

Statement by the Gender and Diversity Working Group (GDWG)

Item 10i: Gender Mainstreaming

Twelfth Meeting of States Parties to the CCM, 10–13 September 2024

Thank you, Madam President. I am pleased to take the floor on behalf of the 13 organizations making up the Gender and Diversity in Mine Action Working Group.

This is a challenging time for the Convention on Cluster Munitions community. After over fourteen years of implementation and innumerable efforts to reduce the humanitarian consequences of cluster munitions, we see a State Party wanting to withdraw from the Convention and from the protection the Convention gives to women, girls, boys, and men in conflict-affected countries. As a result, State Parties and civil society organizations must redouble their efforts to ensure that security concerns do not overshadow years of progress on universalizing and fully implementing the treaty, and to strive for a world free of cluster munitions.

Despite this threat to the Convention and its norms, we should not lose sight of the huge amount of progress made to-date, including with respect to gender and diversity considerations which were firmly embedded throughout the Lausanne Action Plan. We recognize the actions being taken by State Parties to implement the Action Plan at its halfway point, as noted in the Working Paper by 24 states and UNIDIR. We are pleased to see Mine Action Review's monitoring of the Lausanne Action Plan reveal that 60% of the affected State Parties assessed have integrated gender and diversity considerations in their work plans and strategies. The remaining 40% must follow suit.

We know that mainstreaming gender and diversity is essential for generating effective victim assistance and risk education programs, and for reaching all members of affected communities during survey, community liaison, and handover. Gender, age, and disability disaggregated data about casualties and incidents is crucial to designing programs to keep people safe. Unfortunately, as highlighted in the 2024 Cluster Munitions Monitor, age and gender disaggregated data "was severely lacking" which makes it very difficult to target risk education activities to those most at risk in cluster munition affected communities.

While there are notable advancements in transparency reporting under Article 7, including a dedicated form on "Gender and Diversity of Populations" (Form J), continued efforts are still necessary to address gaps and ensure comprehensive and accurate reporting by all State Parties.

Our focus on gender and diversity is not based on fashion or ideology, it's about effectiveness and everyone's safety. And it is widely recognised good practice for reaching the goals of the Convention. Over the last few years, we have seen a pushback against gender and diversity-responsive policy making around the world. States Parties must remain committed to our work ensuring that the needs of all affected communities are covered and that all diverse groups are given equal representation.

We appreciate the information shared today by States Parties and we warmly welcome the cross-regional joint statement just delivered by [Germany]. That statement, like the co-sponsored working paper, demonstrates that we are committed to making progress on this important topic.

Next year we are celebrating 25 years of the Women Peace and Security Agenda and the CCM should celebrate and intensify its efforts in effectively considering women's perspectives. Women across the world play a crucial role in clearing explosive ordnance, conducting comprehensive non-technical surveys and risk education.

As we move forward, it is crucial that we reaffirm our commitment to the principles of gender equality and inclusion. We must ensure that our progress is inclusive and that every voice is heard in the efforts to address the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions. Our collective goal must be to uphold the values of the Convention, ensuring that all affected communities receive the support they need and that no one is left behind in our pursuit of a world free of cluster munitions.