



Ireland's Second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security

Submission by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines – Cluster Munition Coalition (ICBL-CMC)

15 August 2014

The ICBL-CMC congratulates Ireland on pursuing an agenda on Women, Peace and Security, and thanks the Conflict Resolution Unit of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for offering civil society an opportunity to provide input on the Second National Action Plan. In the course of our work on antipersonnel landmines and cluster munitions, we have the pleasure and honour of working closely with representatives of Ireland and we very much appreciate this fruitful collaboration.

The ICBL-CMC is a coalition of non-governmental organization in some 100 countries working to put an end to the suffering caused by antipersonnel landmines and cluster munitions, through the universalization and full implementation of the international treaties banning these weapons¹. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997 for bringing about the Mine Ban Treaty.

Ireland was at the forefront of efforts leading to the adoption of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (Dublin, May 2008) and is tirelessly promoting this instrument as well as the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention and other measures to remedy the devastating impact of antipersonnel landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war (ERW) on lives and livelihoods, including those of women, girls, boys and men.

Clearly women, men, boys and girls are all affected by landmines, cluster munitions, and other ERW, but they are often affected by them in different ways, meaning gender should be an important consideration in mine action and victim assistance. For example, men and boys are much more likely to be caught in the explosion of a landmine, cluster munition or explosive remnant of war than females are.² But women and girls often have different access to healthcare, leading to a higher fatality rate for females than males.³ In addition, when men have accidents, women often have to take up the role of primary breadwinner in addition to their household tasks and taking care of other family members. The impossibility to access or cultivate land contaminated by landmines, cluster munitions or explosive remnants of war also has major economic consequences on women and girls. Single or widowed women face the particular risk of being dispossessed of their land due to difficulties in obtaining land certificates or titles after mine clearance. Increased levels of poverty can in turn lead to increased exposure to abuse.⁴ Women, men, boys, and girls also have different information on contamination that should be factored in by survey teams, different requirements for land use that is

¹ The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (1997, also known as Mine Ban Treaty) and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (2008).

² Some 85-90% of victims are boys and men. Source: Gender and Mine Action Programme www.gmap.ch

³ Due to inequalities in victim assistance, women who survive explosions receive less health care resulting in a higher fatality rate for females (43%) than for males (29%). Source: Gender and Mine Action Programme www.gmap.ch

⁴ United Nations, *Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action*, forthcoming (2014), page 146.

important for prioritization of clearance tasks. Gender and age is also important when designing mine risk education materials and when handing over land to communities to ensure the messages get clearly communicated to all members of the community.

In this context the ICBL-CMC brings the following points to the attention of the Conflict Resolution Unit. They mostly fall under **Question #2** – How can Ireland help empower women affected by conflict? and **Question #6** – How should Ireland promote Women, Peace and Security in multilateral organizations?

The ICBL-CMC recommends that Ireland:

- Promotes or continues to promote the universalization and full implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in its bilateral diplomatic relations and in multilateral fora. States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions have a special responsibility (under Article 21) to promote adherence to the convention.
- Heeds the call of the UN Secretary-General to “ensure that mine action programmes have an equal impact on women, girls, boys and men and that all enjoy equal access to mine action as employees and beneficiaries, and that both women and men have a decision-making role in mine action in their respective communities.”⁵ To this end, the ICBL-CMC recommends that Ireland, which is a generous donor to mine action⁶, carries ongoing dialogue with implementing partners to ensure gender issues are successfully mainstreamed in their activities, including through the use of the UN’s Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes⁷, the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining’s checklist on gender and development⁸, and the UN’s Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action⁹ when appropriate. Mine action partners include non-governmental organizations but also commercial companies and UN agencies.
- Support projects that ensure women and girls who are victims¹⁰ of landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war receive high quality emergency medical care, physical rehabilitation and psychological support, and that they benefit from socio-economic inclusion opportunities, on an equal basis with other persons with disabilities or other vulnerable groups.

In-depth practical recommendations are listed in *Gender and Landmines, from Concept to Practice*, published by the Swiss Campaign to Ban Landmines and made available on the Gender and Mine Action Programme’s website at www.gmap.ch/?id=233

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⁵ UNGA, *Assistance in Mine Action: Report of the Secretary-General, A/64/287*, 12 August 2009.

⁶ Mine action traditionally includes land clearance, destruction of stockpiled weapons, risk education in affected communities, assistance to victims, and advocacy.

⁷ United Nations, *Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes*, March 2010.

⁸ Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), *Linking Mine Action to Development, Guidelines for Policy and Programme Development*, pages 113-119.

⁹ United Nations, *Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action*, forthcoming (2014), pages 145-156.

¹⁰ In the context of the Mine Ban Treaty and Convention on Cluster Munitions, the term victim encompasses survivors of explosions, the families of those injured or killed, and the affected communities. Women and girls will often fall in the latter two categories.

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