Will We Know It When We See It? Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Nuclear Policy

Speakers

Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley  
Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, U.S. Department of State

Angelica Liao-Moroz  
Executive Director for Non-Proliferation, Disarmament and Space, Global Affairs Canada

Richard Johnson  
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Policy

Chris King  
Deputy Chief and Senior Political Affairs Officer, Weapons of Mass Destruction Branch, UN Office for Disarmament Affairs

Moderator

Emma Belcher  
President, Ploughshares Fund

Emma Belcher: Thank you very much. I'm going to explain what this is all about in just a second. This over here. Good morning everybody, and welcome to our panel session this morning. I'm very excited to have this terrific panel of experienced professionals. This panel is titled, "Will We Know It When We See It? Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Nuclear Policy." I'm also thrilled that this is a panel in the main session at this year's Carnegie Nuclear Policy Conference because the workforce that we have working on these problems is as important, if not more important than the substance and what comes out of the discussions that we all have on solving nuclear problems. It is critical that we have a range of backgrounds, perspectives, lived experiences, as people work on solving these critical issues.

It's no secret that the nuclear policy area has been quite homogenous over the decades. There's, at times, a certain amount of hostility to questioning the status quo, bringing new ideas, and welcoming people from different perspectives. Why we're here today to talk about all of this is not because we are paying lip service to a popular moment. It is not because it aligns with the values that many of us hold dear. Let's be really clear about this. It is because the range of diverse backgrounds and experiences helps improve nuclear policy. We know this from a range of studies that have been conducted in a number of fields, not just on this, but in the public and the private sector, in all parts of the world, in all contexts.

We know that diverse teams are better at examining facts. They're better at remaining objective. There is less bias in the discussions, and it leads to situations where information is being processed more carefully. I think it is sometimes easy for people to brush this aside and forget that this is also the reason we are doing it. We also know through studies, one in particular by the late Katherine Phillips that found
that diversity leads to more innovation. I think innovation is also key in this field, given where we are today, more than 70 years after the invention of nuclear weapons, and we're still dealing with this incredible threat in ways that are worsening as we are seeing right now.

I know that DEI is essential if we are to adequately address the nuclear weapons threat and prevent catastrophe. The good news is that this field is changing. It's changing in civil society. It's changing in governments. Today, we are going to be talking about governmental institutions and international organizations. Governmental institutions play a critically important role in advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in the nuclear policy field because of the sheer size of their workforces, the agenda-setting function they have, their ability to adapt policy processes to improve outcomes, particularly for minority communities.

How do these institutions define their metrics for success in this endeavor, and how are they performing in meeting these objectives? What effect did the COVID-19 pandemic have on these efforts? I think probably quite significant. I'm looking forward to hearing the answers here. What lessons have been learned thus far on promoting accountability toward the defined objectives?

Now, before I begin, I want to raise your attention to the pin here that Ambassador Laura Holgate just handed me because mine, I think, is in my daughter's bedroom, which is kind of appropriate because it's Gender Champions in Nuclear Policy. I'm a proud gender champion. I know there are others who are watching today who are also proud gender champions. It's a leadership network that brings together heads of organizations working across the field who are committed to breaking down gender barriers and making gender equality a reality.

[unintelligible 00:04:34] Pluses is also a member of the organizations in solidarity, which is an initiative of the Women of Color Advancing Peace Security and Conflict Transformation. It's a partnership with more than 300 organizations and individuals who seek to combat racism and discrimination in all its manifestations. In doing so, diversify the fields of peace and security from policy and national security, making its work more inclusive and equitable.

As we jump in, we have a terrific panel today, one that represents a range of background, experiences, approaches, perspectives, nationalities. This is because this is a problem for all of us. It's not just a problem for those who might feel most impacted and affected by being excluded from these discussions. It's important for all of us because nuclear policy affects us all. We are thrilled to have all of these champions up here, allies on the stage, and we are going to dig in with some interesting questions.

I would also encourage you to start sending the questions for the panelists. I'm going to have them here on the Trustee iPad. We'll get to as many of them as possible. We have Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley, who is the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer at the State Department. We have Richard Johnson, who's a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Policy. We have Angelica Liao-Moroz, who's Executive Director, Division for Non-proliferation, Disarmament & Space in Global Affairs Canada. We
have Chris King, Senior Political Affairs Officer for WMD, United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs.

Welcome everybody. Delighted to have you all here. Thank you for your time. I'm going to start with a question for Ambassador Abercrombie-Winstanley. The State Department recently submitted a five-year strategic plan on diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice to the Office of Personnel Management. You led this effort within the department to produce this plan. What were some of the key barriers you were seeking to address in the first place? What challenges, or did you confront challenges?

[laughter]

I will say, "What challenges" I will, that's a given. What challenges did you encounter in developing your plan, and what strategies did you use to try to build consensus within the building? I'm also going to ask you, what did you design into your plan to know if you're being successful? They're three things, key barriers, challenges and strategies, and designs to know if you're being successful.

**Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley:** God, I love these easy questions.

[laughter]

The first thing I want to say is thank you very much for having me and how pleased I am to be on a panel that looks like this. You made a point earlier about it not being just the problem of those of us who belong to underrepresented groups, regardless of what the field is. Oftentimes, I find myself invited to speak or on panels, and everyone is a visible minority, or Black, quite frankly.

Remind me to come back to what I was just about to say, but this is what panels should look like. Now, I say no if it is only visible minorities, I decline, because it's not just my problem, our problem, this is a discussion for all of us. Number one, yay on that. To the question that you ask, many barriers remain within the Department of State. I know you all know the reputation of the organization. I won't use the shorthand someone from Yale yelled at me last week, although I didn't use it, it was the foreign policy on *Wall Street Journal*, but anyway, that we tend to be. I think our last numbers at senior levels, 83% European-American, over 60% male in our civil service. I think 84% European-American and over 60% male in our foreign service. As I very diplomatically say to my colleagues, women and minorities, because women aren't a minority, do not become more stupid as we go up the ladder. Something other than merit is at play here for the decision-making. Barriers that we are trying to address, main one that we have known from our workforce, from a climate survey we did, the fact that we have this data, women, people with disabilities, Brown people of all sorts, see what it looks like at the top, and we look much better at the bottom. The ability to make it to the top, the ability to feel valued for what you bring to the organization, that your contributions are welcomed, mine as well as my colleagues who don't look like me, that will help me remain in the organization.
This is imperative because we spend a lot of money training people in the Department of State, particularly in the Foreign Service. When they leave before we intended them to leave, we've wasted that money. Retention, promotion, and then finally, I have one more here and I'm going to have to put my glasses on to remind myself, knowledge. When I was in the private sector, people paid me lots of money for me to tell them, "You must know your organization, how things work, who are the deciders." We have been fabulous in the Department of State of keeping things extremely opaque. Opaque. Unless you know the right person or the right person knows you, your ability to navigate the organization is, let me be diplomatic for a moment, compromised. So drawing back the veil, those are the three main things.

Then you asked challenges, I will speak to one which is simply a technical challenge in the government because OPM put out the word that we're going to do this. and it's great every federal agency doing one, but every federal agency is not the same, does not have the same challenges. Some agencies had already started this process ours included, and so what we had intended as a document and then we got the template from OPM and it didn't look anything like what we had intended to do. There was a lot of you don't want to know, but scrambling [growling] to get it to fit OPM's template and that was very painful and I think that's the challenge I'll leave it with.

Then finally, building consensus, building, buy-in I think is a phrase you used. I will say that this is an ongoing challenge and ongoing effort but here's my view. I did cyber and other things before coming fully into DEIA and I tell people think about DEIA like cybersecurity. When we first started talking about being careful with your passwords, and don't sharing them and don't click on links and et cetera, all the things we know we're not supposed to do, and yet people slip up because we are human beings. Nobody loved it, but it's imperative for us to accomplish our mission and I want you all to think about DEIA the same way.

In short, hearts and minds desired but not required. Action, I need you to step up and do the right thing for your organization and for yourselves. To help people do that after we did our strategic plan and I looked at it and I said, this is fine, but what does it mean and how are we going to know people are actually doing these things that we've laid out? I need an implementation plan, and I have a staff of warriors, just amazing, amazing people. Melissa over there is on my staff, wave Melissa, awesome. My staff, my people said, right, and so we have an implementation plan. We took comments from the entire organization, local staff, civil service, foreign service, specialist, contractors, everybody could feed into where they solve problems in our organization. For us to, not in the strategic plan because that's very formulaic but in the implementation plan, where we have hundreds of milestones. To keep people accountable because that is important, transparency, accountability, intentionality. We have in our implementation plan on our SharePoint sites where everybody can see it, go and check, look at it. What's supposed to happen and which quarter of which year? What are the resources that have been attached to it, or must be attached to it, and who's responsible for it? Everybody going in can see it and should ask questions and this is to keep us all accountable. I'm sure that's my four minutes. Thank you.
Belcher: It is, and that was a terrific four minutes. I know we've got lots we'll be able to dive into in the Q&A. We'll turn now to Ms. Liao-Moroz. Canada has for some time been implementing a feminist foreign policy, which prioritizes gender as an important organizing principle. In the summer of 2021, the deputy ministers of Global Affairs Canada published a letter on implementing a call to action on anti-racism, equity, and inclusion.

What has changed since this call to action was set forth and what are some of the issues you're prioritizing in the department you lead? Because I also threw several questions at the Ambassador. I'm also going to ask you, based on her answers, what's your sense of the differences between Canada and the United States or between Global Affairs Canada and the State Department in terms of how you assess the current status and where you want to be?

Angelica Liao-Moroz: That's a huge question. What she said.

Belcher: Yes, I'm sorry, a little unfair.

Liao-Moroz: Let me try and unpack that and I'll start from the last question. I think there are a lot of similarities in terms of the starting points in our respective ministries and departments and the obstacles that the ambassador has just outlined. A lot of that resonated with me. I'll take a few steps back, about 2015 our prime minister at that time appointed women to half of the federal cabinet positions and he was pressed on this. He was asked, why did you go about this so intentionally, why, why, why? Three words, because it's 2015. That caused quite a buzz at that time, and I don't want to give the impression that nothing prior to 2015 had been done, there's been a lot of activity and a solid history of calling for women's rights and gender equality.

I think that by explicitly stating that and by adopting a feminist foreign policy, this was signaling that gender, equality and diversity was going to be at the center of all our efforts, at the center of all our priorities. Whether that's in peace and security, whether it's in the international systems that we provide to partners abroad, and beyond that, domestically and outward facing as well. That was seven years ago, and change takes time.

The next question is what has actually happened? I think on the representation front we've had federal cabinets that are more or less at 50% since then. In the core public service in Canada, about 52% of executives are now women. The feminist foreign policy has led us to having a woman foreign minister, until recently, a woman deputy minister, an associate deputy minister, a woman disarmament ambassador, and a leader at our HQ in Ottawa, overseeing arms control policy.

For example, in my group, 60% of the managers on my team are women, 40% are visible minorities, so we have to work on that, of course, and overall, over 60% of the staff are women. It's not even across the board, I have to say, so that is just one specific example. It's not just about numbers and representation that in and out itself is too simplistic as well. In our international assistance including in our international security programming, this is the capacity building that we would provide to
organizations and partners around the world, including to reduce threats from weapons of mass destruction. We now systematically apply what we call a gender lens to all our programming.

When we are planning or entertaining a project and deciding whether we're going to move forward or not, we go through a pretty detailed analysis of what the gender and diversity outcomes will be at every stage of that project moving and ultimately, will that get us to our vision. It's detailed and it sounds sophisticated as a methodology but I have to say that we're learning too, we're along this learning curve. It's early days, but the point is that we're doing it and we're doing it intentionally.

I think everyone's aware of the various UN Security Council Resolutions on Women Peace and Security. Our current or second national action plan, again, was very intentional in bringing together different government departments to make sure that we were quite cohesive across departments. Making sure that the work that we're doing, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected states, spoke to our broader commitments around gender equality, empowerment of women and girls, their human rights, and inclusion and respect for diversity.

That last piece, I just want to underline, because a feminist foreign policy, many people think of that and think it's just women, equality for women. It doesn't strictly apply to women or simply apply to issues related to gender, but it should be about lifting all marginalized people and communities. If I can point to the murder of George Floyd, which obviously shook this country and it shook the entire world, including in Canada. I really think that was one of the factors, not the only one, but it was one of the factors that really triggered this deep reflection in our system in the foreign ministry especially, but widely across government, we saw more and more public servants come forward with quite painful experiences.

They're quite courageous in telling these stories, and not just telling these stories and experiences, but demanding that more be done. Demanding of our seniors, of our ministers, of our deputy ministers to actually take concrete action. Emma, you mentioned this call to action. What started that was the clerk of our privy council, so our most senior civil servant issued an open call to action early last year, so that we could take deliberate action to counter systemic racism. Essentially make the public service look more like what you would see on the streets of Ottawa, or elsewhere in Canada. We're far from that, but we're on our way down that path.

We conducted a survey of thousands of employees and there were four key challenges that came out of that. The first was representation, which will come as no surprise to anybody. Confidence in senior management in this space, which is notable. Systemic discrimination or bias, or at least the perception of, and career development, education, training in anti-racism. What's come out of that is that this multi-year anti-racism strategy has been developed by our department and by other departments as well.

As the ambassador was saying similar to State Department, there are performance metrics that are built into that to make sure that we can measure what we're doing. We know when we're off track, there are specific performance indicators that tell us whether or not something is moving at the right pace. There's an accountability check halfway into its implementation because it's a multi-year strategy. I won't go
into detail on everything that's-- Well, there's not that much that has been done, but some highlights that I will note is that there's more structure thinking around this.

There's a advisory committee to the deputy ministers to provide that regular channel of feedback and advice. We have piloted sponsorship programs to, again, be more intentional about making sure that visible minorities rise up the ranks. They are overrepresented at lower certain occupational levels and underrepresented the higher you move up. Being less opaque about data, so publishing disaggregated data. I could go on and on, but I'll sum it up here by saying that what's changed overall is that I think that there's a growing sense of collective responsibility.

In gender, everybody thinks it's their job now. It's not just women that are touting this, everybody in the department has embodied that. When it comes to diversity and inclusion more broadly, that's where we have more work to do.

Belcher: Excellent. Thank you so much. I'm sure there's a lot to dive into. We can get into in the Q&A as well. I'm gonna turn to Mr. Johnson. Richard, you participate in the DEI council for the Defense Department. You've also been outspoken on the challenges of being an openly gay man in the community that is fairly conservative, in an institution that is dare we say even more so conservative. Can you please tell the audience a bit about these challenges that you've encountered and how your thinking on DEI has changed since you became deputy assistant secretary? What does it mean to walk the talk on DEI at the Pentagon?

Richard Johnson: First of all, thank you to Emma, and thank you to this incredible panel. I really feel honored just to be up on the stage with all of you. Thanks to Carnegie for hosting something like this. I think one of the most important things at the beginning of any of these conversations is representation, and seeing yourself represented on these panels, seeing yourself walking the halls of these buildings. Because frankly, sometimes you don't even know, we've talked a lot about underrepresented folks. There are some folks that you can tell what their background is and other folks that you can't.

Sometimes in the LGBTQ community, there is still a glass closet, if you will, in that regard. I think there is a lot of questions that come up in this regard of, why is it even important to talk about sexuality, sexual orientation, gender identity in the nuclear space. This doesn't have anything to do with this, you're not working on human rights or something like that. In fact, it really matters because of the reasons that have been said here about the worst thing that can happen, and many a people I see in this room who have been in government or in NGOs is to get a room full of people who all think the same way. Who all come from the same background and the same experiences, in the same schools, and you get group-think. Which means you get the same policy outcomes every time, and you get the same processes and the same sort of things.

That's not to say that just automatically by getting a diverse group of people in the room, you're going to get always the best policies or the best outcomes. You have a better chance of doing that when you have diversity in the room. That's one of the things that I think is important. I should say for this particular panel, I'm speaking in my personal capacity and not on behalf of the Department of Defense. You did note that the department does have, at least in the policy part of the office of the
Secretary of Defense, a DEI council now, which I think is a very, very important thing.

I should say to the ambassador's point, which I really, really resonated with, it is not made up of just folks who come from underrepresented backgrounds. In fact, I'm very proud that one of the chairs of that council is in my office, and not all the folks on that council-- Frankly, there are white, cis straight men on that council because they think that this is important too for the future of the department.

In terms of my experience, what I would say is, frankly, I never thought in my life I'd be working at the Pentagon. I grew up in an era of don't ask, don't tell. I did not serve in the military. I did think about it a little bit, I thought about trying to go to an academy. I was a closeted gay man at the time and it just didn't seem like this was something that was for me. In a field, and particularly in a space on the military side, that is often perceived as being very hyper-masculine, a very certain perception of what you are supposed to be to work in this space. It just didn't seem like a welcoming place for me, and not a place for any diversity of thought or different views when it came to the policy choices as well.

Then if you're going to want to raise what may be a different view than what is the norm, and you are perceived to be the other, not of this crowd. Well, you didn't go to the academy, maybe you speak with a little bit of a lisp. "Boy, never hear about that wife of yours," that sort of thing. You may not be taken seriously. That's not necessarily been my experience, but I think it is something that a lot of queer people in very different ways, depending upon your background and your experience in life have to deal with. There is a concern about, "Well, maybe I shouldn't speak up, maybe I shouldn't be known, maybe I should just slide into the background."

My experience has been frankly a very privileged one. I should say I come to this from recognizing that I'm a white man, I'm a cis man, and my experience has been challenging, but certainly not as challenging as it probably would've been if I were a person of color, if I identified as a female, or if I were trans or anything like that. Nonetheless, I think that I've been lucky because I've entered the Pentagon in the position of some leadership, and so I felt like I was able to be a little bit more open because my leadership had my back. I knew that I was appointed by this administration, I knew that I was appointed by the secretary, and so I wasn't a low person on the totem pole. A low person saying-- Sorry, as it is, I shouldn't say something like that. I was not on the lower end of leadership and so I had some ability to be out there for lack of a better term.

I tried to do that in subtle ways. It's not that I have to walk around the building waving a rainbow flag every day, but when I first started in this field, I didn't want to talk about my personal life. People would ask what you did for the weekend, "Oh, I saw friends. Oh, I did something." I remember a particular trip, I went to Vienna and it sounds ridiculous, but colleagues of mine said, "Do you want to maybe have a beer after the meeting?" I said, "No, no, no, I need to do some work in my hotel."

The reality was I had run into a friend of mine in the lobby who is a State Department employee, who's also a gay man, happened to be dating somebody living in Vienna, and he wanted to go out to have a drink at a gay bar. I didn't feel comfortable even saying that to my colleagues. I literally changed clothes, threw on a t-shirt and a pair
of jeans, and I snuck out the back of the hotel like I was a little kid or a teenager because I didn't want to have to deal with that. I think it is important that we represent ourselves in the official spaces.

Even if it's just subtly mentioning those sorts of things. Correcting when there are things that'd be wrong. I just said something that I wish I hadn't said and I will correct myself and say that sometimes we all make mistakes. I think that was the point that was made earlier. To acknowledge that we don't always get it right. I would say I've had several occasions and maybe I'll close on this and we can certainly talk more in the Q&A. Where I've been surprised that my efforts to just remind folks about who I am as a person have led to folks actually calling me afterwards and apologizing to me. I've always been very surprised, "Why are you calling to apologize to me?" I was the one that made a subtle reference to RuPaul's Drag Race in a meeting I was--

**Abercrombie-Winstanley:** Subtle?

[laughter]

**Johnson:** Drag and subtle are not usually in the same sentence, very fair Ambassador. I was the one that made the silly comment, but it was because I think we actually have a lot of people in these systems who genuinely do want to get this right. Because we haven't talked about it, because we haven't implemented it across our systems, they just don't know quite how to do it. The response tends to be more on the apology side of things. I say, "Don't apologize to me, I was just living my life and living my truth and doing it in hopefully an appropriate way. I appreciate that you're acknowledging that but that's just me."

I think that it means we have an opportunity to be able to talk about these things more in this space and to represent why it's important. As somebody and I'll just close on this, as somebody who is a manager, one of the things that I've made my own personal mission is to make sure that everybody that I supervise, everybody that I am talking to in my team knows that I value diversity, I value equity, I value inclusion. It's something that is important to me. It is something that I think about daily. It's something that I want to be a theme and a mission for our office.

I think that if you can start, it's a very beginning start, but if you can convey to folks that this is something that is valuable to you as a team, you will attract people to your teams because they will want to work in a place where people know that that is a value. I am very proud that we have over the last year and a half attracted some incredible talent across many different areas of underrepresented folks. Not because we were necessarily saying we need to find folks from these communities, but because they said this is an office where the leadership cares and we can do good work and frankly they were the best people that were available and they are rock stars and I love working with them every day. Anyway thank you for the opportunity to talk about this, look forward to the questions.

**Belcher:** Thank you so much for sharing your personal background and experience and how it relates to the work because it really does and we all need rock stars. We need rock stars more than ever now I think. All right so moving on to Mr. King, the UN as an international organization has lots of rules about hiring and National representation that are perhaps different than some of the government agencies
represented today. I’m curious about your experience at UNODA in terms of assessing where the field currently is in terms of diversity, where it should be and how you think about integrating DEI objectives in your programming.

Chris King: Thanks Emma. Just to echo what everyone said about thanks to Carnegie, it's great to be here on this panel, it's great to have this panel mainstreamed into the convention so again thanks to Carnegie this is a really good move on your behalf. I should also say this at the very outset that the Secretary General of the United Nations is obviously extremely committed to DEI, we will have gender parity by 2028. We are committed to creating equitable geographic representation, we are committed to creating an enabling environment for all gender identity and expression and sexual orientation to engaging with youth, to engaging with people with disabilities.

The Secretary General put a plan for all of this into his common agenda. Within the system itself, obviously there is a very deep commitment to DEI. I wish we did discuss RuPaul's Drag Race more in the UN, but it doesn't tend to come up that often unfortunately. In terms of the state of the field, that's where things obviously get a little bit more complicated because you would think in a multilateral disarmament institutions just by sheer virtue of the membership base that diversity would be something prevalent, it's not. I think that's because diversity as has been said here, diversity is about more than who is in the room.

Diversity is about who is leading, who is speaking and who is taking decisions. I think in multilateral nuclear policy forums, it's still predominantly white and male and that is largely because of capacity issues. For many delegations it's due to power structures. Often it's due to cultural issues as well, which is another factor that we really have to take into account in the United Nations.

It's interesting too, because this is not necessarily something that is reflected across all of multilateral structures. If you look for example at human rights forums, gender parity and human rights forums is much, much better than it is in disarmament nonproliferation forums. That I think has a lot to do with things like concepts of masculinity, weapons are masculine, men deal with weapons. These are the issues that we tend to be confronting in the UN.

I think on gender parity in disarmament nonproliferation, we've made some really really good strides. Certainly, gender parity has become much more mainstreamed into the conversation. It is an area that we are working hard to create leadership roles. It's an area that we're working hard to create an environment where this is just normal. I do think there's been good strides there, but again, we're not there yet, because if you look at the first committee of the general assembly which is the International Peace Security and Disarmament committee. We had a 25% increase in women speakers, but that still only took us to 27% of total speakers being women. We're making progress, we still have a long way to go.

There are areas where like for example the open-ended working group on cyber security. We have reached almost parity on gender but that's because of countries like Canada, because of other countries that have really been very forceful on this particular issue. There is a particular scholarship in place for women delegates
particularly from the developing world to come to that open-ended working group, and so consequently we've had some better results there.

On cultural diversity, I think I would also agree with what Angelica said, which is that we have a bit more work to do there than we do on gender diversity. In the UN we have, I mentioned it before, equitable geographic representation which is where obviously people from all regions are supposed to be equally represented. That is very different from cultural diversity, there is overlap, but it's very different. Even there, if you look at who is in the room and particularly when it comes to nuclear conversations it's a [unintelligible 00:37:24], and if you look at who is not in the room for example. It's only in the context of the treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons and recently in the NPT, that we have conversations about affected communities. People who are affected by the use and testing of nuclear weapons for example.

Those communities are predominantly indigenous and yet they're not in the room, they're some of the most affected but they are not in the room, that's a problem. If you look at groups of governmental experts which are the bodies established by the general assembly to look into these issues. The African group for example represents 30% of UN member states, of UN membership, and yet it's only 10% of experts on these disarmament nonproliferation GGE's. Clearly we still have a very, very long way to go.

What we're doing from that front is particularly on the gender parity issue, we now have a mandate in which we will strive for gender parities in all of those groups. For example, we will push back against member states who say we don't have any women. We will do things like, "Well, you need to be creative, you need to look beyond traditional diplomatic and military CVs and look at what else can contribute to these GGE's. What can strengthen the outcomes of these groups that are not necessarily traditional backgrounds." That's something that we are very focused on.

The other issue I think is that we can have all of these endeavors, we have to have gender-diverse, and culturally diverse panels, geographically diverse panels. Every event that we do has to correspond to those guidelines. All of our youth programs for example our fellowships, our youth Champions, they all have to correspond to those guidelines and we're rigorous about implementing them. I think an issue that again, sorry that Angelica raised this issue of sustainability.

Emma mentioned that we're in a moment and to a certain extent that's true, but it's how do we continue that, how do we embed this in the system and so for us it comes back to sustainability. One of the issues there is things like focuses, so it's not just about participation, it's about the lens that you view things through. Not just a gender lens, but an affected community lens, an indigenous lens, and a cultural lens and how do we do this. I think through those issues we can make a bit more sustainable.

I just wanted to conclude by saying that, what has been said across this panel is that we don't do this because it's a moment and we're not doing this because it's the right thing to do, we're doing this because it's the smart thing to do. I think the one thing that I add to the examples here is that, diverse peace process are more likely to achieve sustainable outcomes. I think that's it for me.
Belcher: Thank you very much Chris for that. We've got really terrific questions so I'm going to go to audience questions now. Some of the questions relate to aspects that each of you have already touched on, but the first one I'm going to ask actually relates to the NPT Review Conference from Elena Sokova. She said, "At the NPT RevCon, several states pushed back on including gender in the language. How can we get more support of diversity and inclusion in regions and countries that resist, not only participation and inclusion of women but also of other gender identities?" You've touched on that a little bit in terms of what your office, I think, is trying to do. I'm curious if you have anything else specific about this, or if anybody, any of the other panels want a comment-cleansed.

King: Just really quickly, the NPT obviously, is a difficult case study, but the NPT is also not because it represents pretty much the GA membership. There's a few notable absences, but it does. I think what we are trying to do in the GA, which is to mainstream these issues is part way of the education process, but I do think it is all about education, outreach, and awareness and I think youth has a particularly strong role to play there. This is not a change that is going to happen overnight. It is a change that is going to take time and we have to build it from the ground up. All of our programs that engage with youth have a diversity component to them.

We do talk about the importance of diversity, be it gender or culture or anything else. By skillling those future policymakers in these areas, we hope that that will become part of their culture. We also hope that it will just become part of the culture as a body as a whole, meaning that there will be cross-fertilization between the two. I did want to say here very quickly about special measures as well, which is something that we have put in place in the UN. We do have benchmarks, we do have things that we are supposed to agree on. I know that people complain about those, but unfortunately, they aren't necessary, and ultimately, I think they benefit everyone.


Liao-Moroz: If I can just refer off of what Chris was saying. Absolutely, in terms of more education, outreach, et cetera. Canada led on a gender statement at the NPT Review Conference, and I think about 67 or so other states signed on. You're right, we encountered a lot of hesitation, resistance. It's going to take time to chip away at that, but I think one of the things that we are doing that we're more mindful of is, for example, at UN First Committee is we took a decision and it wasn't an easy one. We took a decision a few years ago that Canada was not going to co-sponsor any resolution that did not contain gender language that moved us forth in some way, shape, or form.

This applied even to resolutions that we otherwise were very supportive of in terms of the substance. It was tough the first year, people didn't understand why would you adopt such a policy? I think last year, so 2021, we saw an increase in resolution slowly reflecting gender language, diversity language from I think about 25% to 35%. A lot of people, cynics may argue that these are just words on paper, but I would say these resolutions express the views of states, it expresses the will and intent of states. Slowly through those type of policies, I think, we can edge closer to greater acceptance of diversity and inclusion.
Belcher: Fantastic. It's so interesting as I'm seeing some of the questions that are coming into about the language of foreign policy. These are issues that you're addressing here. I'd like to ask a question that actually Rosa Park-Tokola has asked of Ambassador Abercrombie Min Stanley. Can you please detail how the US State Department is protecting increasingly diverse foreign service officers stationed in countries where they may not welcome more diverse diplomats?

Abercrombie-Winstanley: How we're protecting them?

Belcher: Yes.

Abercrombie-Winstanley: The sad part is that it's needed, but we are gathering the information, number one. I don't know how many of you may have paid attention to an article a couple of years ago from one of our young diplomats who was stationed at the border between Mexico and the US and talked about her challenges of getting through the border on a daily basis because our diplomats go into, I guess, El Paso's on the other side. That she was repeatedly stopped, harassed, questioned as to her diplomatic status, and that it wore to such an extent that we lost her. Again, we lost her.

She left the foreign service, left the US government, which I said earlier is a horrible waste of money and for no other reason, and humanity as well, but a waste of resources.

We have urged our missions, of course, to be cognizant of that. Several of our chiefs of mission ambassadors have noted that they were unaware that, as you talked about, people coming out with stories in Canada after George Floyd's murder. Many of our diplomats thought they had to suffer in silence on the basis of SOGi, sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or race or disability. On many levels, people can harass or discriminate or be cruelly around the world. It's not just our own problem.

We recently have sent out a message to our missions to codify, A, the instruction that you must take this up. It is incumbent upon all of us to ensure that all of us are receiving equitable treatment and not being harassed or discriminated against. We also want to know how you're doing it. What is the process? When this happens to someone, to whom do they report? What are the steps at the mission? What are the steps of Washington then is going to take to address it? This is something that the secretary felt very strongly about. All of our senior leadership and our commitment to ensuring that we're all treated the same is very strong.

That's something that we have done in recent days, but listening to the discussion about the words and having gendered language, and I really wanted to interrupt since you told us we were allowed to ask, on what basis is the pushback to take into account 50% of the world? I'd love to understand that and how important it is for us to push this through, for our presence, not only in the room but at the table and leading the table. Because I'm looking at this room, we have 8 to 10 over here almost gender parity.

We have 11 and 8 over here, and we have 17 to five over here, and all three sections of this room, there are more women than men. Again, this gets to who's in
the space, who's listening, are we talking to ourselves, our allies? I'll have further thoughts, but I'll stop.

**Belcher:** Oh, please don't.

[laughter]

Absolutely said what probably a lot of us have been thinking as we've been sitting here in this room. We're going to come back. There's so much here. I've got a question specifically about the workforce and early mid-career staff from Sarah Beth Marcher. I think maybe, Richard, you might take this one on. How do you recommend early to midcareer staff best advocate for DEI within their offices, that is, professionals who don't yet have hiring power aren't directly programming? I think you alluded to some of this earlier, so I'd love to hear your answers.

**Johnson:** Absolutely. First of all, hi Sarah Beth

[laughter]

Great question. Again, I'll speak a little bit from my own experiences, but look, I've worked at organizations where exactly that happened, I would say. It was frankly not happening at the very top. Not because it wasn't something that folks in that organization ultimately thought was important, but it was just something that there were lots of other things going on in the world. I think that there were folks in the organization who recognized that. I really appreciate, by the way, the discussion of organizations and governments and multilateral institutions recognizing we've made some progress on the gender equity issue.

Maybe a lot in some ways, but not so much in other categories. I think this was also true in this case for us. I think it really did start with the younger staff, the entry-level folks, the folks who really wanted to make the beginnings of their career and see themselves represented across their career. Part of, I think, the answer is, first of all, not being afraid to say something. It may not happen the first time, it may not happen the second time. It's not to say there's not going to be a challenge, but there are going to be folks, I think, in your organizations and in your institutions who are going to hear this and it's going to resonate with them.

If it's said enough by enough people, something will change. In this particular case, there was the creation of a DEI group. We did some work on building some training, having discussions about things, talking about unconscious bias. We really were starting to dig into these sorts of things and I think it really had an impact. I think that if you are passionate about this, and we all should be passionate about this, there are ways to bring this to folks and to identify those champions. This is one reason why I'm very passionate about things like mentorship.

Again, this is one of the reasons why it's important for folks to be out and present. I can't tell you how many people come to me and say, "Oh, I didn't know there was another queer person working in this space. Would you be willing to have coffee with me?" I'll take coffee with anybody, by the way.

[laughter]
King: There's lots of coffee out there.

Johnson: Yes, there's a lot of coffee. I've already had one. There's a recognition, people go, "I thought I was the only one in this organization." No, you probably aren't. Then building those networks. One of the things I love about Washington and about the policy community is people love to have those kinds of discussions and love to build the next generation and bring folks in. Oftentimes that does lead to a year later, five years later, somebody goes, "Oh, I remember you, we had coffee. Actually, I have a job in my office, do you want to come work for us? It'd be great to have you." I can tell you right now, 10% of my staff now is LGBTQ.

I'm sure that's probably not true across other offices, but it happens to be the case in my case, and then we're making progress and other categories as well. The bottom line is don't be afraid to say something, don't be afraid to speak up because I think that this kind of conversation has to be had, and then it starts to magnify across the spaces such that at some point, there will be changes. We see it in the DEI Council at the Department of Defense, which is a rather new development, which you would think shouldn't be the case but in fact it is. It's because people at that level said, "We need something like this." Now they're meeting on a regular basis with the undersecretary of defense.

Belcher: Fantastic. I want to turn to a question that Chase N Wright has posed, which is, "Accessibility is an oft-forgotten part of DEIA." In fact, actually, the A is not in the title of this panel. I know there are a lot of different ways of talking about these issues and different acronyms, but let's address it accessibility, how can we increase accessibility in the field? Who wants to take that one on?

Abercrombie-Winstanley: How can we increase accessibility?

Belcher: Yes.

Abercrombie-Winstanley: I'm assuming all of our organizations have something like the Department of State which has an office of accessibility that grapples with and listen to the word I use, grapple, but which puts in place reasonable accommodations for our colleagues who need them. It is a huge challenge. It's one of the things I took up at the beginning of people with disabilities which are not visible or reluctant to identify having them because you're afraid they might not get hired similar to our LGBTQI colleagues. I started speaking gently about this and saying it's important for you to self-identify. We don't collect the information, you have to voluntarily provide it.

It is kept anonymous, it's not attached to your name, but it comes to resources. If we think we have 5,000 people with a disability and we're spending X million dollars on it, then that ratio looks pretty good, but, in fact, if we have 25,000 people with disabilities, we're not spending enough money. We need to know for resources for accommodations. Also, as a visible minority, I'm less sympathetic to this point of view. I say speak up for those of us who can't hide and have to make it and demand our place and demand our acceptance and recognition, the more of us who are different and embrace it and don't hide it, I think it's better for all of us.
I want everybody to speak up about whatever differences because the organization needs them all. We are working very hard to get people to self-identify. We will be unveiling at the end of November or beginning of December a much broader array of options to self-identify the Department of State. We're putting in gender identity, we're putting in national origin, we're putting in are you a first-generation American. All of those things that help better show who we are and how we represent Americans? That was a challenge to get it done, but we take no prisoners, so there we go, so anyway.

**Belcher:** Fantastic.

**King:** I just wanted to add to the end of that, that I think in this field, in particular, that issue is one that is demonstrably underrepresented. Particularly because the relationship between weapons and the legacy of weapons and people who do have disabilities is just very, very strong. If you look across the spectrum of disarmament and non-proliferation, there are some areas: anti-personnel landmines, cluster munitions. Some of the more humanitarian-oriented disarmament conventions that are very focused on, victim assistance I don't think is a term that we use that mush; affected communities. In the nuclear field, we don't really do that.

While certainly from a UN perspective, we obviously have internal strategies about accessibility for our own secretariat. We don't hear that much in the nuclear policy field, about accessibility and how to engage with this community.

**Belcher:** Thank you very much. We have 15 minutes left, and two sets of questions, so I'm going to group them here. One is about times of crisis and representation, and another is about practical steps on metrics and how we know that we're actually making success. Let me start first on the side of the moment of crisis. Two really good questions. One from Monica Montgomerie "DEI often seems to fly out of the window when we're in moments of crisis. We've seen a huge uptick in interest on nuclear policy since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but it seems to be, by and large, the same spokespeople dominating public discourse."

What can be done to better ensure that diversity remains a priority in the here and now, instead of something for the future?" Chris, you referred to this earlier to. The other related question comes from Ian Biggs. "Is the language of foreign policy and international relations an issue we can address?" We just discussed this a little bit. "Should diplomats be able to interact with equal effectiveness in any of the UN languages or any of the national languages of member states?" Is there a role for the languages of First Nations people? Does the urgency of arms control provide a legitimate excuse for conducting almost all serious engagement in the standard English?"

We have a lot here in those questions. We probably won't get to address them all today, but I wanted to put that out there for people in the audience to think about and to see what reactions each of you might have. Why don't we start with Angelica?

**Liao-Moroz:** That first question, in particular, I would say something that we encounter time and time again in arms control for at the UN treaty negotiations and other places as we constantly get told, "Gender equality, it's important, but you know what? Now is not the time we've got this crisis or that crisis going on, we can redirect
people's focus, resources and attention." We heard that during the pandemic, we heard that through economic crises, we heard that through the current war in Ukraine. It does two things when you say something like that, and frankly, we hear that I'm on [chuckles] almost a weekly basis in the work that we do. It does two things when you say something like that.

The first is, at the risk of stating the obvious, it suggests that gender parity and gender equality is not on the same playing field when it comes to how you measure development and progress. In fact, to suggest that, well, we'll eventually come to it when, in fact, we are further away from gender parity and gender equality than we were pre-pandemic. If you look at the most recent global economic surveys, I think, at this point, we're well over a hundred years away. It's 2022, are we all going to wait till 3022 to 3050 or beyond to get to make real headway in this space?

The second piece to this is when you say a comment like that, "We'll get to it eventually, but let us first deal with this crisis," you are basically ignoring all the intersectionality. Going back to the economic crisis example, research shows that women are disproportionately impacted from the pandemic, they have less economic opportunity, they have had to weather a lot of this, and so you can't ignore something that's so integral to that. I think we're doing ourselves a disservice by continuing to push away our work on this to some undefined point in the future. I have a thought of his question on language, but I don't want to take up all the airtime, so maybe we can circle back to that.

Belcher: Why don't we do that? Maybe what I can do is also then read out the next group of questions in a way, and then we can take responses. Let's look at DEI goals. We have questions here from so many people: Noah Mayhew, Sophia Potit, Nick Ross, Daniel Horna, Penny Wilcrot. They're coming in and in. How do you establish goals and metrics particularly given that organizations have different cultures and starting points? What are the range of strategies? What are the unique roles that different organizations play? I think just people are really craving something in terms of really concrete measures that you might be thinking about. Why don't we start with you, Richard?

Johnson: Sure. I think maybe I might pick and choose a couple of those things.

Belcher: Why don't you do that?

Johnson: There are some great things there. On the issue of not the right time and who are the spokespeople, first of all, I just completely with everything that Angelica just said. It goes back to where we started here, which is that it's actually not in our interest to wait on these issues. We have to do these issues now because we need the best people in these jobs because of the crisis that we're in now and we're not actually taking advantage of the entirety of the workforce and all of the knowledge, all of the skills, all of the expertise that's out there if we're not trying to meet-- I'm baseball fan, but it's a little bit like you're only going to go recruit at these three schools.

Your team is not going to be very good. You're going to have to go out there and get after all of that. Now is the time. We need more people on deck. I'll continue the baseball analogy there because there's too many things happening in the world to
not do that, and frankly, there are going to be generational changes. One of the things that I worry about is that we haven't set ourselves up for that next generation to come in and take that onboard.

If you don't start building that set of leaders now, when are you going to do that? I think that's a challenge and I'll mention one other thing that I'm very passionate about, and frankly, I want to do on myself, which is we talk a lot about, I'm actually grateful it hasn't been said yet in this panel, but the pipeline issue. It was always like, "Oh, well, it's a pipeline problem." We don't have people coming in, "Yes, we'd love to hire in a more diverse way, but we just don't get those applicants." Guess what? You have to create the pipeline.

I will tell you the only reason that I'm even in this field is because I took a class at a particular school, and I will say, you would put it in that category of an elite school, which is great. I love that school and I see some alumni of that school here in the audience and I'm very grateful that I was there and I was able to learn about this field and to be where I am today, but we can't just continue to reach out and only work with a few specific institutions, a few specific folks who we always know that there are folks there. Let's go talk at HBCUs, let's go talk at minority serving institutions, state universities, community colleges.

There are so many places that we can go, high schools, and talk about this field. Again, the only reason that I'm here is because I took one class and I think that there is understandably a bit of an impostor syndrome that happens where you go, "I'm not a nuclear physicist, I'm not an engineer, I'm not a chemist, I don't have a PhD from Harvard, so I really shouldn't apply for any of these jobs." First of all, that's not true. The answer is if you can think you can write, you can analyze, that's what we need, and then the rest of the stuff you can learn.

I got very lucky to be mentored by a lot of great folks in our national labs and institutions, but we need to make that message be known. I feel really passionately that we need to do more as a community to reach out beyond the traditional places that we often do that recruitment because we do need to build that next generation.


King: To talk about Ian's question about language. I think one of the things, and to get back to what the ambassador said, the pushback you often get is related to relevancy, like, why is this issue being discussed here? Which comes to, I think, again, the why now issue as well. On the language; language is also used as a reason to push back on diversity, particularly in the United Nations, the culturalisms. We're often told that, well, the nuances in English are different to the nuances in Spanish or French or Chinese or Russian.

That's particularly when it comes to pronouns.

If you look for example, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva had an incredibly lengthy debate about gender-neutral language. You'd think that would be a pretty cut and dry issue, right? Gender-neutral language and the rules of procedure for the Conference on Disarmament. It's not. It was the biggest debate they had, which speaks volumes about the Conference on Disarmament.
It was the biggest debate they had and it was because of that push back about language and nuances in language and what it means in English does not what it mean in Spanish or whatever else. I think that's something that we have to grapple with and we need to have better alliance and better push back on that to be able to say, "It doesn't matter, we need to find out a way to smooth out those nuances."

I think on the issue of First Nations, in particular, the United Nations obviously is found on a very specific charter and that is a six-language basis, but I do think there's room for, I think, accessibility is going to require having people to be able to speak in their own tongues, to be to use their own cultural identities as vehicles to move us forward in this space. As a techno-optimist, I'm really, really hopeful that machine learning and technological innovations will enable that simultaneous interpretation across all different kinds of language, and therefore, we can grow on that structure. That's something that we need to be pursuing in parallel as well.

Belcher: Fantastic. Ambassador, put some thoughts on the views.

Abercrombie-Winstanley: Everything they said. Of course, just bad policy. Bad policy is what comes when you have limited-- Aargh, bad policy. [chuckles] I was thinking about the languages because we're grappling with that at stages you can imagine and we have people. We have diplomats who communicate via ASL, American Sign Language, and we've got a working group to address our language requirement. You've got BF language, foreign language, and whether sign languages, because there are different ones in different countries, whether they could be added as a foreign language for those who are using sign languages.

These are things that we're talking about now, which I think are overdue and very exciting and I'm hoping for good results on that and then a very enthusiastic group of folks who are trying to figure that out.

Belcher: Fantastic. Thank you. We just have a few minutes left and I want to notice. I think we've had wonderful questions. We haven't heard specific answers yet on the metrics side, so I'll remind the panelist. There's one question here that comes up. "At your respective organizations, what level of financial resources are you committing to DEI initiatives? Do you think it's enough?" Is there a metric there anyone would like to offer?

Abercrombie-Winstanley: Let me just very briefly speak to metrics because in this country, it is against the law to do anything that is useful and sensible.

[laughter]

Are we on the record?

Belcher: It might be the headline.

Abercrombie-Winstanley: Meaning, discrimination happened in a very deliberate, thoughtful fashion for many years. We had a president who put out an executive order, it may have been his first one, one of his early ones that removed African Americans from federal service. It was an executive order that segregated the
federal service in the US government, which many Americans who love Woodrow Wilson for other reasons don't know that he did, but he was a flaming racist. To correct these things, logically you'd say, "Okay, I've got two great candidates. All things being equal, let's go for gender parity, or let's have something that generally reflects the US population if we've got great candidates."

You could do that, but that's against the law. We cannot set quotas. We cannot set targets, my lawyers tell me, because it's too close to quotas. We cannot set goals because it's too close to targets, which are too close to quotas. I spend my money and my time and my focus on barrier analysis to find out where groups are being stopped in our way up the ladder because it's different for women, it's different for Asian Americans, African Americans, Hispanics, particular if they are of color, et cetera. Finding that and identifying, we're changing the way we're doing assignments in hiring. No more single decision-makers. We say panels, minimum three people outside the bureau.

If you want to be promoted, you must be able to write about what you're doing in support diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. Not only must you be able to write about it or your a supervisor, you've got to talk about the impact of what you're doing. Not, did you join a council? What did you do on the council and what was its impact? That's where we're our money where our mouth is as far as metrics or not metrics. We'll see in the end whether we have improved our numbers because that's what I care about, but I can't do logical, sensible, useful things immediately to do so because it's against the law.

**Speaker:** I hope that we are. Just to reiterate that you can put as many benchmarks in place as you want and you can have participation. It's decision-making and leadership. That's something. Just to come back to, capacity building, think about the future, think about building tomorrow's generation and how they're gonna see the world and what skills we can provide them.

**Liao-Moroz:** Fantastic. I'm sorry not to be able to provide the final words. I'm getting the wind-up sign. I think I'm so energized by this because there is so much more we could talk about. There's clearly a lot here, there's a lot of interest. I want to say thanks to each of our excellent panelists for their wonderful contributions, not only on this stage but in the work you're doing at your respective organizations. Thanks to all of you who showed up.

Thanks to everybody who's watching because this is something that is all of our responsibility, creating the kind of workforce that we need, is going to help us build on better ideas, and better nuclear policy, and keep us all safe, safer in this, quite frankly, challenging time and challenging times ahead. Thank you, everybody.

[01:11:15] [END OF AUDIO]