

Cross-Regional Joint-Statement on Gender, Diversity and the WPS Agenda APMBC Intersessional 2025

I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of Albania, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand and Uruguay, as well as Cameroon, Sri Lanka, the United Kingdom and my own country Belgium, who are serving as APMBC Gender Focal Points this year.

We are driven by a shared commitment to advancing gender equality and addressing the diverse needs of affected communities within the framework of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Our collective efforts aim to amplify the voices of those who have long been marginalized, and to ensure that our policies and actions reflect the diverse experiences and needs of everyone affected by anti-personnel mines. By integrating gender equality and promoting inclusivity, we strive to enhance the effectiveness of our humanitarian efforts, ensure equitable access to resources and support, and uphold the fundamental principles of justice and human rights for all.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, as formally initiated by the landmark UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), which specifically calls on the mine action sector to ensure that the special needs of women and girls are taken into account. There is significant evidence that gender mainstreaming in mine action concerns all four pillars of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: participation, prevention, protection, and relief and recovery. Therefore, mine action makes a substantial contribution to the WPS Agenda. Now, for the first time in the Convention's history, the Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan also acknowledges the contribution of mine action to the WPS Agenda.

Furthermore, the Siem Reap - Angkor Action Plan 2025-2029 recognises the need for mainstreaming gender across all areas of work. The diverse needs and experiences of affected populations are underscored in relation to Survey and Clearance of Mined Areas, Mine Risk Education and Reduction, and Victim Assistance. It also adds that Cooperation and Assistance should be responsive to gender, age, disability, and other diversity considerations. These Actions closely align with the 2030 Development Agenda, in particular with SDG 5 on gender equality, SDG 10 on reducing inequalities, and SDG 16 on promoting just, peaceful and inclusive societies.

Several mine action donors, affected states, operators, and other actors in the sector have taken forward these principles and made progress towards more effective and inclusive mine action. However, more work needs to be done.

The full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of women in international peace and security processes, including strengthening their leadership roles, is necessary to achieve sustainable conflict resolution. Transformative progress on the WPS Agenda also requires consideration of the role of men and boys, who could serve as agents of change and also benefit from greater gender equality.

Therefore, we call upon all States Parties to implement Actions related to gender and diversity needs in the Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan and to apply the working principle of integrating and mainstreaming gender, age and disability and other diversity factors, and ensuring consideration for the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities in order to build on the progress made.

Thank you.