

Analysis and input from the Gender RevCon Working Group for the Review Document

States Parties agreed to implement the Maputo Action Plan in a “gender-sensitive manner” building on the Cartagena Action Plan and the Nairobi Action Plan. Following the growing emphasis on gender sensitivity under the previous Action Plans, the Maputo Action Plan represented a step forward towards integration of gender perspectives in mine action.

Implementation of activities in a gender-sensitive manner and recognition of the importance of including a gender perspective in mine action has increased since the Maputo Action Plan was agreed by States Parties in 2014. However, this has not been done systematically. Given that gender is not formally included within the scope of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, there is no mechanism for holding States Parties to account or monitoring progress towards improved mainstreaming of gender in mine action. The lack of a forum for discussion on gender in mine action means it is difficult to galvanize support for action, discuss challenges or share examples of good practice.

In addition to drawing on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, which has long provided a reference point for gender in mine action, stronger links with National Action Plans on Women Peace and Security would be highly beneficial. It is also essential to highlight links between mine action and the Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG5: Gender equality and women's empowerment.

Gender-sensitive programming

Civil society and the United Nations (UN) have taken significant steps to ensure mine action is implemented in a gender-sensitive manner. Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA) NGOs have started to include gender-focused objectives in organizational strategies, they are increasingly conducting gender analysis and disaggregating data by sex and age is now standard sector practice. In some areas, disaggregated data is used to inform the approach taken to mine action at the community level. For example, this includes tailoring risk education (RE) messages to different activities undertaken by women, girls, boys and men or taking additional measures to ensure that men and boys are reached adequately by RE programmes in contexts where they represent the majority of mine casualties. Similarly, consulting women, as well as girls and boys during non-technical survey can lead to a more accurate picture of mine contamination and, therefore, more efficient and effective land release.

In February 2019, the UN launched its Mine Action Strategy for 2019-2023 which prioritizes that mine action programmes address gender, age, and diversity considerations in their planning and implementation. In addition, recently updated UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes that will be published in 2019, will serve as a practical tool for the sector on integrating gender considerations in mine action.

The Landmine Monitor has the world's largest set of gender-disaggregated data on mine/ERW casualties and it highlights the differences in victim assistance provided to women, girls, boys and men. Despite the increased collection of disaggregated data in the sector, weaknesses remain around the operationalization of such data in prioritization and programming. In addition, data should be disaggregated by age, gender and disability in order to look at the intersectionality of these factors and fully address all forms of vulnerability and exclusion, and should inform whether a casualty had a pre-existing impairment.

Promoting gender equity through employment

In addition to gender sensitive programming, there has been improvement in promoting gender equity through employment of women in the demining sector. Although cultural stigma and public perception of demining as a “male profession” continue to be a hindrance, an increasing number of women have been recruited in HMA NGOs since the last Review Conference.

Additionally, from an operator’s perspective, there has been increased recognition of the importance of supportive human resources policies such as parental leave, flexible working hours and locations, strong safeguarding policies and childcare support to ensure equal opportunities for women and men. Significant work remains to ensure that these supportive human resources policies are in place throughout the sector and are available to all staff, including psycho-social care and mental health support. Both States and NGOs are beginning to address safeguarding challenges but there is significantly more to work to do.

Women’s representation

Due to longstanding gender imbalances, operators, national authorities and States Parties see significantly fewer women in leadership roles. It is expected that this situation will improve with the recent increase in the recruitment of women across the sector, however, efforts must be made to ensure that workplace culture is supportive of women’s advancement.

Formal reporting mechanisms for States Parties do not currently encourage reporting on women’s participation or the inclusion of gender-disaggregated data. While States Parties are encouraged to report on gender within their Article 7 transparency reports, this is currently underutilized by states, with only a small number of states regularly reporting on gender mainstreaming in their mine action programmes, mostly focused on casualties and victim assistance.

Female representation at formal and informal meetings of States Parties of the APMBC remains the lowest within the conventional weapons community. Over the past five years there have been slight improvements in women’s participation in the Meeting of States Parties to the APMBC, with civil society sending significantly more women delegates than states. From 2009 to 2017, the participation of female delegates has increased by 3.5% and in 2017, 23.6% of overall delegates to the APMBC meetings were women.

The development of the International Gender Champions Initiative¹, and in particular the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group, has encouraged greater focus among the diplomatic community on gender in disarmament in Geneva. The UN Secretary General’s Agenda for Disarmament has also called for the “full and equal participation of women in all decision-making processes related to disarmament and international security.”

Conclusion

There are many examples of best practices regarding gender sensitive programming, overcoming challenges related to employment of women and increasing women’s representation. In addition, there

¹ International Gender Champions is a leadership network that brings together female & male decision-makers determined to break down gender barriers and make gender equality a working reality in their spheres of influence. <https://genderchampions.com/>

are also UN Gender Guidelines and other useful resources on the topic. What is missing is political accountability and a forum for discussion within the Convention context to exchange best practices and discuss challenges.

In addition, making significant improvements with gender mainstreaming in mine action will require additional resources to allow stakeholders to build up the skills and capacity to achieve this. Many donor states to mine action emphasise the need for increased gender mainstreaming in mine action, but few permit additional resources to build gender considerations into budgets. Programmes that primarily focus on achieving the lowest possible costs of their activities may hinder progress to integrating gender and strengthening the sector's ability to respond to the needs of all groups equally.

Although significant progress has been made since the Maputo Action Plan on integrating gender perspectives into mine action, in this Review Conference year there is a need to change the structures within the Convention to create accountability for gender issues in mine action and facilitate best-practice sharing beyond the Review Conference.

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