

Statement on Gender and Diversity
(Agenda Item 3h, Gender and Diverse Needs of Populations)
(delivered by NPA on behalf of the Gender and Diversity in Mine Action Working Group
(GDWG))
CCM Intersessional Meetings, 7–8 April 2025

Thank you, President.

I am pleased to take the floor on behalf of the 13 member organizations of the Gender and Diversity Working Group in Mine Action: Amputee Self-Help Network Uganda (ASNU), Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines, Danish Church Aid (DCA), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), The HALO Trust, Humanity and Inclusion, International Campaign to Ban Landmines-Cluster Munition Coalition (ICBL-CMC), Mines Advisory Group (MAG), Mines Action Canada, Mine Action Review, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), and SEHLAC (Seguridad Humana en Latino América y el Caribe). We welcome this dedicated plenary item on Gender and Diverse needs, in order to highlight this core aspect of implementation, and until it is effectively mainstreamed.

There is no doubt that our community is facing some of its greatest challenges since the Convention on Cluster Munitions was negotiated in 2008. With a State Party withdrawing and increasing funding challenges, it might be tempting to overlook the gender and diversity provisions of the Lausanne Action Plan. But this would come at the expense of effective and efficient implementation. Make no mistake, shifts in power and responsibility towards equality have never been easily negotiated and need constant advocacy. We are grateful for the Gender Focal Points that have taken a stance today in this plenary to speak up as well as those that support effective mainstreaming across affected communities at the field level.

We are also aware that there is continued push back from some States Parties who object to concepts of diversity and have concerns about gender mainstreaming. But let us remember that the only way to meet our shared goals of implementing the CCM is by being as inclusive as possible. We cannot afford to leave anyone behind on the road to a world without cluster munitions.

The gender and diversity related actions under the Lausanne Action Plan have made a tangible impact in communities affected by cluster munitions. It makes a difference, for example, when:

- There is more access to well paid jobs for women
- When budgets of families increase because women are employed in the sector.

- When operators offer parental leave and childcare support and further boost the local economy and support young families.
- When disaggregated data regarding age, biological sex, disability status and other diversity factors is collected and improves targeting especially across the victim assistance and explosive ordnance risk education pillars.
- When we have more information for survey and clearance because of female deminers in the team – who often serve as role models or build trust among various community members

Overall, gender and diversity mainstreaming allows us to use the limited resources we have effectively and efficiently – we do a better job in a more sustainable manner. Mine Action Review’s country reports provide concrete, practical examples of initiatives and advancements being made by national authorities and their implementing partners to mainstream gender mainstreaming and inclusion in mine action programming. Mine Action Review’s monitoring of the Lausanne Action Plan shows that 60% of affected States Parties now have national work plans or strategies that integrate gender and diversity, in line with Action 4 of the action plan. These must be translated to drive actual change in headquarters and in the field.

We encourage States Parties when filling in annual Article 7 transparency reports, to use the new reporting template which includes form J on ‘Gender and Diversity of Populations’ to further document the actions you have taken.

While there is still plenty of room for improvement, significant progress has been made in the sector over recent years. Protecting this progress is paramount. Now is the time to step up firmly on the foundation we have built and be as inclusive as possible in our implementation of the Lausanne Action Plan.

According to the ICRC, there are currently more than 120 armed conflicts around the world. But security is not just about hard assets – member states of this Convention understand the importance of soft power and of putting effective limits on weapons that will only make us less safe in the long run.

We demonstrate the lasting impact on the safety of affected communities through effective implementation – this is only possible through gender and diversity mainstreaming.

We are all in this treaty together and no-one should be left behind.

Thank you.