

Gender mainstreaming in the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Introduction

Gender mainstreaming was established as a global strategy for promoting gender equality 25 years ago, in the Platform for Action at the United Nations Fourth World Conference in Beijing. Following that goal, efforts have been made to include gender mainstreaming in multilateral arms-control, disarmament and non-proliferation agreements.

Gender equality refers to equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities between all people, regardless of gender. Gender refers to the socially constructed identities, roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for all women and men.

The recently adopted Oslo Action Plan (2019) of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC), requires countries to mainstream gender considerations in mine action programming. The Arms Trade Treaty contains a specific provision on gender-based violence under its article 7 and States Parties have also been encouraged to take actions on gender and gender-based violence in the context of the treaty. For the past five years, there has been increased discussion of the gendered impact of nuclear weapons resulting in the strong gender provisions in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The UNGA First Committee resolutions and work on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda have also addressed the links between gender equality and international security. The Convention on Cluster Munitions (art.5) includes an obligation to provide age and gender-sensitive victim assistance. Although there has been significant progress made on integrating gender perspectives in disarmament, there is much work to be done to promote a better understanding of different people's experiences, capacities, needs and vulnerabilities in order to better address their needs and protect their rights. Gender, age and disability as well as other diversity factors should be considered in the drafting of the Lausanne Action Plan.

This paper by the Gender Working Group¹ aims to highlight the importance of gender mainstreaming in Convention implementation and how the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) community can make progress on gender equality through the Second Review Conference and the Lausanne Action Plan.

Why gender mainstreaming is important for the implementation of the CCM

- Gender-sensitive programming helps ensure that survey, clearance, risk education, advocacy and victim assistance activities take into consideration the different impact explosive risks and the response of mine action organisations have on women, girls, boys and men. This means that it acknowledges that men and boys are more likely to be involved in cluster munition accidents, which has an impact on women and girls who become carers for injured family members or breadwinners.
- Gender-sensitive programming in victim assistance works to respond to the needs of survivors, as well as to those of their families and affected communities, who are indirect victims. Women, girls, boys and men may hold different information on contamination depending on their different

¹ The Gender Working Group aims to support the mainstreaming of gender and diversity provisions within the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). The Gender Working Group members are: Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines, Danish Church Aid, Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, The HALO Trust, Humanity and Inclusion, International Campaign to Ban Landmines-Cluster Munition Coalition (ICBL-CMC), Mines Action Canada, Mines Advisory Group, Mine Action Review, and Norwegian People's Aid.

patterns of mobility, as well as different interests, perspectives, knowledge and needs that should inform clearance prioritisation. In survey and clearance, gender-sensitive programming means conducting consultations with all members of society, helping ensure the most comprehensive information is collective. Gender-sensitive risk education should recognise that risk-taking behaviour is different depending on gender, age, disability and other diversity factors, and design materials and delivery methods accordingly. Gender and diversity -sensitive advocacy ensures that policies, laws and plans reflect the needs of all members of society.

- Gender-transformative programming promotes gender equality and seeks to eliminate discrimination against women, in line with legally binding commitments, such as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) or political agreements such as the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.
- Gender equality is equality between all people, regardless of gender. Because women and girls have historically been oppressed or otherwise disadvantaged, addressing gender inequality is about promoting the interests of all women and girls in order to address these disadvantages. The intersectionality with other factors that can lead to marginalisation - such as race, ethnicity, nationality, language, religion or beliefs, age, sexual orientation, level of education, disability - should also be considered.
- Treaty implementation activities can either reinforce gender inequalities or challenge them. Employing thousands of staff in communities recovering from conflict and with scarce employment opportunities, the sector benefits millions of people every year. Employment in this sector can have a significant empowering effect, both in terms of income and status, so who is employed matters.

Gender mainstreaming in the CCM

- The text of the convention recognizes the need to provide age, disability, and gender-sensitive assistance to cluster munitions victims and recalls United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.
- Action 3.4 in the Dubrovnik Action Plan (DAP) emphasizes the need to be inclusive when developing a clearance and risk education response. This action includes best practices such as involving affected communities in the development and implementation of national clearance plans; and mainstreaming gender in the development of plans and programmes, as well as in the conduct of survey, clearance and risk education and other relevant activities;
- Gender and diversity are also mainstreamed in other parts of the DAP – it acknowledges that risk education should be “age, gender and ethnic sensitive” (Action 3.2), recommends that victims are included in policy making and decision making in a “gender and age sensitive manner” (Action 4.2), and recommends that requests for cooperation and assistance are based on appropriate surveys and needs assessments “including an emphasis on gender and age specific requirements” (Action 5.3).
- Organisations engaged in cluster munitions operations are making progress with mainstreaming gender in their activities and some CCM States Parties such as Laos and Lebanon are demonstrating increasing willingness to mainstream gender in national cluster munitions programmes.

What remains to be done – Recommendations for the Second Review Conference

- Though the text of the CCM recognizes the need to provide age, disability, and gender sensitive assistance to cluster munitions victims and the Dubrovnik Action Plan includes references to

gender mainstreaming, more needs to be done. The CCM should provide an environment to engage in more practical conversations regarding the challenges to integrating gender in cluster munitions operations and how to overcome them.

- Integrating a gender and diversity perspective in the implementation of the CCM should improve the quality of the implementation rather than create additional obligations.
- The Second Review Conference should put in place the processes and mechanisms to ensure a qualitative assessment of the implementation of the Convention. Such measures may include but are not limited to:
 - Establish a gender equality objective and indicators in the Lausanne Action Plan and ensure gender and diversity are mainstreamed in other objectives pertaining to survey and clearance, risk education, victim assistance, and international cooperation and assistance. Suggested objectives and indicators are included below in Annex A.
 - Nominate two gender focal points in the Coordinating Committee to assess the extent to which States Parties integrate gender and diversity considerations in their Article 7 reports and Article 4 extension requests.

Annex A – Initial proposals for the Lausanne Action Plan

States Parties should commit to implement the Lausanne Action Plan in an inclusive, age-appropriate, gender and diversity sensitive manner and to promote women's full, equal and meaningful participation in the sector. Diversity factors should also be taken into consideration when implementing activities and assessing their impact. To measure success, the Lausanne Action Plan should set ambitious objectives that encourage gender sensitive and responsive programming to become standard practice and to galvanise international support for promoting women's participation in mine action, such as:

(to be mainstreamed in clearance and risk education, and victim assistance sections)

1. Women, girls, boys and men meaningfully participate on an equal basis at all stages of the survey and clearance process.
2. Women, girls, boys and men have access to gender-sensitive, disability and age appropriate victim assistance services.
3. Women, girls, boys and men are protected from harm from cluster munitions through the provision of gender-sensitive, disability and age appropriate, comprehensive and tailored risk education.
4. International cooperation and assistance are responsive to gender-sensitive operations and promote the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in cluster munitions operations.

(to be included under a specific gender equality objective)

5. Women and men are equally represented in employment across all cluster munitions operations, including in positions of leadership and decision-making.
6. Women and men are equally represented and able to meaningfully participate in CCM meetings.