



THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN NATIONAL MINE ACTION GENDER EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY 2025-2030





A female deminer conducts a signal isolation drill at a battle area clearance with a mine detector in South Sudan. Female frontline operators contribute directly to land release and community safety. © UNMAS

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Cover Photo : A female team leader guides her demining team to a demining worksite in Juba County, South Sudan. Increasing the participation of women in both technical and leadership roles is a cornerstone of inclusive mine action. © UNMAS

FOREWORD

South Sudan's National Mine Action Gender and Diversity Policy has been developed with the support of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), in consultation with all relevant mine action implementing partners, including the United Nations, government line ministries, international donors, and other stakeholders.

This is the first mine action gender and diversity policy developed in close cooperation with all contributing partners. It is aligned with national and international policies, plans, and conventions, reflecting international best practices while addressing South Sudan's unique context, opportunities, and challenges.

The Gender Equality and Diversity Policy supports South Sudan in implementing and mainstreaming obligations articulated in relevant disarmament conventions and their related action plans. These include the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production, and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (APMBC).

The policy is centred around five main objectives:

1. **Institutional policies, systems, and procedures** promote gender equality, diversity, inclusion, and the rights of people with disabilities.
2. **Fair, equal, and transparent access** to employment opportunities and benefits for women and men working in mine action.
3. **Protection from harm**, including gender-based violence and discrimination, for employees and program beneficiaries.
4. **Meaningful participation** and full, equal access to mine action activities and services for women, girls, boys, and men from diverse populations.
5. **Gender and diversity mainstreaming approaches** to drive positive change within the national mine action program through learning, advocacy, and communication processes.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of South Sudan, I extend my gratitude to all donors for supporting the mine action program in South Sudan. I also convey my sincere appreciation to all mine action partners and stakeholders for their ongoing efforts in implementing this policy.

In this regard, I hereby endorse South Sudan's National Mine Action Gender Equality and Diversity Policy and request all relevant partners and stakeholders to refer to this policy as the guiding framework for all mine action operations in South Sudan.

Best regards,

Hon. Ambassador Chol Mawut Ajongo
Minister,
Office of the President,



1. POLICY STATEMENT

The South Sudan National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) is dedicated to advancing gender equality and promoting the empowerment of women, girls, boys, and men from diverse populations in all aspects of mine action. Recognizing the critical role that gender and diversity play in shaping exposure to risk as well as the impact of landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW), the NMAA is committed to addressing gender inequalities and ensuring inclusivity in the mine action sector in South Sudan.

Objectives

- ▶ Institutional policies, systems, and procedures promote gender equality, diversity, inclusion, and the rights of people with disabilities.
- ▶ Women and men working in mine action have fair, equal, and transparent access to employment opportunities and benefits.
- ▶ Employees and programme beneficiaries are protected from all forms of harm, including gender-based violence and discrimination.
- ▶ Women, girls, boys, and men from diverse populations meaningfully participate in and benefit from mine action activities and services on a full and equal basis.
- ▶ Gender and diversity mainstreaming approaches are utilized to create positive change within the national mine action programme throughout the processes of learning, advocacy, and communication.

Scope and applicability

The **South Sudan National Mine Action Gender Equality and Diversity policy** (hereafter referred to as 'the Policy') is implemented in conjunction with the National Mine Action Strategy 2024–2028 which was launched in South Sudan in April 2024. The National Strategy indicates the commitment of the NMAA to mainstream gender and diversity in the national mine action programme at all levels. The Strategy also clearly states that stakeholders will ensure that gender and diversity aspects are considered in the planning, implementation, and monitoring phases of all mine action projects, promoting equality and equity.¹

The Policy applies to all stakeholders involved in mine action activities in South Sudan, including government, national/international organizations, and other relevant entities. It is mandatory for all stakeholders to adhere to the principles of gender equality, diversity, and inclusion outlined in this policy.



International and national references

The Policy supports South Sudan in implementing gender and diversity mainstreaming obligations articulated in relevant disarmament conventions and their related action plans. These include the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (APMBC).

The Policy is implemented in parallel with the efforts of the Republic of South Sudan to achieve the provisions of international obligations which are concerned, in whole or in part, with the mainstreaming of gender equality, diversity, and the rights of persons with disabilities, the most prominent of which are:

- ▶ The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030²
- ▶ The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)³
- ▶ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women and Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325) 2000⁴
- ▶ The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)⁵
- ▶ The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC)⁶
- ▶ The Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM)⁷

National frameworks on which the Policy is based include:

- ▶ The Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan, as Amended 2013⁸
- ▶ South Sudan National Disability and Inclusion policy 2013⁹
- ▶ National Gender Policy 2013
- ▶ National Reproductive Health Policy 2013
- ▶ The second National Action Plan UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2023–2027)¹⁰

Implementation

The NMAA will oversee the implementation of the Policy at the national level, collaborating with stakeholders to ensure adherence and accountability.

Review and revision

In parallel with the national mine action strategy review, this policy will undergo review/revision every five years to reflect evolving priorities and emerging issues related to gender equality in mine action. Stakeholder consultations and feedback mechanisms will be utilized to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of the policy.



An Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) session delivered to school children in Juba, South Sudan. Gender-responsive risk education adapts messages for both boys and girls to promote safe behavior. © UNMAS

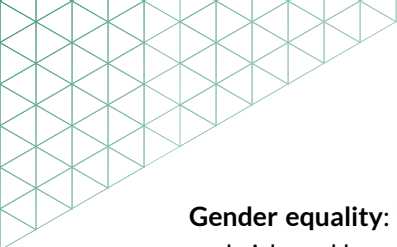
2. DEFINITIONS AND CORE CONCEPTS

Data collection: The process carried out by mine action operators, including the participation of beneficiaries in data collection processes, cooperation between organizations that provide data, and the identification and documentation of relevant data sources. It involves the development of data collection tools, the collection of disaggregated data by age, gender, and other appropriate diversity dimensions, and the establishment of defined standards for key terms and measurements.¹¹

Diversity: The full range of human differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, and other ideologies. It also includes diverse ways of doing and being, thinking, working, and communicating.¹²

Gender: The roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for men and women. It involves a range of identities, expectations, and norms that society ascribes to individuals, based on their perceived sex. It is a fluid and dynamic concept that can change over time and across cultures. Gender disparities in the humanitarian and international development sectors must be recognized and addressed to ensure equitable access to resources, opportunities, and outcomes for all individuals, regardless of gender identity.¹³

Gender-based violence (GBV): An umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between females and males. The nature and extent of specific types of GBV vary across cultures, countries, and regions. Examples include sexual violence, including sexual exploitation/abuse and forced prostitution; domestic violence; trafficking; forced/early marriage; harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation; honor killings; and widow inheritance.¹⁴



Gender equality: This refers to the equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women and men, and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs, and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men.¹⁵

Gender mainstreaming: The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women, as well as men, an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.¹⁶

Gender sensitive (in a mine action context): An approach that takes into consideration the different impact that explosive ordnance and the response of mine action organizations have on men, women, boys, and girls. It addresses gender norms, roles, and access to resources in so far as needed to reach project goals.¹⁷

Gender responsive: An approach that identifies and acknowledges the existing differences and inequalities between women and men and articulates policies and initiatives which address the different needs, aspirations, capacities, and contributions of women and men.¹⁸

Intersectionality: A way of thinking about identity and its relationship to power. It recognizes that people's lives are shaped by their identities, relationships, and social factors. These combine to create intersecting forms of privilege and oppression depending on a person's context and existing power structures such as patriarchy, ableism, colonialism, imperialism, and racism.¹⁹

Sex: The biological characteristics that define humans as female or male.²⁰

3. GENDER IN MINE ACTION, SOUTH SUDAN CONTEXT

Explosive ordnance remains a significant barrier to development in over 50 countries and territories worldwide, including South Sudan. These hazardous remnants of conflict obstruct access to land and essential infrastructure such as housing, roads, and education and healthcare facilities. Consequently, they delay livelihood activities and hinder the safe return of displaced populations, perpetuating cycles of poverty and instability.

Gender plays a critical role in shaping the exposure to and impact of landmines and ERW. Women, girls, boys, and men are affected differently, requiring tailored approaches to assistance. Gender-specific mobility patterns, roles, and responsibilities influence individuals' access to information about contaminated areas, making inclusive consultation essential for effective risk mitigation efforts. In the context of South Sudan, boys lead in the list of casualties, followed by men, girls, and then women.²¹

South Sudan ranks 173 out of 177 on the global Women Peace and Security Index according to the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security (GIWPS),²² and women may face greater barriers in accessing victim assistance (VA), explosive ordnance risk education (EORE), and employment opportunities due to social norms and logistical constraints. Examples of these barriers include unequal employment opportunities, gender-based discrimination, non-gender-responsive working conditions, considering women as a lower priority for outreach services, non-technical survey (NTS) and victim assistance, due to stereotypical social roles in the context of South Sudan.

Failure to engage women in survey implementation can result in the exclusion of their priorities, which are often aligned with the well-being of their families and communities.

4. POLICY COMMITMENTS

The Policy will be implemented at two levels within the national programme: the institutional level, and the operational level.

A. Institutional level

All stakeholders working in the mine action sector must adopt a gender- and diversity-responsive approach at the institutional level through:

- ▶ Establishing a unit/committee within the NMAA that takes on the responsibility of supporting and monitoring gender and diversity mainstreaming in the mine action sector at the national level.
- ▶ Providing career development and training opportunities for the above-mentioned unit/committee members and supporting them to implement and monitor the implementation of the Policy.
- ▶ Ensuring that the budgets of the NMAA and all operators include the costs associated with gender and diversity mainstreaming.
- ▶ Ensuring that the NMAA and operators report data on beneficiaries disaggregated in line with Convention obligations, donor requirements, and national legislation.
- ▶ Ensuring that men and women are equally integrated into institutions operating in the sector, in accordance with national laws.
- ▶ Measuring and reporting on beneficiaries of EORE, VA, and land release activities in line with minimum requirements and recommendations for disaggregation, as outlined in Technical Note for Mine Action (TNMA) 05.10/01 Measurement and reporting of beneficiaries, and in compliance with national legislation and ethical standards.
- ▶ Supporting women of diverse backgrounds to reach decision-making positions within the NMAA and all operators.
- ▶ Monitoring the existence of effective safeguarding systems.
- ▶ Raising awareness on gender-responsive work environments and programming amongst the staff.

B. Operational level

The NMAA and all operators must ensure that mine action operations are responsive to gender and diversity by:

► **Using gender-responsive analytical methodologies and analysis of needs, vulnerabilities, and capacities through:**

- Conducting intersectional gender and diversity analyses of the areas of operations at all stages of programmatic design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.
- Adapting community engagement methodologies to maximize the meaningful participation of marginalized groups where possible.
- Using data collection and analysis tools that are responsive to gender and diversity, and disaggregating data on people to understand differences in their needs, vulnerabilities, and capacities.

► **Employment and operations:**

- Acknowledging that gender bias and harassment in the workplace may prevent women from applying for job opportunities, create a hostile work environment, and contribute to a high turnover rate of employees. Thus, the NMAA will ensure taking the necessary measures to reduce cases of gender-based violence and sexual harassment, as well as discrimination based on gender, disability, race, ethnicity, and other diversity factors.
- The NMAA and operators are committed to taking gender and diversity considerations into all stages of recruitment through:
 - Conducting labour market analysis, using cross-channel job advertisement approaches, inclusive advertising language, and mixed gender and diverse interview panels, offering equal pay for equal work, and contracts written in gender-sensitive language.
 - Removing employment criteria that could unnecessarily exclude qualified candidates—such as prior military service or skills that can be easily developed on the job in order to promote more inclusive hiring.
 - Ensuring equal access to training opportunities for men and women, which includes identifying any barriers to learning or accessing training faced by potential trainees, and making necessary adjustments in line with IMAS 06.10 Management of training.

Regarding **staffing** in operations departments, the NMAA and operators are committed to:

- Ensuring that the composition of EORE, NTS, and community liaison teams is made up of mixed gender and is reflective of the access requirements with regard to operations, to ensure effective communication with local communities.
- Ensuring that teams for technical survey, clearance, and post clearance are comprised of mixed gender participants.



Male and female deminers work side by side to clear explosive ordnance from land contaminated by conflict. Promoting gender-balanced clearance teams ensures inclusive participation in mine action and contributes to safe, equitable access to land for all community members. © UNMAS

Recognizing the **diverse needs and vulnerabilities** of men and women in the workplace, the NMAA and operators are committed to:

- Enhancing the safety and security of staff by integrating gender and diversity considerations into risk assessments and using the findings to put in place mitigation strategies that are adapted to the specific vulnerabilities of men and women employees.
- Providing separate accommodation, bathrooms, and sanitation facilities in the field for men and for women.
- Making reasonable adjustments to the workplace to be responsive to the situation of pregnant women and new mothers, taking into consideration the type and level of physicality of the work they perform.
- Providing separate resting areas for men and women, also private breastfeeding and childcare areas must be provided for mothers working on the site.
- Ensuring that all work clothing, footwear, and personal protective equipment is adapted for both female and male employees.
- Ensuring that gender stereotypes are not reinforced in the field, and that women are not asked to carry out household care work that falls outside the scope of their responsibilities.
- Providing health insurance for all employees, men and women alike. If this is not possible for any reason, a fixed monthly allowance should be paid for healthcare expenses.
- Providing travel insurance during working hours for all employees.

► **Participation and engagement**

- Selecting appropriate spaces and resources to meet with each category of the targeted community.
- Using communication channels appropriate to the local context, which includes using appropriate language, using audio-visual means to raise awareness or collect information, using maps, etc.
- Including all men, women, boys, and girls in all processes of disseminating information in local communities.



5. LEARNING, ADVOCACY, AND COMMUNICATION

- ▶ Utilizing gender mainstreaming and diversity to create positive change within the targeted communities by ensuring equitable access for all women, men, boys, and girls including persons with disabilities, to all the opportunities and services.
- ▶ Using the results of gender and diversity analyses, in addition to success stories, in the advocacy process to improve laws and programmes.
- ▶ Using gender, age, and disability disaggregated data – whenever possible – to clarify the following:
 - How might the presence and consequences of explosive remnants of war affect men, women, boys, and girls differently within one society.
 - How can the participation of women and men impact the processes of democratization and peacemaking in societies.
 - How can crises and wars affect the access of women, men, boys, and girls to public services.
- ▶ Building partnerships with local structures and institutions such as youth and women's associations, associations for people with disabilities, child protection institutions, religious and social forums, schools, health centres, and local humanitarian organizations to support the process of communicating with local communities.
- ▶ Using a gender- and diversity-responsive approach for visual, audio, and print publications, in addition to avoiding the reinforcement of the stereotypical image of women and men held by the local communities.
- ▶ Striving to ensure the gender-balanced representation of institutions in public forums, important meetings, and discussions at the national level for the purpose of enhancing the equal presence of women and men in discussions and decision-making.

6. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

The NMAA is primarily responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Policy and assessing compliance by all operators in South Sudan through the following:

- ▶ Ensuring that all data collected at all levels are disaggregated by gender and age and, where possible, disability.
- ▶ Ensuring that all questions used in monitoring are gender sensitive and relevant to the nature of the lives of women, men, boys, and girls.
- ▶ Monitoring to ensure that all indicators used to measure projects' progress are gender sensitive or gender responsive.
- ▶ Where applicable, using gender-specific indicators.
- ▶ Based on this policy, an action plan will be developed for implementation and monitoring, which will be reviewed periodically by the NMAA in cooperation with the stakeholders.
- ▶ This policy is a living document that can be reviewed, updated, and revised every five years.

ENDNOTES

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