

# EORE AG

## Explosive Ordnance Risk Education Advisory Group

### 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the States Parties to the APMBC

20-24 November 2023

*Check against delivery*

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

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

Risk education is a fundamental pillar of mine action. Recent crises that have led to new contamination by explosive ordnance have shown first-hand the importance of investing in effective and locally led EORE interventions. EORE deployment in Ukraine is an example of how the sector can deliver innovative and quality-focused EORE, even when facing emergency situations. However, the sector is facing multiple and new challenges: the threat posed by improvised explosive devices has progressively expanded; extreme weather events and climate change increasingly impacted negatively on the protection of civilians from explosive ordnance threats; the urbanisation of conflict and the use of explosive weapons in populated areas continued to cause suffering among civilians. Ongoing, new or renewed hostilities led to reports of new or worsened contamination. All these elements call for a need for increased protection of the civilian population from EO through solid EORE interventions.

In this context, it is key that the mine action sector puts a focus on how to deliver sustainable and impact-focused risk education, through enhanced national ownership. The upcoming Review Conference provides an opportunity for States Parties to invest in the centrality of risk education and put it at the core of their efforts to better protect the civilian population. The Advisory Group stands ready to support the preparation of the Siem Reap Action Plan's sections related to this topic.

Moving forward, the EORE Advisory Group draws your attention to several actions to further improve the implementation of risk education globally:

- States with EO contamination should take the lead in the coordination and delivery of EORE. This will mean going beyond the accreditation of mine action organisations and including EORE in national policies involving education and risk management. Also, engaging local authorities in the planning, delivery and monitoring of EORE is a game changer. National ownership is vital to guarantee the sustainability of risk education activities; mine action operators and donors should support state parties in achieving this.
- States should guarantee the delivery of impact- and quality-focused EORE. Tailoring EORE interventions for effective behavioural change requires implementing injury surveillance, behavioural surveys, and other assessments to identify at-risk groups and understand drivers of safe and unsafe behaviour. The Advisory Group, under the lead of

UNICEF, is developing a Theory of Change for EORE that will support the sector to design and implement impactful risk education projects.

- Effective EORE implementation requires assessing gender, age, disability, and diversity factors to design targeted interventions. Currently, the sector lacks information on how various disabilities respond to contamination, hindering the creation of tailored interventions. Collecting disability data enables a comprehensive understanding of high-risk individuals, facilitating tailored EORE activities based on age, gender, disability, and diversity considerations.
- It is important to go beyond traditional approaches for EORE to achieve better results. Other practical risk reduction solutions - other than EORE and clearance - are particularly relevant in transition and protracted crisis contexts where more holistic approaches and integration with other sectors to provide alternative solutions could reduce the risk of communities being forced to conduct unsafe practices due to socio economic reasons.
- As stated in action 24 of the Oslo Action Plan, countries requesting extensions should be more specific on the efforts they will take to safeguard their populations from the ongoing contamination, including through risk education while they achieve their land release targets. For this, we make a call to the countries asking for extensions to comply with this obligation by presenting detailed, costed, and multi-year plans for context-specific mine risk education and reduction in affected communities.
- To conclude, we would like to suggest that risk education is elevated to a stand-alone agenda item in the Convention's programme of work to allow States Parties to have thorough exchanges on EORE and report adequately on actions #28-32. We also encourage donors to promote the risk education pillar and continue to ensure appropriate funding is made available for EORE, and that funds for risk education are reported separately from clearance to enable resourcing to be tracked.

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.