



## Implementing Intersections: Convention on Cluster Munitions and Women, Peace and Security<sup>1</sup>

Mainstreaming gender into mine action is necessary for effective and efficient implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and it helps states meet their obligations under the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Resolution 1325 and its subsequent resolutions (UNSCR 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122, 2242, and 2467) form the basis of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. The WPS agenda in particular is closely linked to activities to implement the CCM which are commonly referred to as mine action.<sup>2</sup>

Conventional weapons like cluster munitions have differing impacts on men, women, boys and girls. Those differing impacts are related to both biological sex and the socially-constructed gender roles that shape how we are supposed to act as men and women. Remember that gender refers to those social constructed roles and includes men, women, boys, and girls. Gender does not just mean talking about women and girls; it means looking at how the gender roles of men and boys also affect society.

Like mine action, the WPS agenda also has pillars. They are protection, participation, prevention and relief/recovery. To implement the WPS agenda, states develop National Action Plans which are often referred to as a NAP. Most NAPs cover the four pillars with additional nationally specific issues addressed. At least 81 states have existing or expired National Action Plans on WPS including 54 States Parties and 8 Signatories to the Convention on Cluster Munitions.<sup>3</sup> Not all National Action Plans explicitly mention mine action but the links between this area of work and the WPS agenda are quite clear.

**Protection:** The protection pillar involves ensuring that women and girls' rights are protected and promoted in conflict-affected situations or other humanitarian crisis. Particular attention is paid to protection from gender-based violence in general and sexual violence more specifically. Cluster munitions, landmines and ERW prevent displaced women and girls from returning home leaving them at risk for sexual or gender-based violence over an extended period of time. For female cluster munition survivors, like all women and girls with disabilities, this risk is compounded.

Supporting clearance and victim assistance will help states contribute to the protection pillar under the WPS agenda. Clearance and victim assistance programs indirectly reduce risk of sexual and gender-based violence by allowing women and girls to return to safety and by reducing the vulnerability of survivors.

**Participation:** Research shows that women still make up less than a quarter of delegates to disarmament forums at the international level. The CCM has surpassed that average but has yet to achieve gender parity. In 2018, women made up approximately 33 per cent of the attendees at the meeting of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The voices of women, especially female cluster munition survivors and of young women living with

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<sup>1</sup> An expanded version of this paper which covers both the Ottawa Treaty banning landmines and the Convention on Cluster Munitions can be found on the Mines Action Canada website at: [www.minesactioncanada.org](http://www.minesactioncanada.org)

<sup>2</sup> This paper uses a holistic understanding of mine action as the activities required to implement the Ottawa Treaty and the Convention on Cluster Munitions: landmine clearance, victim assistance, research and advocacy, stockpile destruction, and risk education - also known as the five pillars of mine action.

<sup>3</sup> For the list of states with National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security, please see: <https://www.peacewomen.org/member-states>

cluster munition contamination, are fundamental to ensuring that the CCM is implemented in an inclusive manner.

Organizations involved in implementing the CCM have long had a focus on gender equality. Hiring of women is a key priority for a number of organizations as a path towards gender equality and empowerment. Mine action operators have noted that employment of women in mine action can change attitudes towards women. In post-conflict contexts employing female deminers brings women into the peacebuilding process and helps them contribute to the reconstruction of their communities.

**Relief and Recovery:** Under the WPS Agenda, relief and recovery focuses on responding to international crises through a gendered lens taking into account women and girls' unique experiences in displacement situations. When it comes to the implementation of the CCM there are significant overlaps between the pillars of mine action and the WPS pillar of relief and recovery. For example, the provision of risk education in situations of displacement and in post-emergency situations is an important step towards ensuring the safety of civilian populations. This risk education needs to be gender and age sensitive to ensure that the whole community is reached. Clearance of cluster munition contamination including survey and land release are necessary to allowing displaced communities to return home. Inclusive survey and clearance which takes into account the diversity of displaced populations are essential relief and recovery tasks in post-conflict situations.

Victim assistance under the CCM requires age and gender sensitive services be provided to meet the needs of landmine victims and others with similar needs due to the principle of non-discrimination. Support to victim assistance programs in complex emergencies can help ensure that the specific needs of women and girls with disabilities are met. Women and girls with disabilities, including cluster munition survivors, are often overlooked in humanitarian settings despite being among the most vulnerable.

**Prevention:** The Prevention pillar refers to prevention of conflict and all forms of violence against women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations. Mine action has played an important role in peace processes often providing a common endeavor to bring together conflicting parties thus reducing the risk of a return to hostilities.

In countries like Colombia and Sri Lanka, former combatants are hired into mine action programs as part of or after Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) activities. In these cases, the social trust necessary for conflict prevention is built by ex-combatants working with former adversaries on a joint project and by strengthening the links between ex-combatants and their communities. At the same time, employment in mine action reduced the financial and social pull factors towards armed groups. For women leaving armed groups employment with mine action programs provides opportunities for leadership that are missing when DDR programs offer heavily gendered training options such as tailoring, hairdressing and cake decorating.

### **Intersections for more efficient implementation**

The Women, Peace and Security Agenda is crucially important to meeting the objectives of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The need for effective and efficient mine action means that states, operators and national mine action authorities are already using gender analysis and integrating gender sensitive programming into their implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. States have obligations under the WPS Security Council Resolutions just like they have obligations to complete the implementation of the CCM in accordance with existing deadlines and action plans. States can promote both areas of work by including mine action in their National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security and including Women, Peace and Security considerations in their national mine action strategies.

Strengthening the links between mine action and the WPS agenda is a matter of demonstrating the intersection between existing work rather than adding new tasks. Legal obligations and political goals will be met more efficiently when we consider the intersections and the overlaps between the CCM and the WPS agenda.