account that non-lethal armed violence generates high public health costs. This research also showed that crime in Ecuador is armed and quite aggressive, as there are people who were shot for stealing a mobile phone and were unable to work for life, which has economic and psychological repercussions on their social and family environments.

Carla’s research also found that many of these gunshot wounds were self-inflicted injuries from unintentional shootings. According to Carla, this happens a lot in the countryside, where most homes have long weapons for hunting pigeons and for personal defence. This information serves, for example, to raise awareness of the institutions responsible for the adequate handling and protection of these weapons. Finally, another of the study’s findings was the impunity of gender-based violence with firearms. Carla tells us that it was very painful to understand, through the victims’ testimonies, how many women were deliberately attacked by their partners, in many cases with the intention of committing femicide. Sadly, the attackers were never convicted of attempted femicide. In Carla’s view, this not only indicates that justice does not operate adequately to address gender-based violence, but that **the circumstances and impacts of armed violence on men and women are different and that a differentiated analysis,** in other words, applying a gender perspective, is required.

## AROUND 15 CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS FROM LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, WORKING IN THE ARMS CONTROL FIELD, ARE PART OF THE INTERNATIONAL ACTION NETWORK ON SMALL ARMS (IANSA). MOST OF THOSE ORGANIZATIONS ARE LED BY WOMEN.

To name a few:

- Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress (Costa Rica)
- Institute of Education for Sustainable Development, IEPADES (Guatemala)
- Women’s Institute for Alternative Development, WINAD (Trinidad and Tobago)
- Caribbean Women Honors and Empowerment (Trinidad and Tobago)
- The Violence Prevention Alliance (Jamaica)
- Kingston and St. Andrew Action Forum (Jamaica)
- Sou da Paz Institut (Brazil)
- Foundation Studies for the Application of Law (El Salvador)
- Public Policies Association, APP (Argentina)

For Carla, the most important result of this research has been to make the social group of gunshot wound survivors visible. They have not received any attention from the State in terms of health, justice, reparation or restoration of their pre-accident conditions.

Today, Carla feels that there is significant merit in having created a space dedicated to the study of arms control policies and armed violence in a country where academic debate on these issues is still in its early stages, where there is little information available and where women's participation is still very limited. Carla shared that, after some effort, she managed to make some of the results of her research visible and to present it to public opinion and decision makers, thus putting these issues up for discussion on the Ecuadorian media agenda. While significant progress has been made, much remains to be done and women are still under-represented, says Carla.

"There is still much to be researched and studied, there are many relationships that remain hidden and - in many cases - the information available is outdated or non-existent." As a researcher, Carla recommends promoting **the formation of an epistemic community that**

**works on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control issues from a gender perspective;** in other words, a network of professionals with recognised experience and expertise, who, due to their specialised knowledge, have sufficient legitimacy to make policy recommendations in these fields.

Just as it is essential to produce knowledge and strengthen the scientific community in the region on these issues, Carla believes that **bridges must also be built between the academic community and other sectors of society**, not only with those who are responsible for deciding on public policy. "There is a need to disseminate data and generate awareness in society in general, forming opinions, writing columns in a newspaper, debating. We must prevent this academic knowledge from remaining in expert circles. We must open this bubble and communicate the knowledge and results in a language that is accessible to the general population. It is necessary to stir up the hornet's nest a little, to put the subject on the table, to create emotions, to generate initial perceptions so that there is a connection with the subject and more decisions are made and more is done about it."

To conclude, Carla calls for greater financial investment to develop these fields of knowledge. "The reality is that no one succeeds in doing research on their own." That is why research grants are key: scholarship funds for undergraduate and post-graduate students; research scholarships and grants for university teachers; publication spaces for the promotion of scientific results; funding for the production of short films, for example, on the consequences of armed violence. In Carla's opinion, these are some of the examples of support that can produce results, and which must be sustained over time. **In this way, we can encourage the production of knowledge, promote its circulation in society and raise social awareness about these issues that affect us all.**

"THERE IS A NEED TO DISSEMINATE DATA AND GENERATE AWARENESS IN SOCIETY IN GENERAL, FORMING OPINIONS, WRITING COLUMNS IN A NEWSPAPER, DEBATING. WE MUST PREVENT THIS ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE FROM REMAINING IN EXPERT CIRCLES. WE MUST OPEN THIS BUBBLE AND COMMUNICATE THE KNOWLEDGE AND RESULTS IN A LANGUAGE THAT IS ACCESSIBLE TO THE GENERAL POPULATION."

## VOICES OF EXPERIENCE

**MARÍA PÍA DEVOTO.** Argentina

—  
María Pia is the Director of the Association for Public Policy in Argentina and the Director of the Human Security Network in Latin America and the Caribbean (Seguridad Humana en América Latina y el Caribe - SEHLAC). Since 2002, she has been working on international security, disarmament, arms control and gender issues at the national level with the Argentine Disarmament Network (Red Argentina para el Desarme - RAD); at the regional level with the Latin American Coalition for the Prevention of Armed Violence (Coalición Latinoamericana para la Prevención de la Violencia Armada (CLAVE) and SEHLAC; and at the international level with various initiatives, such as the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), Control Arms, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines-Cluster Munition Coalition (ICBL-CMC), the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots and the International Network against Explosive Weapons ( INEW).

*“Although the field of arms is notoriously masculine, activism is dominated by women. It is women who are at the forefront of mobilisations, campaigns, and activism.”*

**FOLADE MUTOTA.** Trinidad and Tobago

—  
Folade is the Founder and Executive Director of the Women’s Institute for Alternative Development (WINAD). As an activist leader, she began the creation of a regional NGO platform to collaborate in arms control initiatives, research on related issues, and advocate in the countries of the Caribbean Community. Through her work at WINAD, the Caribbean Coalition for the Development and Reduction of Armed Violence (CDRAV) emerged. Folade has been one of the leading Caribbean civil society supporters for the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty.

*“My mission is to work for the development of a society that reflects the creative genius of all its peoples.”*



**CAROLINA DE MATTOS RICARDO.**  
Brazil

—  
Carolina is the Executive Director of the Peace Institute (Instituto Sou da Paz), a non-governmental organisation focused on public policies for security and violence prevention. Since 2012, she has been active as a researcher and activist in Brazilian civil society on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control issues.

*“There are many women experts on the subject in the region. The creativity and initiative of women in the region contribute to the existence of very concrete practices to contribute to arms control. The effort to collect data and information on the subject, carry out research, implement pilot projects in partnership with governments, and innovative communication strategies are examples of the empowerment of women in the region . . . Women’s empowerment and the participation of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control will increase at the international and regional levels. In addition, spaces like these contribute to women perceiving that they are not alone in their countries and that they can be supported in this field.”*

**LUCÍA DAMMERT.** Peru / Chile

—  
Lucia has a PhD in Political Science and is a professor at the University of Santiago de Chile. She is part of the United Nations Secretary-General’s Advisory Council on Disarmament Issues for the 2017-2020 period, and is the only representative from Latin America. She has been a consultant for various regional and multilateral organisations (OAS), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), among others.

*“I am in favour of quotas and positive discrimination initiatives. There is an urgent need for Ministries of Defence and Ministries of International Relations, as well as other related areas of government, to increase the recruitment of women. In order to do so, it is essential to promote the support of young researchers with scholarships to study and jumpstart their careers. Mentoring and strengthening networks of experts seem to me to be important tasks.”*



## PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

*One of the most successful alliances for disarmament is undoubtedly the participation of civil society in its various manifestations: advocating with decision-makers, carrying out community work, conducting research, raising awareness of society and public officials, and often clearing a path and putting issues on the agenda.*

The Northern Triangle of Central America — comprised of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador — unfortunately has one of the highest rates of armed violence in the region and lives with the impacts and costs of firearms proliferation on a daily basis. As a result, these countries have a robust and organised civil society that has been active for many years in contributing to the reduction of these violent dynamics. UNLIREC spoke with three Central American women who are representatives of civil society: Carmen Rosa de Leon from Guatemala, Leyla Diaz from Honduras, and Dina Martinez from El Salvador.

Each of these women, through their respective organisations, have worked together at various times through the Central American Network for Peacebuilding and Human Security (Red Centroamericana para la Construcción de la Paz y la Seguridad Humana - REDCEPAZ), a space for exchange and collaboration in the sub-region for the articulation of efforts on security issues. Aware that the problem of arms trafficking does not respond solely to a national logic, but that it is a transnational phenomenon, REDCEPAZ has focused its work on arms and ammunition control and on



Carmen Rosa de León Escribano. Guatemala

the prevention of armed violence since its inception in 2002.

**CARMEN ROSA DE LEÓN ESCRIBANO**, a Guatemalan anthropologist, sociologist and activist, shared her vast experience in social and political advocacy on issues of citizen security and in particular, arms control. Since 1997, Carmen Rosa has been the Executive Director of the Education for Sustainable Development Institute (Instituto de Enseñanza para el Desarrollo Sostenible - IEPADES), a civil society organisation dedicated to promoting peacebuilding and democracy after the signing of the Peace Accords that ended the armed conflict in Guatemala in 1994.

Carmen Rosa shared with us how the role of Guatemalan civil society has evolved over the years. After the signing of the Peace Accords, her work led to the monitoring of all issues related to violence prevention and the strengthening of arms control, the generation of a culture of peace through work with children and youth, and the strengthening of institutional capacities in the security and justice sectors to combat firearms proliferation. “This has led us to develop permanent campaigns to raise awareness about the non-proliferation of weapons, as well as to try to separate the macho culture from the use of firearms. For us, it has been fundamental to have information to document the arguments, evidence-based research, as well as a multidisciplinary team with expertise and knowledge,” says Carmen Rosa.

The research-related work has been a very interesting and enriching path, because as some topics have been addressed, other closely linked issues have appeared along the way. For example, Carmen Rosa shares IEPADES’ involvement in the discussion

and formulation of the then new Arms and Ammunition Law (2009), “We really started with the arms law, and we saw everything that was related to it: the weapon is a thread that takes you to all the problems of citizen security, private security, organised crime and gender violence.”

Although civil society operates under a different logic from that of the authorities, this does not mean that these two sectors should always be at odds. On the contrary, building bridges between non-governmental organisations and state institutions is essential to achieve results that benefit society as a whole. “Activism for the sake of activism is not enough; reclaiming the issue of violence is not enough. **You have to have something to give to the institutions; you have to have proposals; you have to have expertise and you have to have experience, because it is the only thing that lets you in, in some cases.** If you don’t have anything to offer, if you don’t know more than the public officials, advocacy alone doesn’t work,” says Carmen Rosa.

This is how IEPADES began a process of strategic alliances with state institutions. Many meetings were held with authorities, with public officials from the different ministries to facilitate the exchange of experiences, and training was provided to the security and justice sectors on different topics. “We became

a training and capacity-building body. We reached a point where we were sometimes asked by the institutions themselves to establish the inter-institutional panels to avoid jealousy between entities.” Carmen Rosa states that this type of alliance has been very beneficial, since, in this way, they have become a technical assistance resource for the state. “The most important thing is having the resources to do things at an institutional level, so that you become indispensable to a public institution.” This has allowed them - as civil society - to build a relationship of trust and to maintain dialogue independently of changes within the bodies. “Perhaps it



Campaign in Guatemala

is difficult to enter into the institutional processes, but once you are inside, you are already there. Even if the heads change, you are still a resource for that institution and its training unit.”

Today, IEPADES is recognised as a go-to institution on matters of citizen security and arms control, not only in Guatemala, but also in Central America. Thanks to its impact, important achievements can be highlighted, such as Guatemala’s accession to important international instruments, such as the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacture of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials (CIFTA) in 2003 and the Arms Trade Treaty in 2016.



Leyla Elisa Díaz López. Honduras

We also spoke with **LEYLA ELISA DÍAZ LÓPEZ**, Honduran consultant and activist, who has been involved in disarmament and arms control issues for several years in different areas ranging from social monitoring, political advocacy to research and academic training, and campaign development. Leyla defines her trajectory as “a personal conviction and commitment that has transcended the professional and institutional spheres.”

Leyla told us how in the middle of the year 2000 - in Honduras - there was very little organised civil society working on specific security issues, especially few women who were openly and publicly engaged in them, as there was still a perception that these were exclusive or mostly male domains within the uniformed institutions. “In this context, and adding the youth factor, these were naturally aspects that worked against each other. Therefore, the question for me and even for my family was whether this was a world where I would really survive as a young woman. At the beginning, it wasn’t easy, but as the months and years went by all of that was left behind.”

For Leyla, as for her Central American colleagues, civil society (organised, independent, trade union, academic) is a fundamental pillar for the advancement of issues, since governments often assume and incorporate into their agenda the issues that this sector places on the table. In her opinion, **civil society should not only act as a watchdog or social auditor, which calls for transparency and accountability, but should go further in its strategies**, conducting research that allows for facts and reliable actions to obtain evidence and strengthen ties with other relevant groups to propose and achieve actions for change.

These advocacy spaces have not been open naturally. It has been a slow process of paving the way and gaining trust with the different sectors. One of Leyla's advocacy strategies was to study, get to know and recognise the other actors involved in the dialogue, "Recognise who they were, what their interests were. A map of actors from

the most visible to the most invisible to know where the issue was moving, since it was not the most convenient to get into a field where we did not know who all the actors were and the interests that converged. This action gave us enough light to be able to better develop our advocacy work."

As an example, Leyla referred to the reform process of the Law on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Related Materials, which began as a document generated by civil society with different experts from different areas of expertise. For this purpose, a multidisciplinary team was created that included diverse organisations with actions in the field of human rights, children, women, the LGBTQ population, epidemiologists, doctors, academics, statesmen and even relatives of victims of armed violence. This allowed for different perspectives and a comprehensive approach to a very important legal reform process for Honduras.



**A number of international disarmament treaties were the result of civil society and women-led campaigns such as the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), the Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC), the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and the Control Arms Campaign.**

It was a process that lasted a decade, "Ten years of those comings and goings. At some points we decided not to push it any further, because the political environment was quite complex. We also knew that - in arms control - there were not only those who wanted better controls, but also other actors with different interests. When the media were in our favour, we turned to them, especially at strategic times. At other times, we

kept our distance," Leyla recalled. In the end, a project was achieved that materialised into a law that came into force in 2019 and which provides for many of the aspects originally raised by Honduran civil society.



Dina Martínez. El Salvador

Lastly, **DINA MARTÍNEZ**, Salvadoran community worker, spoke about the implementation of projects on citizen security, violence prevention, gender and disarmament. Dina is the coordinator of the legal security unit of the Foundation for the Study of the Application of the Law (Fundación de Estudios para la Aplicación del Derecho - FESPAD), a civil society organisation in El Salvador that works for human rights, citizen security and transparency in state institutions. FESPAD has been working for more than 15 years on

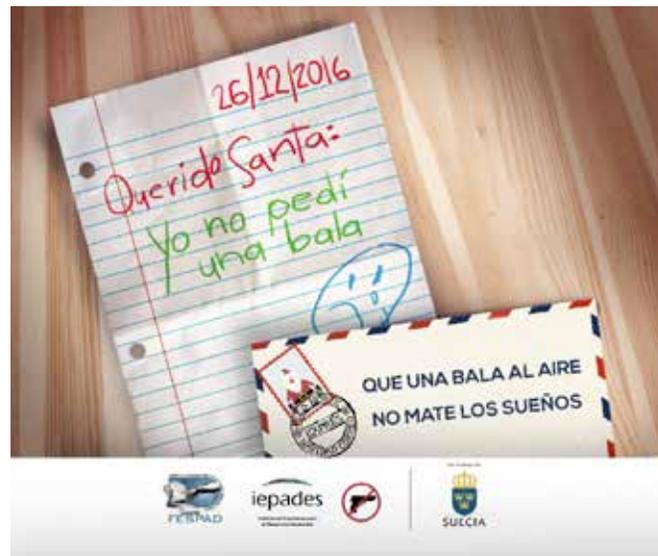
the issue of arms control in El Salvador through different strategic pillars, such as research, advocacy, training and institutional strengthening.

Dina believes that women's work on security issues, and especially on disarmament and arms control, has long been invisible. "When I started my work, I realised that in the meetings I attended, discussions and opinions were given primarily by men. The issue of arms is an issue that was almost always linked to men and that made it very difficult for women to play a role," Dina said. "We have seen how these paradigms are shifting over time and have managed to open up some spaces," she added.

As a premise, Dina stressed the fact that, “It is believed that weapons only impact issues of citizen security. However, we see that they also impact development, they impact health, and they violate rights.” Therefore, her organisation has carried out research related to the impact of firearms in different areas, for example, the impact on vulnerable groups, such as women, children and people with disabilities, among others. For Dina, in a country with high rates of armed violence and in which arms control issues are politicised — especially during election periods — strategies that make it possible to have an impact definitely involve alliances with different sectors and actors. **Civil society’s role in dialogue must be maintained with both the authorities and the general population.**

One of the experiences Dina shared was a project on the prevention and non-proliferation of firearms in schools between 2008 and 2010. This was a pilot project in which schools were identified in areas considered to be high risk. “This led us, on the one hand, to generate a strategy to be able to get into our schools, because the issue is not as easy as going to tell young people, “Look, don’t use weapons, because weapons generate violence and you are not violent.” We had to generate a strategy in line with the target audience. In that sense, it was very positive to work with the National Civilian Police.”

“This is how a series of experiential workshops were generated in which we spoke to boys and girls,” said Dina. “They shared their experiences, whether they were for or against weapons, but they were also made aware of the impact of weapons. We created a series of training and information materials to work on in the workshops. We visited several schools and it was really beautiful, because - in the end - we had a painting competition. The children were excited to present their drawings at the end of the



Campaign in El Salvador

competition. As this is community work, we involve parents and teachers and the police with whom we work together in a well-coordinated manner.” Dina highlighted the comprehensiveness of the project by bringing together educational, didactic and recreational components to generate a culture of peace in their communities.

At the end of the interview, these three women shared a final reflection with us.

For Carmen Rosa, it is significant to highlight the fact that, within IEPADES, the knowledge of the issues in which they work is in the hands of women. “Nowadays, it is not unusual to attend meetings to discuss safety issues and find that all the participants are women. If we women end up dominating many of the security issues, it is also because these issues affect us,” she stressed.

For her part, Leyla invited those interested in working from civil society on these issues to train constantly and to become more professional in order to

obtain better tools and gain credibility with public institutions and other non-state sectors. She also suggested not limiting oneself to acting during specific junctures or when funds are available. “This work goes beyond a specific period. We did not always have funds. It is not only with funds that we work on these issues. Work is done on these issues from other feelings and thoughts, that is, from awareness and commitment.”

Finally, Dina called for an end to the stigma and discrimination that women have suffered throughout history in the spaces where these issues are discussed - originally made up only of men - and to continue opening up spaces for dialogue that allow women’s proposals to be incorporated. **“We have a lot to contribute to improve arms control measures, to incorporate legislative reforms, to prevent armed violence and to promote a culture of peace, and we do so with a gender perspective. We must continue to build broad and pluralistic spaces for dialogue,”** she concluded.

**IF WE WOMEN END UP DOMINATING MANY OF THE SECURITY ISSUES, IT IS ALSO BECAUSE THESE ISSUES AFFECT US.**

## VOICES OF EXPERIENCE



**ANA YANCY ESPINOZA QUIRÓS.**  
Costa Rica

—  
Ana Yancy is the Academic Director of the Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress. For more than 20 years she has been working on disarmament issues, promoting scientific research on the illicit trade in small arms and armed violence, as well as national, sub-regional and regional initiatives for peace and security.

*“There is a tendency to make policy proposals based on citizen security and crime, when the reality of many women does not correspond to that vision. So it is important to integrate a gender perspective in order to be in a better position to address the causes and reduce the consequences. Also, the measures would have to be different and require an educational component.”*



**KATHERINE AGUIRRE TOBÓN.**  
Colombia

—  
Katherine is an economist with experience in the areas of violence and development. She leads the Amassuru Network bringing together Women in Security and Defence in Latin America and the Caribbean. She has worked at the Conflict Analysis Resource Centre (Centro de Recursos para el Análisis de Conflictos - CERAC) and Ideas for Peace Foundation (Fundación Ideas para la Paz - FIP) in Colombia and at the Small Arms Survey in Switzerland.

*“Considering gender as a central part of the arms control debate opens up unexplored opportunities that can enhance this struggle. Gender-sensitive prevention allows for a differentiated approach to victims and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration processes . . . It is necessary to change the narratives that have prevailed and that have proven to be ineffective. Only with women active, participating, speaking out and making public policy, can real sustainable strategies for violence reduction and arms control be achieved.”*



**RUT DIAMINT.** Argentina

—  
Rut is a professor at the Torcuato di Tella University (Universidad Torcuato di Tella) and a researcher at the National Scientific and Technical Research Council (Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas) of Argentina. Since 1989, she has worked on defence policy, disarmament and international security issues. From 2015 to 2018, she was a member of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters and the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR).

*“Women’s participation incorporates views and trends that are different from those contributed by men. We are not enticed by weapons, but by the implications of the use of weapons . . . Little by little, the participation and expertise of women has intensified. I believe that this is a process with no turning back. In any case, women will have to fight for the places automatically occupied by men. Networks are an interesting way to empower ourselves and share information and events.”*



**ANNITA MONTOUTE.** Santa Lucia

—  
Annita works in the Sustainable Development Department of her country's government. During her career, she has been a researcher at the University of the West Indies, lecturer and author/co-author of several papers on citizen security in the Caribbean, including components on arms control. She also participated in the Second Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty and civil society meetings. In 2014, she participated in consultations to propose a national report on security and armed violence in Trinidad and Tobago.

*“Interventions addressing the challenges of small arms proliferation must give greater prominence to the socio-economic dimensions of the problem. Relevant institutions and civil society must be continuously involved. Good governance, transparency and accountability at all levels are also key to achieving sustainable solutions.”*

# THE PROTAGONISTS AND THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS

INVALUABLE THOUGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO  
NEW GENERATIONS FROM OUR FORCES OF CHANGE



*“It is necessary to strengthen the presence and association of women to allow them to express themselves, exert pressure and move towards arms control and disarmament, starting with the same state bodies in these Latin American countries. It is also important to strengthen women’s groups, which, in the exercise of micropolitics in their neighbourhoods, can unite forces to achieve weapon-free spaces in their communities. These initiatives can be aimed at promoting collective community effectiveness in which women have a special role to play. The challenges are many, but the progress we have been able to make is also deeply rewarding. Much more can be achieved”*

**VERÓNICA ZUBILLAGA.** Venezuela

—  
Researcher with a vocation to influence arms control and disarmament and professor at the Simon Bolivar University (Universidad Simón Bolívar). Founder of the Activism and Research for Coexistence Network (Red de Activismo e Investigación por la Convivencia - REACIN). Promoter and member of the Presidential Commission for the Control of Arms, Ammunition and Disarmament in Venezuela.



*“My advice for women who want to work with policy research is to take advantage of the digital platforms to broadcast your voice, to write and publish your own articles. Make a habit of writing your thoughts, articulating your views on topics that interest you. Whenever you attend a conference, be it as a speaker or as a member of the audience, write down an original summary of the discussions or develop a specific point that interested you. In today’s world, there is no need to wait for an invitation from a newspaper to express your views. You can use your own LinkedIn, Twitter, and social media accounts to make your voice heard”*

**RENATA HESSMANN DALAQUA.** Brazil

—  
Programme Lead for Gender and Disarmament at the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR).

*“I would advise upcoming young women to stand firm and strive for the most influential decision making position that they can attain in the field. Women have unique skills that need to be brought to the forefront. Studies have show that if women hold these positions, the chances of attaining peace are bound to increase significantly. They should never think that the position is better suited to a man”*

**EBONY LYALL - NICHOLAS.** Belize

—  
Forensic Firearms Examiner at the Belize National Forensic Science Service





*“My recommendation to the new generations is that they have a great opportunity in their hands to achieve what my generation could not. It is up to them to study and strengthen their knowledge, to not only participate, but to become involved in conflict resolution, put their awareness and their vision into play to achieve their objectives. While doing so, they should not forget to continue fighting for gender equality in all regions of the planet. Let them know that when they get involved, their work is recognised and that their leadership can be vital not only to achieve the primary goals, but also to become an example for other women to follow”*

**ADRIANA SILVINA BERNACCHI.** Argentina

—  
Scientific Advisor and Vice-chairperson of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach (ABEO) of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

*“Send intelligence analysts to courses in other national and international agencies to acquire weapons expertise, in order to promote integration and facilitate communication through technical intelligence channels. Furthermore, the empowerment of women leaders can stimulate the participation of other women in addressing the idea of social arms stockpiling as a solution to public security problems. The dissemination of women’s professional activities in the field of public security and the fight for disarmament can stimulate debate on the subject”*

**CÉLIA CRISTINA PEREIRA DA SILVA VEIGA.** Brazil

—  
Sergeant of the Military Police and Training Coordinator of the Public Security Intelligence School of the State of Rio de Janeiro (Escola de Inteligência de Segurança Pública do Estado do Rio de Janeiro - ESISPERJ)



*“I recommend the participation of more women to consolidate and expand progress. I believe that we can move forward to have not only inclusive arms policies, but also to create arms control policies that help drive sustainable development and disrupt the violent gender dynamics that are expressed in all areas of society. To deal with the challenges of being a woman in this field, I would recommend patience, forming part of collaborative networks and setting aside moments of self-knowledge and self-care so as not to get lost along the way”*

**NATÁLIA POLLACHI.** Brazil

—  
Project manager at the Sou da Paz Institute (I am for Peace Institute), with years of experience in research and management of disarmament and arms control projects.

*“Empower women and create spaces and conditions, ensuring consistency with international human rights instruments, especially those related to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. Disarmament issues are not exclusive to men; there are challenges to overcome in order to move forward and change gender discrimination conditions. I hope that men and women alike will be involved in addressing disarmament from a gender perspective”*

**ELSA MARISOL ALONZO DEL CID**

Guatemala

—  
Coordinator at the Education for Sustainable Development Institute (Instituto de Enseñanza para el Desarrollo Sostenible - IEPADES) dedicated to strengthening the capacity of the Public Prosecutor’s Office in the investigation of crimes committed with firearms and the prosecution of arms trafficking.





*“There is an urgent need for more women and young people to become involved in all the campaigns that exist both within countries and internationally. What is needed is for more women to participate in public life, both in the political and electoral remit, for the occupation of representative spaces, and also in the private sphere through non-governmental organisations that effectively mobilise in countries and in the world, in networks that form opinions to give visibility to the issue. Another recommendation is to build networks to make the work more effective and supportive. It is important to use media to create greater levels of awareness in the population”*

**MARGARITA STOLBIZER.** Argentina

—  
Politician and lawyer. Former Deputy of the Argentine National Congress. Currently, leader of the political party, Generation for a National Encounter (GEN). Member of Parliamentarians for Global Action.



*“(1) To be true to their convictions and remain firm in the face of difficulties and hurdles. (2) To demand compliance with resolutions that promote women occupying spaces to which they can contribute so they can start gaining experience at an early stage in the fields of disarmament, non proliferation, and arms control. (3) To look for opportunities to continue their education. (4) To raise awareness among other women in the abovementioned areas”*

**MARÍA LUCÍA CENTELLAS.** Bolivia

—  
Founder and Director of Esfuerzos de Mujeres Bolivianas, a civil society organization that seeks to link the international disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control agenda with the implementation of actions at the national and sub-national levels with a preventive and gender focus.

*“Never be intimidated by the problems or conflicts that you may have to address or resolve and, when necessary, never focus on being a minority when carrying out your tasks. Focus upon your assigned role and understand that your contribution is not only invaluable, but that it brings humankind one step closer to coexisting in peace and having safe environments within which to do so”*

**DEIDRE KINCH.** Barbados

—  
Parliamentary Counsel at the Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel.





# UNLIREC'S TEAM OF WOMEN

*C. Mélanie  
Régimbal*



IN MY ROLE AS  
DIRECTOR OF  
UNLIREC, I HAVE THE  
DAILY PRIVILEGE  
OF WORKING WITH  
EXTRAORDINARY  
FEMALE  
PROFESSIONALS  
FROM THE LATIN  
AMERICAN AND  
CARIBBEAN REGION  
AT UNLIREC  
HEADQUARTERS IN  
LIMA, PERU.

Some of these women are seasoned professionals, while others are just beginning their professional ventures. Some work with national officials and partners to carry out our activities, while others dedicate their days to advancing disarmament-related policies and norms, while still others invest their time ensuring our work is aligned with UN administrative and financial standards. Above and beyond shared workloads and professional camaraderie, there is something else binding these women: their dedication to women's empowerment in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

Join me in applauding them for their unwavering day-to-day commitment to manifesting the spirit of A/res/65/59 into our support to States in the field and to building an ever-stronger "gender architecture" in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

Let me introduce you to UNLIREC's Programme Unit where the exciting job of transforming concepts into practical actions in the field takes place. Based on the needs and requests of States,

UNLIREC has broken its assistance down into two main areas: the Conventional Arms Control Programme (CACP) and the Non-proliferation and Arms Control Agreements Programme (NPACA).

The first of these Programmes, the Conventional Arms Control Programme, benefits from the expertise of six professional women from the region

Firstly, allow me to introduce you to **QUINNELLE KANGALEE**, from Trinidad and Tobago; **ANA MUCCI**, from Argentina; and **GIULIANA VILA**, from Peru. These extraordinary women work side-by-side on UNLIREC's forensic ballistics activities.

Quinnelle is the brains behind our ballistic programming, including the coordination of the Forensic Ballistic Intelligence Course. The ballistic project aims to enhance the technical capacity of Caribbean States to reinforce national forensic procedures for tracing illicit arms and prosecuting criminals and traffickers. All of that to say that these women can feel proud of the fact that their efforts are contributing to solving

gun crimes across the Caribbean. However, their contribution doesn't end there. All three women are also involved in delivering training to national officials to improve the interdiction of weapons at entry and exit points – Ana is an instrumental instructor of this x-ray course - as well as to improve the investigative procedures at arms-related crimes scenes. These interventions are leading to the prevention of arms trafficking and reductions in impunity, respectively. Additionally, Quinnelle and Giuliana have been responsible for coordinating the destruction of over 60,000 firearms and 60 tonnes of ammunition across the Caribbean, as well as stockpile management assistance and marking practices. While Giuliana has been involved in all UNLIREC law enforcement training activities for more than 15 years!

I have no doubt that the energy of these three women will continue to boost the capacity of States to face the disarmament-related challenges in the years to come.

Our second cluster of outstanding women working within the Conventional Arms Control Programme is made up of four women, **BETHZABE RODRÍGUEZ** and **ANA PAMELA ROMERO** from Mexico; **MERCEDES ALLERBON** from Argentina; and **ISABELLA DUQUE** from Colombia.



**Quinnelle Kangalee.** Supported States in the destruction of over 60,000 arms and 60 tonnes of ammunition for a safer region since 2010

**Ana Lucía Mucci.** Supported the training of over 150 officials to solve gun crimes through forensic ballistics since joining UNLIREC in 2019



**Giuliana Vila.** Assisted in the training of close to 3,000 law enforcement officials to combat illicit trafficking since 2004

The project to which they dedicate their time and energy is aimed at preventing and combating illicit trafficking and misuse in arms and ammunition across the Latin American and Caribbean region, but with the added value of fusing arms control measures with gender-responsive programming. Mercedes was also an integral member of the group assigned to addressing the use and possession of arms in school settings, a lamentable existing phenomenon across our region, and previously worked for years, before joining UNLIREC, for the National Agency for Controlled Materials (ANMAC) in Argentina. Bethzabe was the lead author of the present 2020 'Women as Forces of Change' publication and had previously worked in peacekeeping and political UN missions in West Africa and Latin America, including her contribution to the laying down of arms process as part of the Peace Accord in Colombia before joining UNLIREC. Ana Pamela is a lawyer and crime scene investigator specialized in the procedural and forensic handling of firearms and ammunition as physical evidence; she is currently a consultant for UNLIREC. While Isabella is a flourishing recruit in UNLIREC's Internship Programme who is interested in pursuing her career in security and disarmament studies.

At present, Bethzabe, Ana Pamela, Mercedes and Isabella can rest assured that by bolstering the technical capacity of women trained in specialized arms control that they are both empowering women, as well as boosting their meaningful contribution to security and arms control in line with the spirit of resolution 65/69. I am confident that these women will continue to blaze the trail in motivating States to integrate gender-sensitive perspectives into arms control measures and keep it on their agendas in the long-term.



**Bethzabé Rodríguez.** Contributed to the laying down of arms process as part of the Peace Accord in Colombia



**Mercedes Allerbon.** Developed an educational proposal to address the link between firearms and hegemonic masculinity in Argentina



**Isabella Duque.** Contributed to UNLIREC's innovative working paper on reducing violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic

**Ana Pamela Romero.** Incorporated a gender perspective in the scientific investigation of crimes related to firearms and ammunition, from a methodological, reasoned and considered position.



Turning to the field of non-proliferation and arms control agreements, I would like to introduce you to three women who form the backbone of the NPACA Programme. Namely, **SONIA FERNÁNDEZ**, a Spaniard who has been living and working in Peru for the past 15 years; and two Peruvian nationals, **CARLA PÉREZ** and **MILAGROS MALPARTIDA**.

These superlative women dedicate their professional drive to supporting States across the region in combating the threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) to international peace and security. They are responsible for activities ranging from promoting a “disarmament culture” through improved regional dialogue to delivering specialized legal assistance so States can update their legislative non-proliferation frameworks.

**INTRODUCE YOU TO UNLIREC'S PROGRAMME UNIT WHERE THE EXCITING JOB OF TRANSFORMING CONCEPTS INTO PRACTICAL ACTIONS IN THE FIELD TAKES PLACE.**

I am proud to tout that Sonia is the leading firearms legal expert in the region who has accompanied numerous states in the region in the drafting of national legislation related to WMDs and import/export controls, including helping to develop a WMD control list for States to detect and control dual-use goods of proliferation concern. Sonia also leads UNLIREC's ATT-related assistance and provides legal expertise to States on improving arms control within the private security sector. States also look to these UNLIREC women for help in translating their commitments taken on at the international level into practical activities in-country, such as how to interpret certain arms control provisions found in international instruments and turn them into actions in the field.

Sonia, Milagros and – most predominantly Carla - are also leading the way in strengthening national efforts in the area of ammunition control measures for improved national security. Carla has been a great asset to UNLIREC applying all she learned in her years with Peru's National Superintendence for the Control of Security Services, Arms, Ammunition and Explosives for Civilian Use (SUCAMEC). UNLIREC also benefits from Milagros's seasoned expertise in all things related to logistical and procurements

**Sonia Fernández.** Led the elaboration of legal studies in the area of firearms in 33 countries and of WMD non-proliferation, in 9 countries of the region



**Milagros Malpartida.** Formed part of the creative team behind the development of UNLIREC's flagship Interdicting Small Arms, Ammunition and Parts and Components Course

**Carla Pérez.** Supported the drafting of legal regulations linked to the Peruvian firearms legislation



tasks without which UNLIREC could not bolster States' much-needed technical infrastructure or equipment. And this is only the beginning for these inspired women...

Behind the programmatic scene at UNLIREC, we find three women who maintain the administrative and financial pulse of UNLIREC. That is to say, three remarkable Peruvian women: [MARÍA TERESA DÁVILA](#), [VERÓNICA CUADROS](#), and [CECILIA MORALES](#).

The Executive Office, where they have developed their dynamic all-women working niche, depends in great part on María Teresa's guidance, organization and knowledge, with fifteen years of accrued administrative experience, as well as on Verónica and Cecilia's specialized expertise in financial issues and human resources, respectively. These women are constantly keeping UNLIREC's Programme Units on their toes so that every one of their activities is in keeping with donor obligations and in line with UN rules and regulations, as well as ensuring that UNLIREC has at its disposition the human capital that makes UNLIREC what it is today: a Centre of Excellence.



**María Teresa Dávila.** Ensured the sound administrative and financial management of more than US\$ 40 million in extra-budgetary project funds

**Verónica Cuadros.** Assures the execution of all UNLIREC projects are in strict adherence to UN financial and accounting procedures



**Cecilia Morales.** Led the recruitment and hiring process for over 50 UNLIREC officials to ensure an expert in-house team

Simply put, UNLIREC would be unable to function without the administrative knowledge and steadfast dedication of this group of empowered women.

## UNLIREC WOULD BE UNABLE TO FUNCTION WITHOUT THE ADMINISTRATIVE KNOWLEDGE AND STEADFAST DEDICATION OF THIS GROUP OF EMPOWERED WOMEN.

Finally, I would like to present another all-women team, the Office of the Director, where I am lucky to hang my hat.

I share this Office with my Political Affairs Officer, [AMANDA COWL](#), a Canadian/Peruvian, with whom I have worked since 2007, and a Peruvian Communications Expert, [MELISSA YI](#), who just this year became a first-time mother! Melissa juggles between her time at home with child – as do half of the other UNLIREC women – with increasing the visibility of UNLIREC by getting the word out on the great work undertaken by UNLIREC staff through our webpage and communication tools. In the absence of her visibility efforts, States, donors, partners and the like would be unable to take advantage of UNLIREC's offer of assistance in making this region a safer one.

Amanda, for her part, is my right-hand support in mobilizing extrabudgetary resources to develop and implement quality programmes and activities, as well as to put in place a quality team of in-house and external experts.

For the past 15 years, Amanda has ensured the pristine quality of our specialized training manuals, innovative studies and communication tools. Most recently she



**Amanda Cowl.**  
Main drafter of the 2020-30 Caribbean Firearms Roadmap for regional action to prevent and combat illicit trafficking

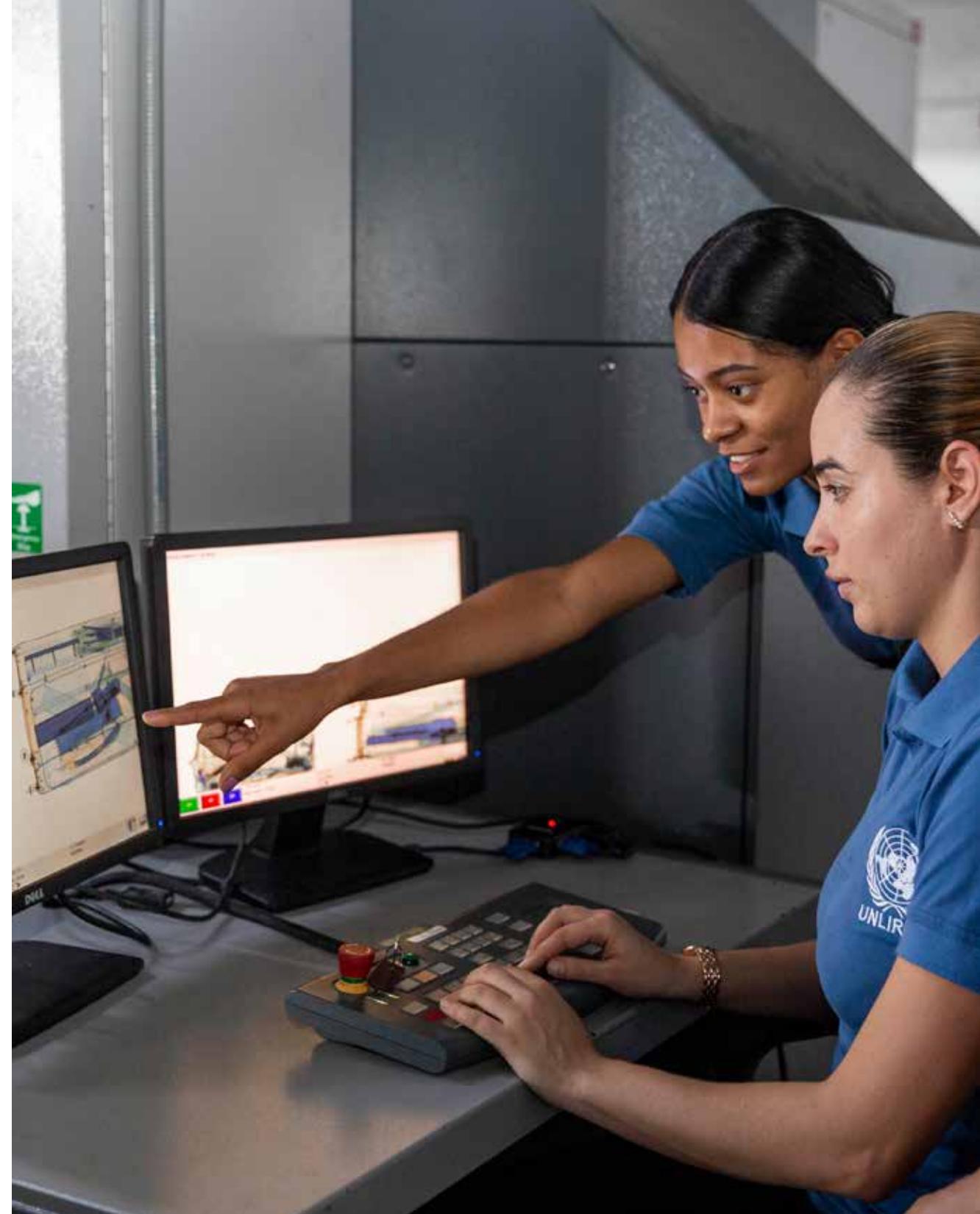
**Melissa Yi.**  
Assisted in bringing together over 40 women from 26 LAC countries for UNLIREC's First Symposium on Women and Security in 2018



**Mélanie Régimbal.**  
With sound leadership, guided the implementation of close to 1,000 disarmament-related activities in the region since 2006

led the consolidation of the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap. We both embrace the responsibility of guiding the team towards our mission of strengthening peace and security through disarmament and in leading them into the 21st century.

As for me, C. Mélanie Régimbal, I am daily blessed and honoured to lead this team of Forces of Change in the disarmament field and all that comes with it. The successes. The disappointments. The accomplishments. The hiccups along the road. I believe that being a good female leader is about lifting others up so they can explore their own potential and empowering them to persevere and acknowledge their own worth in my absence. I celebrate every one of you, for your work makes our work great.



Interdicting Small Arms, Ammunition, Parts and Components Course, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 2019.



# THE WAY FORWARD

United Nations

A/RES/65/69



General Assembly

Distr.: General  
13 January 2011Sixty-fifth session  
Agenda item 97**Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 8 December 2010***[on the report of the First Committee (A/65/410)]***65/69. Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control***The General Assembly,**Recalling* that the Charter of the United Nations reaffirms the equal rights of men and women,*Recognizing* that the participation of both men and women is essential for the attainment of sustainable peace and security,*Recognizing also* the valuable contribution of women to practical disarmament measures carried out at the local, national, regional and subregional levels in the prevention and reduction of armed violence and armed conflict, and in promoting disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control,

1. *Encourages* Member States, regional and subregional organizations, the United Nations and specialized agencies to promote the equitable representation of women in all decision-making processes with regard to matters related to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control;

2. *Invites* all States to support and strengthen the effective participation of women in organizations in the field of disarmament at the local, national, regional and subregional levels;

3. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-seventh session an item entitled "Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control".

60th plenary meeting  
8 December 2010

10-51668



C. MÉLANIE RÉGIMBAL  
UNLIREC Director

*The group of women featured within these pages embody the spirit and mandate of **resolution 65/69** on Women, Disarmament, Non-proliferation and Arms Control. A resolution that was born in Trinidad and Tobago and championed by our region.*

They are the forerunners who continue to break ground and open doors for those who will come after them. They are also the foreseers who look forward to celebrating their achievements at the 20th anniversary of the landmark resolution.

On behalf of the UNLIREC team, I wish to thank all of the incredible women featured in this edition of the 'Women as Forces of Change' publication who - like the 200 women featured before them, as well as the hundreds more who invisibly carry out their work throughout the region - wake up every day with the solid and unwavering conviction of building a safer and more secure region...

for you are the  
**FORCES OF  
CHANGE**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication has been developed by the United Nations Regional Center for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC).

UNLIREC wishes to thank the Governments of Canada and Sweden for their generous financial support, which made this publication possible.



UNLIREC

**United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament  
and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean**

**[www.unlirec.org](http://www.unlirec.org)**

Av. Jorge Chavez 275, Floor 3  
Miraflores  
Lima - Peru  
Tel: +51.1.625.9114.

With the support of

