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United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action
Intersessional Meetings of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

**Integrating Gender and the Diverse Needs of Affected Communities in
Operational Planning and Prioritization**

(22 June to 24 June 2021)

Delivered by Mr. Bruno Donat, Chief, Geneva Office, UNMAS

Mr. Chair,

On behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA)¹, let me begin by congratulating Spain for its chairing of this session on Integrating Gender and the Diverse Needs of Affected Communities in Operational Planning and Prioritization, as well as the Presidency of The Netherlands on its leadership in convening the Intersessional Meetings that allow space for States Parties, observer states, civil society and other stakeholders to participate meaningfully, especially under these unusual and difficult circumstances.

Our thanks to all of the panelists in this session for your fruitful interventions; our gratitude as well to several who mentioned the work of the United Nations on diversity and gender. A special word of appreciation to Sweden for highlighting the recent discussion on Inclusion and Diversity: Racial Equity in Mine Action that occurred last month at the international meeting of mine action Directors and United Nations Advisors, and for recommending the need to continue this discussion in various ways.

Since it is the first time we are taking the floor, allow me to echo the words of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to convey once more our deepest condolences to the victims of the recent and outrageous attack on our Afghan colleagues of the HALO Trust that occurred in Afghanistan. The United Nations condemns, yet again, in the strongest possible terms, those who target members of a humanitarian organization seeking to support mine-affected communities. Our thoughts are with the injured deminers and their loved ones and the families of the deceased.

¹ The United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action consists of twelve United Nations Departments and Offices of the Secretariat, specialized agencies, funds and programmes: the United Nations Mine Action Service of the Department of Peace Operations, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the World Bank are observers.



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Excellencies,

In the Oslo Action Plan, the States Parties recognized that while landmines and other explosive remnants of war are indiscriminate by design, the specific threat and impact will vary according to gender, age and other aspects of diversity. Consequently, they renewed their commitment to the full implementation of their treaty obligations and committed to strong actions on the consideration of gender, age and diversity in the implementation of the Convention. They identified the integration of gender and age, and the consideration of the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities as a best practice.

Like the Oslo Action Plan, the United Nations Mine Action Strategy 2019-2023 calls for the mainstreaming of the specific needs of women, girls, men and boys from diverse groups in the planning and implementation of mine action programmes, while facilitating their empowerment and inclusion in all aspects of mine action programmes.

Aligned with the United Nations Mine Action Strategy, the joint UNMAS-UNOPS gender and diversity strategy includes gender diversity, empowerment, equality and inclusion as well as non-discrimination in employment, decision-making and opportunities. Nineteen mine action programme workplans are guided by gender and diversity frameworks adapted to the local context. A gender and diversity dashboard tracks statistics on parity to monitor and evaluate progress.

As a result, in Afghanistan, dedicated gender mainstreaming officers have implemented technical workshops with the national Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan, undertaken perception studies with female deminers in Bamyán, developed operational toolkits for partners to ensure gender and diversity mainstreaming in operations and ensured that behavioral change focused explosive ordnance risk messaging is tailored to specific needs within communities.

In Iraq, women and men from multiple religious groups within communities have been hired and trained as deminers within mixed-gender teams, promoting social reconstruction. Iraqi women police officers responding in communities affected by explosive ordnance have trained to appropriately manage the explosive threat and strategic planning processes of the Iraqi mine action authorities are now streamlined to be gender responsive. Sex and age disaggregated data are ensured across all mine action programmes for data collection and reporting.



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Mr. Chair,

The United Nations invites States to consult the United Nations Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes. They illustrate how gender and diversity considerations can be included in different stages of mine action programming from a very practical perspective.

Only if mine action actors are equipped to apply lenses of gender, age and diversity as part of a comprehensive and inclusive approach to planning, can we ensure that “no one is left behind.”

And this is our duty.

Thank you.

END.