

## **Gender and Diversity in Mine Action Working Group**

### **Statement to the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty on Cooperation and Assistance**

I am making this statement in my capacity as a member of the Gender and Diversity Working Group, on behalf of the 11 civil society organizations, Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines, DCA, the GICHD, The HALO Trust, HI, the ICBL-CMC, MAC, MAG, Mine Action Review, SEHLAC and my own organization NPA.

Since our Working Group first came together in the lead up to the 4<sup>th</sup> Review Conference of this treaty in 2019, we have seen an increase in attention paid to gender and diversity in these forums. The Oslo Action Plan set us on a clear path towards more inclusive and effective implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty and helped us bring gender and diversity from the side event room to the plenary.

In its review of Article 7 transparency reports, the working group noted that six donors to mine action included information in their reporting on measures they are taking to support integration and mainstreaming of gender and diversity in affected countries, including the UK which provided the most comprehensive information.

Furthermore, from the experiences of our member organisations, we know that a handful of donor states are allocating dedicated budget lines to improve gender and diversity mainstreaming in mine action. We commend these efforts and urge other donors to do the same and to report on this in Article 7 reports.

At the same time, we have seen a concentrated effort by some states and other actors against diversity, equality and inclusion around the world, and the mine action sector is not immune. It is imperative that donors recognize that the improved quality of inclusive programming is worth the investment. Ensuring that all groups in affected communities can participate in decision making, and benefit from survey, clearance and victim assistance programs, is crucial to effective mine action operations.

Finally, we note with concern the situation in Afghanistan. We hope the mine action community can collectively help our Afghan colleagues to ensure that the hard-won advances for women and girls in the mine action sector are not lost. Now is not the time to be silent.