
Conference on Disarmament

14 September 2020

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Australian proposal to make the Conference on Disarmament Rules of Procedure gender neutral

1. During the Conference on Disarmament (CD) Plenary meeting on 3 March 2020, Australia, as incoming CD President, advised that we would propose technical changes to the CD's rules of procedure to remove the use of gendered pronouns in the context of the CD President, Secretary-General, and Member State representatives.
2. We offer the following proposal to make the CD rules of procedure gender neutral.
3. Australia proposes a technical update to the Rules of Procedure of the Conference on Disarmament, as contained in CD/8/Rev.9 of 19 December 2003, to make the text in the Rules of Procedure gender neutral.
4. Rule 47 allows the Rules of Procedure to be amended by a decision of the Conference.
5. Rule 18 of the Rules of Procedure states that the Conference shall adopt its decisions by consensus.

Proposed technical update

6. Technical updates to the underlined text of rules 10, 11, 13, 16 and 37 of the Conference's Rules of Procedure are proposed with the bracketed text to replace the underlined text to make the rules gender neutral.
7. Rule 10: "If the head of the delegation which performs the function of President cannot be present, he [the head of the delegation] may be replaced by a member of his [the] delegation. If no member of the delegation holding the chair is able to perform the function of President, the delegation next in order of rotation shall temporarily assume this function.
8. Rule 11: "Apart from exercising the normal functions of a presiding officer and in addition to the powers conferred upon him [the President] elsewhere by these rules, the President shall, in full consultation with the Conference and under its authority, represent it in its relations with States, with the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations and with other international organizations".
9. Rule 13: "At the request of the Conference the Secretary-General of the United Nations, following consultations with the Conference, will appoint the Secretary-General of the Conference, who shall also act as his personal representative [the personal representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations], to assist the Conference and its President in organizing the business and timetables of the Conference."
10. Rule 16: "The Secretary-General shall also perform such other functions as are entrusted to him [the Secretary-General] by these rules or by the Conference".

11. Rule 37: “Simultaneous interpretation, verbatim records of public plenary meetings and documents shall be provided in the languages used within the United Nations system by member States of the Conference participating in its work. Any representative may speak in his [the representative’s] own language provided he [the representative] makes available simultaneous interpretation into a working language”.
