

**Introductory remarks gender and diversity  
Fourth Review Conference of the Mine Ban Treaty  
November 25-29, 2019**

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Dear delegates,

You have been encouraged to ensure that in your statements at this review conference, gender and diversity are taken into consideration. Why not just have a panel or specific item in the agenda addressing these two issues? From the perspective of the ICBL and our civil society colleagues the answer is simple. We believe gender and diversity considerations must be integrated and mainstreamed into all mine action programming and they should not be in isolation.

Though landmines are indiscriminate weapons, their impact and consequences are different for women, girls, boys and men. Gender and diversity influence the role an individual plays in the community, in its social and economic activities. Therefore they also influence the likelihood of a person becoming a victim of a landmine, and of accessing medical treatment, mine risk education, and other services.

Through the 20 years of the Mine Ban Treaty we have seen the benefits of inclusion and the costs of exclusion.

In Cambodia, we saw for the first time in 2003 an all-women demining team, a successful example replicated in other parts of the world! And to date 1 in 5 employees in mine clearance operations is a woman.

In Sudan, we saw that if it wasn't for a focus group that separated women from men, a suspected hazardous area would not have been marked as a low priority risk and perhaps cost lives. Focus groups have demonstrated to be an important tool for deep and accurate data collection.

In Afghanistan, we saw that the idea of "one size fits all" in Mine Risk Education was not working: boys for example needed to be addressed by a different message on what to do and how to behave. Their specific psychological, sociological and environmental factors needed to be reanalysed in order to come up with a workable alternative.

The establishment and strengthening of the global norm against landmines has been created and led by ordinary people who achieved the most successful humanitarian disarmament convention ever. Throughout, women have been at the forefront of it, and our continuous and increasing presence is not to be negotiable. The chant heard in this city, Oslo, during the 1997 negotiations was "Women move the movement!" It is just as true today.

When women are represented as numerically equal – equal in skill, equal in influence, knowledge and creativity – the effect is inspirational. This can undo generations of unconscious bias and release a surge of empowerment.

We, the women, people of colour, survivors, campaigners and our multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination will continue to be in these spaces. We owe it to those whose lives ended because of the use of these indiscriminate weapons.

Our voices matter, and therefore we will continue being assertive, leading, telling the truth, taking up space and asking hard questions.

If your commitments to gender and diversity are to be more than lip service and empty marketing exercises, let's finish the job by 2025 and ensure as said by you, the States Parties, in the Oslo Action Plan, that gender and diversity considerations are integrated and mainstreamed into mine action programming.