Message by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs
4th International Day of Women and Girls in Science

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Today is the fourth International Day of Women and Girls in Science, and despite some progress since this day was established by the General Assembly, a significant gender gap continues to persist at all levels of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines around the world.

Gender equality is not only a moral imperative and fundamental human right, but also a powerful tool for acceleration progress in other areas, including peace, justice and development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes gender equality as a necessary foundation for peaceful, prosperous and sustainable societies.

As the High Representative of Disarmament Affairs, I have pledged to promote the full and equal participation of women in the field of disarmament. I didn’t make this pledge only because it is the right thing to do – although of course it is. I made this pledge because I believe that strengthening the role of women and diversity of voices in disarmament will advance our collective goals in disarmament, nonproliferation and arms control.

In today’s world of increasingly complex challenges, we cannot afford to use only half of our intellect, creativity and energy to address these issues. Problems as grave and difficult as disarmament require mobilising all our human capital, with full engagement by women, men, girls and boys.

Current developments in science and technology are providing unprecedented opportunities for development but also potential challenges to international security. The weaponization of innovation presents a raft of dangerous possibilities, from cyber warfare to biological and autonomous weapons.

Women have already proven that they can be powerful agents for peace. They must also be responsible stewards of scientific discovery, ensuring that innovations are only used for their intended purposes, and to foster a more peaceful and prosperous world for all.

Therefore, today I issue two calls to action. First, I call on all States to strengthen efforts to close the gender gap in science. Second, I call on women and girls in science to join the disarmament movement. The world needs your voices and expertise if we ever hope to reach our goal of a safer and more secure future.