

Remarks by the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament
CD Plenary meeting, Thursday 5 August 2021, 10.00 a.m.

Madam President [Ambassador Norton],

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honor to address the Conference today at this very important meeting that will consider the proposal by the Canadian Presidency for a technical, linguistic update to the Conference's rules of procedure. The proposed update would recognise the equality between women and men and the fact that both men and women can - and have- occupied the roles of representative, head of delegation, President, and Secretary-General of the Conference.

As I already noted in my remarks to the Conference last year, such a technical update should be an automatism, like correcting a spelling mistake. This purely editorial update would not substantively change or otherwise affect the rules of procedure of the Conference. Nonetheless, it will succeed in sending a signal to the international community that the Conference recognizes the fundamental principle of gender equality and that we have moved away from the unfortunate practice in which office-holders were almost inevitably men.

As an International Gender Champion, I am encouraged by the efforts of the Australian and Canadian Presidencies as well as by the support for this amendment among many States parties of this Conference.

The United Nations Secretary-General continues to emphasize that ensuring the equal participation of women in disarmament fora is essential for the attainment of sustainable peace and security. Their contributions must be acknowledged not just in speeches, but with concrete actions like the one under consideration today.

Me and my team stand ready to support the Conference in its efforts to modernize its rules of procedure to reflect today's realities.

I wish you a very fruitful discussion today. Thank you, Madam President.