

**EORE AG**  
**Explosive Ordnance Risk Education**  
**Advisory Group**

**20th Meeting of the States Parties to the APMBC**

21-25 November 2022

*Shortened for delivery*

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for the opportunity to deliver this statement on behalf of the EORE Advisory Group.

The 25th anniversary of the Ottawa Convention offers a chance to reflect on where the Explosive Ordnance Risk Education sector has come from, where we are now, and where we would like to go in the future.

Despite Risk Education being one of the five pillars of mine action, for many years the pillar did not receive the attention it deserved. A sentiment prevailed in the sector, that “a dollar spent on risk education is a dollar taken away from demining”, not recognising that the two are both necessary components of the larger goal to improve safety and well-being among conflict-affected communities.

With the creation of the EORE Advisory Group in 2019 and the ‘uplift’ of risk education in the Oslo Action Plan in December 2019 with a stand-alone chapter, this pillar is beginning to receive the attention it merits. The quality of risk education delivery is also improving: EORE messages are increasingly targeted, adapted to the local context, and interactive, stimulating people to behave in a safer way while reaching those in vulnerable and marginalised groups.

There is still much room for growth, however, in learning from others operating in the “Social and Behaviour Change Communication”-space, to make sessions more effective at influencing behaviours and to find meaningful ways to measure the changes that occur. Principles of “Behaviour Change Communication” should be integrated into all EORE project design, including determining and addressing the barriers to safe behaviours.

Addressing those barriers to safe behaviours also means risk reduction efforts cannot remain siloed in the mine action sector. As long as people feel forced to engage in risky behaviours, or choose to do so in spite of known risks, education alone will not suffice. These people need real, safe alternatives to the choices currently made if those choices are to change.

Where feasible, risk education practitioners should draw on new technologies to continue to reach communities with repeated messaging across a variety of media. While we know repetition and variety are critical to effective messaging, we too often fall back on one-off face-to-face delivery.

Finally, dedicated EORE campaigns are life-saving in emergency contexts like Ukraine, Myanmar, Nigeria, Yemen or Ethiopia. While international operators are often needed in the short-term, in the long-term it is necessary to build and rely on sustainable national capacity. Such capacity development efforts must include not only how to deliver effective EORE, but also how to limit staff risks from explosive ordnance during the course of their work. Decision-makers' Duty of Care must be fulfilled.

In conclusion, the mine action sector's understanding and implementation of effective EORE has improved a great deal since the perception that risk education and clearance were competing priorities. Improved understanding from outside the sector of behaviours, their drivers, and their influencers, however, remains to be more fully integrated into the work we do, as does increased localisation and emphasis on our Duty of Care.

The EORE AG will continue to work to facilitate the integration of these concepts across the sector, and to support the States Parties and Observer States in improving EORE practices and effectively enacting actions 28-32.

Thank you.