



REPÚBLICA DE PANAMÁ  
MISIÓN PERMANENTE DE PANAMÁ ANTE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS Y OTROS ORGANISMOS  
INTERNACIONALES CON SEDE EN GINEBRA

**Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer  
of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction  
Intersessional Meetings**

*Geneva, 30 June 2020*

***Opening Session - Gender Focal Points***

Thank you very much Mr. President.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour and a privilege to deliver this statement on behalf of the gender focal points of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

Across the globe, many innocent and defenceless civilians continue to be exposed to serious suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines, living in fear due to this threat. While we recognize that these weapons are indiscriminate in nature, their effects vary according to gender, age, disability, ethnicity and other aspects of diversity.

Let me give you an example: men are more likely to be physically injured by landmines, and may face exclusion from their communities if they are unable to fulfil their traditional roles, whereas women that are survivors are more likely to be neglected if they can no longer accomplish their conventional tasks within their own family.

We have observed throughout the last decades that mine action takes place in contexts where there are differences and inequalities between women, men, boys and girls, and between diverse groups in terms of the role, behaviour, activities and responsibilities assigned to them. This dynamic influence the likelihood of becoming a landmine victim, the ability to access medical care, assistance and reintegration programmes, risk education and mine awareness resources and information, as well as the decision-making capacities of affected communities.

The international community has for some time now been aware of the importance of considerations of gender and diversity for the effective implementation of the Convention. Since the Third Review Conference in Maputo, there has been a

growing understanding of the need to systematically integrate gender and the diverse needs of affected communities within all aspects of the Convention's work.

It was last year at the Fourth Review Conference, with the adoption of the Oslo Action Plan, that we put further emphasis on these matters and set ambitious actions for implementing the Convention in the most effective, efficient and inclusive way possible, more so than any other previous review conferences.

Action 3 of the Oslo Action Plan commits States Parties to ensure that the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men are considered and inform all areas of Convention implementation and mine action programming, in order to deliver an inclusive approach. Also, States Parties will strive to remove barriers to full, equal and gender balanced participation in mine action and in Convention meetings.

Moreover, the Oslo Action Plan affirms that States Parties will carry out their mine action and victim assistance programmes in a way that is sensitive to gender, age, disability and that take the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into account as they implement their respective obligations under the Convention.

In order to ensure that gender and diversity considerations were not just nice words on paper but to be integrated in the working methods and machinery of the Convention, each Committee was given the responsibility to appoint a focal point among its members to provide advice on gender mainstreaming and ensure that the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities are taken into account in the implementation of the Convention. In this context, Chile, Colombia, Norway and my own country Panama we are proud to be the first gender focal points of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

The mandates of the Committees were also expanded to consider matters related to gender and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities in every aspect of its work. It is important to underscore that while a focal point has been appointed by every Committee, the Chair of the Committee and the Committee as a whole has the responsibility to guarantee that we consider gender and diversity in our work.

Let us be clear... integrating gender and diversity in our mine action and victim assistance programming should not be seen as an additional requirement or workload – it is about ensuring that our response is better targeted and more effective, and thus achieving greater results.

The inclusion of gender specific actions and indicators in the Oslo Action Plan, as well as mainstreaming gender and diversity in the Committee structures could set a positive example for other disarmament fora and promote the connections between mine action and the SDGs, highlighting the contribution of a gender-responsive mine action to the achievement of sustainable development, including gender equality and peaceful and inclusive societies.

One of the main challenges is that there is still reluctance and limited understanding of what gender and diversity mainstreaming means and what

actions might be taken at the national level to guarantee a real application of these issues for the benefit of the Convention. For this reason, we would like to take this opportunity to invite State Parties and other stakeholders to actively engage in our Panel Discussion on “*Effective Implementation for All – Gender and Diverse needs in practice*”, that will take place this afternoon at 3:00 p.m., Geneva time.

The aim of the Panel Discussion is to continue raising awareness of the value of gender and diversity mainstreaming for the effective implementation of the Convention and the Oslo Action Plan addressing key practical challenges in policy making, planning, programming, implementation and its evaluation.

In the meantime, we would encourage all States Parties to pay particular attention to these aspects of the Oslo Action Plan in their reporting obligations, in order to help us to implement our mandate. It is important that you provide us with information on how your State ensures the integration and mainstreaming of gender considerations and take the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into account in mine action programming. This includes your States efforts to carry out its clearance, mine risk education and victim assistance activities, as well as how your State considers these matters in providing cooperation and assistance.

In addition, we call upon States to ensure the active and meaningful participation of women across all aspects of Convention implementation, including in leadership roles.

To sum up..... Making progress in this regard will be our collective responsibility. We have the opportunity through mine action to promote this kind of positive change in our societies, let's take advantage of this.

Thank you Mr. President.