

APMBC Intersessional Meetings

20 – 22 June 2022

Gender and Diversity Working Group (GDWG) Statement

On behalf of member organizations:

Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines, Danish Church Aid, Danish Refugee Council, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, The HALO Trust, Humanity & Inclusion, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines-Cluster Munition Coalition (ICBL-CMC), Mines Action Canada, Mines Advisory Group, the Mine Action Review, Norwegian People's Aid, and la Red de Seguridad Humana en América Latina y el Caribe (SEHLAC).

Session 5: Thematic Panel and Discussion: Making Every Effort Count

Thank you.

The Gender and Diversity Working Group is pleased to join this discussion about Making Every Effort Count since we believe that only through inclusive mine action can we ensure that we are making our best effort to achieve our shared goal of ending the suffering caused by landmines. 'Making every effort count' means creating space for everyone, in particular people and communities who may be marginalized, to contribute to implementing the Mine Ban Treaty.

Yet, many challenges remain. Research from working group member, Mines Action Canada, found that in 2019 women made up barely 20% of clearance staff while another member, then known as the Gender and Mine Action Programme, found that only 23.6% of delegates to the 2017 APMBC Meeting of States Parties were women. Clearly, we are not utilizing the full potential of humanity to tackle this global problem.

We remind you that in 2020, the Latin American Network of Survivors stated that girls and women survivors face additional challenges in accessing education and employment opportunities, as well as experience specific challenges such as higher rates of gender-based violence. As long as we do not take specific measures to address these issues, we will continue to foster inequality.

We note with concern the reporting from the Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, that members of the all-women clearance team in Afghanistan were subjected to intimidation and harassment over the past year.

It is of utmost importance to maximize synergies and connections with other frameworks that address gender and diversity issues to prevent such human rights violations or harassment.

As operators and advocates, we know the inequality in participation on the basis of gender and other diversity factors in this sector is not an issue of a lack of interest or ability, but one of a lack of opportunity. When employment opportunities, for risk education programs, for community liaison activities, for clearance or for campaigning roles incorporate concrete measures to include women, persons with disabilities, and marginalized communities, we see passionate and effective engagement, long term results on the ground, and rights being respected and promoted. Operationalizing diversity in

mine action requires going beyond gender and age, to also include other diversity factors, such as disability and ethnicity and others depending on the context. This would, for example, see transparent and needs-based priority setting reflected in task orders that would lead to the release of land that would benefit people most in need.

Last month, we were pleased to host a workshop on “Best practices and lessons learned from practical mainstreaming of gender and diversity in mine action” with the Colombian presidency of the Mine Ban Treaty and the UK Presidency of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. This virtual event brought together over one hundred participants from mine action authorities, missions, local organizations - including survivors - and international operators to share and learn. We would like to thank the representatives who presented during the workshop. From those presentations, it was clear that when operations are tailored to gender and diversity considerations we see improvement in effectiveness. The conversations indicated that while there is excellent work being done to promote inclusivity in mine action, we still have a lot of work to do to ensure results that truly benefit affected communities. As the Gender and Diversity Working Group, we look forward to continuing these conversations with States Parties as we all strive to meet the goals set out for us in the Oslo Action Plan. Every effort and complete fulfillment of the Convention’s obligations can only be achieved through a gender and diversity sensitive approach.

Thank you.