

CMC Statement on Risk Education

*Convention on Cluster Munitions Intersessional meetings
Geneva, 7-8 April 2025*

Thank you, Chair.

Risk Education continues to be an essential pillar of mine action—one that saves lives, builds resilience, and supports affected communities to navigate the risks of explosive ordnance contamination. We welcome the updates from States Parties that have reported on risk education activities, many of which continue to focus rightly on the most vulnerable, particularly children.

However, we remain deeply concerned about the situation in many countries, including in Afghanistan, where a sharp reduction in risk education activities—driven by the suspension of U.S. funding—has left communities increasingly exposed. This comes on top of ongoing financial challenges since the political shift in 2021.

As reported by the Cluster Munition Monitor last year - civilians accounted for 93% of casualties, and nearly half were children. This underlines the continued humanitarian cost of contamination and the urgent need for risk education, as well as clearance.

The importance of Risk Education is only growing globally, particularly in contexts where clearance operations have slowed or stalled. Over the past five years, the sector—led in large part by the EORE Advisory Group and its members—has made impressive strides. This includes the development of updated IMAS 12.10 guidance, the mainstreaming of social and behavior change communication approaches, and the expansion of digital EORE, which has proven critical in emergencies and inaccessible areas.

We also recognize the leadership of this convention, which has helped elevate EORE by appointing a dedicated coordinator and including risk education as a standing agenda item. Risk education is now more targeted—better integrating gender, age, and to some extent, disability and diversity. It is increasingly recognized as an entry point to survey, clearance, and victim assistance, and its responsiveness in recent emergencies, including Ukraine, Gaza, and Myanmar, has demonstrated its value as a rapid, adaptable intervention.

Despite this progress, persistent challenges must be addressed. Risk education funding remains extremely limited—just 1% of global mine action funding in 2023—and is rarely disaggregated from clearance budgets. This makes it difficult to assess real investment levels. Dedicated, earmarked funds for risk education are urgently needed, particularly to support national and local partners who often lead delivery on the ground.

States Parties also continue to face difficulties in planning and reporting on risk education. Beyond counting beneficiaries, more robust reporting is needed to reflect the methods, approaches, and behavioral changes targeted. Capacity-building in this area could significantly improve transparency and program quality.

We also note a growing concern: in areas where clearance is delayed but risk education continues, communities may experience fatigue and frustration. To sustain trust and effectiveness, risk education must be better integrated with broader humanitarian, development, and livelihood interventions that offer tangible alternatives to contaminated land and lost opportunity.

Finally, the rising use of explosive weapons in populated areas—including cluster munitions—presents new operational challenges for RE, particularly regarding safety, access, and messaging. Strengthening the links between RE and frameworks like the EWIPA Declaration can help reinforce our collective response.

In closing, we urge all States Parties and donors to recognize that effective risk education is not a secondary activity—it is a frontline defense. If we are serious about reducing casualties and building safer futures, then we must commit the resources, coordination, and innovation needed to ensure RE reaches everyone at risk, especially in contexts where clearance cannot yet keep pace.

Thank you.