
CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

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Agenda item 9(d): Risk Education

Mr. President, distinguished delegates,

Thank you for giving me the floor. As host of the EORE Advisory Group Secretariat and one of its core members, the GICHD fully aligns with the statement made by the Advisory Group. We wish to add reflections on what the story of risk education under this Convention shows about what leadership by States Parties can achieve in a challenging global context. That story now demands more of us all, States Parties and the broader CCM community, as we take up the new Vientiane Capital Action Plan.

States Parties' decision, at the 12th MSP, to establish a Risk Education Coordinator, was a significant step. In practice, it gave the Convention a standing mechanism to keep risk education on the agenda and drive it forward between meetings. For Lao PDR and Lebanon, as the Convention's first risk education coordinators, it offered a platform to mobilize other States Parties, convene peer-to-peer exchanges, and lead on risk education commitments under an annual workplan. No other disarmament instrument has made this move. The GICHD has supported this evolution from its early days, and we believe it is a model other instruments should replicate.

Risk education leadership in the CCM has many faces. EORE programme managers and coordinators from national mine action authorities - many of them in this room, from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Senegal, and others - have shown what it means to lead on risk education. In only a few years, they have helped to develop risk education from the delivery of awareness raising messages to the establishment of behavioural change and broader community protection approaches, such as conflict protection and preparedness. They have also led efforts to institutionalize risk education within national systems and cross-sectoral responses. This is the leadership the Convention now gives space for, and it is working.

While welcoming this positive and significant progress, we would like to emphasize that national leadership of risk education by affected States Parties requires resources to sustain it. Action 28 of the Vientiane Capital Action Plan commits States Parties to delivering tailored, inclusive and evidence-based risk education. Doing so requires predictable and sustained support, not one-off projects. Yet, risk education funding remains largely folded into broader programming, making it difficult to track. In addition, funding disruptions in 2025 showed just how far this support still is from being predictable and sustained, at the very moment needs are rising.

We would like to recall that national ownership under this Convention runs in two directions: States Parties have the right to seek and receive assistance in fulfilling their Convention obligations, including on risk education. Correspondingly, the Convention requires States Parties in a position to do so to support these efforts with technical, material, and financial assistance. In this regard, we greatly welcome Actions 33 to 36 of the VCAP, which commit States to making such support both sustainable and predictable.

GICHD's own commitment is to keep supporting national authorities to lead risk education and conflict preparedness and protection efforts to protect civilians from cluster munitions remnants and other explosive threats. As we move into implementation of the Vientiane Capital Action Plan, we ask States Parties to treat the coming five years not only as a period to defend what risk education has achieved under this Convention, but as an opportunity to close the gap between the leadership that has been built and the resources it still lacks to protect civilians.

Thank you.