

JOINT CROSS-REGIONAL STATEMENT ON GENDER EQUALITY, WPS AND THE DIVERSE NEEDS AND EXPERIENCES OF PEOPLE IN AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

TO BE DELIVERED AT THE INTERSESSIONAL MEETING OF THE ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION (APMBC) – 20 JUNE 2024

I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of Albania, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Moldova, Montenegro, Mozambique, North Macedonia, Norway, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and

Japan, Peru, Thailand and my own country the Netherlands, who are also serving as APMBC Gender Focal Points this year.

We stand before you today as a cross-regional group of countries, driven by a shared commitment to advancing gender equality and addressing the diverse needs within the framework of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Our collective efforts aim to amplify the voices of those who have long been marginalized and to ensure that our policies and actions reflect the diverse experiences and needs of all individuals affected by anti-personnel mines. By integrating gender equality and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities and promoting inclusivity, we strive to enhance the effectiveness of our humanitarian efforts, ensure equitable access to resources and support, and uphold the fundamental principles of justice and human rights for all.

In his 2023 Policy Brief “A New Agenda for Peace”, the UN Secretary General highlighted the need to address the humanitarian, gendered, disability and age-related impacts of certain weapons, methods and means of warfare. The UNSG recommends to achieve universality of treaties banning inhumane and indiscriminate weapons, such as the APMBC. Furthermore, he calls upon Member States to renew the efforts to limit conventional arms and increase investment in prevention and social infrastructure and services, with a strong focus on redressing gender inequalities and structural marginalization, in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

It is therefore clear that the nexus between the disarmament machinery and the broader peace and security framework needs to be strengthened in order to promote gender mainstreaming and implementing the Women Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda.

The WPS Agenda, including the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions, is central to placing gender equality at the heart of global peace and security. It is closely aligned with the 2030 Development Agenda, in particular with SDG

5 on gender equality, SDG 10 on reducing inequalities, and SDG 16 on promoting just, peaceful and inclusive societies.

To date, more than 100 countries have adopted National Action Plans to implement the WPS Agenda, which calls specifically on the mine action sector to take action.

There is significant evidence that gender mainstreaming in mine action concerns all four pillars of the Women Peace and Security Agenda: participation, prevention, protection, and relief and recovery. Therefore, mine action already makes a substantial contribution to the WPS Agenda.

However, more work needs to be done. And for many affected States, more work is also needed to achieve gender mainstreaming at all stages of their mine action programming.

Strengthening the leadership roles and participation of women in all their diversity in international peace and security processes, is necessary to achieve sustainable conflict resolution. Transformative progress on the WPS Agenda requires also consideration of the role of men and boys, who could serve as agents of change. In the mine action sector – such agents of change already include female deminers and male allies – but enhanced efforts are still needed – we have only just begun.

The upcoming Fifth Review Conference in Cambodia and the New Action Plan offer an excellent opportunity to address gender equality and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities to strengthen commonalities between mine action and the global agendas such as the WPS Agenda and Agenda 2030. Leveraging these agendas will improve our mutual efforts and effectiveness in working towards sustainable peace for all.

Thank you.

.....