

Thank you.

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Promoting gender sensitivity and gender inclusivity has long been a foreign policy priority for Norway. It is one of our 4 core priorities for our current membership of the UN Security Council, and it was a top priority from day #1 of our presidency of the 4th Review Conference in 2019. Constant attention to the issue of gender shaped our presidency and the Oslo Action Plan itself.

We did of course not do that alone – the operators and civil society were our partners in arms. Without their strong and long-standing advocacy, we would not have been where we are today. And, in the run-up to the Review Conference, the Gender Working Group was immensely helpful to us.

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Attention to gender and diversity in mine action is not new. But the level of attention, and the quality of attention has progressed over time. We have seen a trend of increasing **ownership** to the issue amongst the states parties.

In the Nairobi Action Plan for the period 2005-2009 gender was mentioned twice. Diversity was not mentioned at all.

In the Cartagena Action Plan for the period 2010-2014, gender was mentioned 7 times. The plan also specifies that “women and men” must be involved in the acceptance process related to land release.

In the Maputo Action Plan gender is also mentioned 7 times in relation to risk education, victim assistance and international cooperation and assistance. The Maputo Action Plan specifies that not only “women and men”, but “women, girls, boys and men” must be included in the development of the land release methodologies. Diverse needs was still not mentioned.

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The Oslo Action Plan and the revised mandates of the Convention’s committees at the 4th Review Conference took things a significant step further. The integration and mainstreaming of gender is now recognised as best practice, and has its very own action point – action #3.

That is a fantastic commitment from the States Parties! And it is equally fantastic to see that civil society and the expert community have taken the Action to heart as well, using it to hold us to account. Since 2019 the Mine

Action Review features a gender score, for example, and as a member of the Article 5 Committee, Norway regularly benefits from expert input that now also relates to gender and diversity.

In addition to Action #3, the Oslo Action Plan has retained the gender references in the chapters on risk education, victim assistance and international cooperation and assistance – with gender mentioned 13 times throughout the document, and twice with the clarification that consultations should be had with “women, girls, boys and men”.

As you all know, the mandates of the Committees have been revised to include a gender focal point in each. Action #3 also promotes attention to the diverse needs of the affected population, with “diverse needs” mentioned 8 times in the plan.

What we have undertaken to do is to make mine action **inclusive** by ensuring that the “needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men are considered and inform **all areas of Convention implementation**”. It can’t be much clearer than that.

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I want to make 2 points in this regard:

1) Gender sensitivity is not just about women. This is a long-standing realisation of the mine action community that we as a presidency wanted to take into the convention. That is why Action #3 reads the way it does -- “women, girls, boys and men”. In many situations it’s actually the boys and men that are at the highest risk.

2) The second point I wanted to make relates to Action #3 and the donors. We sometimes hear that a gender-inclusive approach increases the costs.

As recognised in the UNMAS Gender Guidelines, there might indeed in some cases be short-term cost increases in conjunction with gender mainstreaming.

As donors, Action #3 reminds us to not have a narrow focus on *short-term* cost-effectiveness when it comes to inclusivity and gender sensitivity. In the odd case there is a cost implication, we must approach this with a positive attitude. A mine action that is sensitive to gender and diverse needs will provide the best results over time.

Thank you.

