



**The United Nations Mine Action Strategy 2019-2023
Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action
Monitoring & Evaluation Mechanism**

**Thematic Study on Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming in
UN Mine Action – the Cases of Colombia and Myanmar**

Background

The second cross-cutting strategic outcome of the United Nations Mine Action Strategy 2019–2023 (hereafter, the Strategy) is “*Mine action programmes address the specific needs of women, girls, men and boys from diverse groups, while facilitating their empowerment and inclusion*”. It is essential that all mine action actors are equipped to apply a gender lens as part of a comprehensive and inclusive approach to ensure “no one is left behind”.

On an annual basis, and through its country-level survey, the M&E mechanism monitors the progress made towards achieving gender mainstreaming and diversity in countries/territories with UN mine action presence. The guidance provided in the UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action programmes (2019) such as disaggregation of core indicators by gender and age, national institutional capacity of countries/territories, and gender-responsive planning and inclusion was used as a basis for this study.

Countries and territories with a UN mine action presence are at different stages in the process of mainstreaming gender and diversity in mine action operations and face different challenges in achieving progress towards the indicators outlined in the Strategy. UN support varies widely across different UN mine action programmes depending on the national capacity, the existing legal and institutional frameworks, the nature and scale of the threat of explosive devices, and the type of UN mine action engagement taking place.

The quantitative data from the surveys of 2018 and 2019 showed Colombia and Myanmar varied in their progress towards the Strategy’s outcome on gender mainstreaming and diversity. Supplemented by information garnered through in-depth interviews with stakeholders in both countries this study provides insight into the qualitative data provided in the survey, the progress that the UN mine action programmes are making, and the contextual and technical challenges that need to be considered for improved response.

Gender Mainstreaming and Diversity (GMD) in the Country Level Survey of the UN Mine Action Strategy 2019 – 2023

Currently outcome indicators tend to have more focus on the gender and age aspects of diversity. There are ongoing efforts however to further capture other aspects of diversity such as disability, ethnicity, and other cultural identifications. Analysis of progress towards the cross-cutting outcome of the Strategy showed varying results in mainstreaming gender and diversity in mine action operations in terms of institutional capacity, national frameworks, programming, and resource allocation. Globally, in countries with UN mine action presence, “*Sex and age data disaggregation, rates slightly improved from 55% in 2018 to 57% in 2019. EORE data disaggregation of both UN-funded and non-UN funded programmes was 95% (compared to 96% in 2018)*”¹. 91% of countries/territories with UN mine action presence have mainstreamed gender in national mine action strategies, however there is need for support translating the institutional commitment into implementable programmes and to build mine action actors’ technical capacities in gender and diversity mainstreaming.

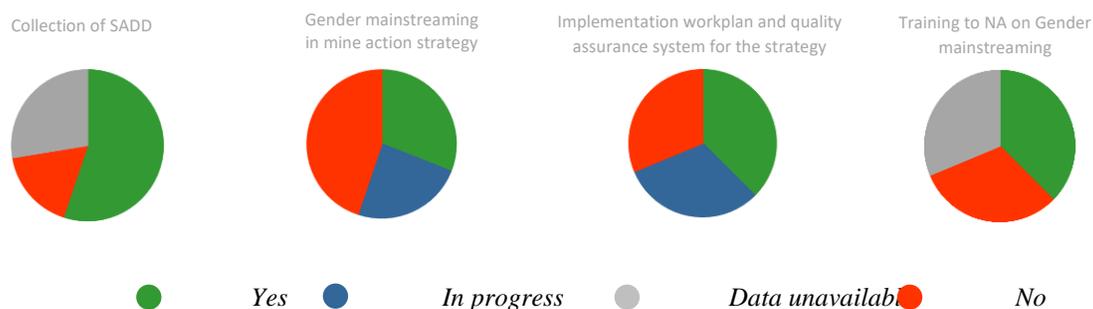


Figure 1: M&E Country-Level Survey 2019

CCSO2: Gender Mainstreaming and Diversity Key Results in Countries/Territories with UN Mine Action Presence

In this study, the engagement in gender and diversity mainstreaming in Colombia and Myanmar will be examined to better understand contextual circumstances and specific institutional and response-related issues that may have affected the results of the survey. This includes looking at the opportunities and challenges resulting from the impact of development and/or the conflict situation in both countries, social and cultural contexts, national legal and institutional frameworks, and gender in the mine action response in the country. The study will generate propositions and recommend areas of focus for other country/territory programmes for successful responses and means to overcome challenges.

¹ UN Mine Action Strategy 2019-2023 Progress Report 2019, p.23

Gender Mainstreaming and Diversity in Mine Action in Colombia

1- National context

Colombia has a complex national context with high levels of inequality and an ongoing armed conflict. The dynamics of war still render women as goods or objects or even war trophies. This results in gender-based violence and perpetuates gender inequality and discrimination².

UNMAS Colombia programme staff interviewed indicated that high rates of violence in some territories causes restrictions to access for mine action programmes and services, further complicating the promotion of gender mainstreaming activities, and communities' participation, including when the control of the lands and territories is under the command of non-state armed groups. In some cases, mine action organizations need to get the authorization of those groups to carry out mine action activities.

Colombia still has marked gender stereotypes, especially in rural areas, where men and women have specific designated gender roles. In this sense, the discourse on gender mainstreaming is not always well received in the communities and greatly depends on the geographical areas of intervention.

The presence of explosive ordnance affects men, women, boys, and girls differentially. The survey showed that almost 90% of casualties are civilian men. Conversely, explosive ordnance poses risks for women in the daily tasks they carry out, and causes changes in their socially structured and assigned roles. Limitations facing male victims in terms of job opportunities force women to assume both women and men's roles. The interview highlighted that when women are victims of accidents with mines, ERW, and IEDs, men often abandon them, limiting their support network.

In addition, the presence of explosive ordnance often causes internal displacement, affecting mostly women, boys and girls and causes them to leave their safe spaces and sources of income to reach cities putting them at risk of gender-based violence and poverty. It is important to mention that contamination in the territories also causes a break with sacred spaces and nature, which mainly affects indigenous communities.

2- Gender and diversity mainstreaming in mine action in Colombia: M&E country-level survey results

The country-level survey showed Colombia made progress between 2018 and 2019 in the area of gender mainstreaming and diversity in mine action consistent with the indicators set out in the

² Interview with UNMAS programme in Colombia on 15 Dec. 2020

results framework. The country is currently developing a gender mainstreaming strategy for mine action, which is an important overarching framework to support gender mainstreaming at the national level. The proposed strategy, however, does not have a corresponding workplan and a quality assurance mechanism is needed to monitor the quality of its implementation. The Colombian national mine action authority collects age and gender disaggregated data for mine action planning and monitoring. Coordination of mine action is maintained under the Mine Action Area of Responsibility (MA AoR), which shares gender mainstreaming best practices with national and international NGOs working in the mine action sector in Colombia. So far, no technical assistance or training was provided by the UN to national authorities on how to mainstream gender & diversity aspects in Mine Action³.

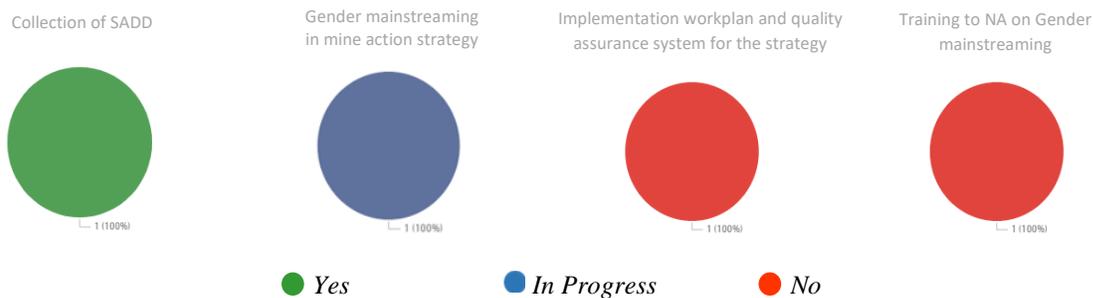


Figure 2: M&E Country-Level Survey 2019
CCSO2: Gender Mainstreaming and Diversity Key Results in Colombia

In this framework, UNMAS as lead agency of the MA AoR, promotes the integration of gender-sensitive needs of victims and communities into mine action interventions. UNICEF, which also has a mine action presence in the country, works on ensuring equal access for both female and male survivors to education and learning opportunities, and the inclusion of female and male survivors and affected family members in employment and livelihood programming, as well as national social protection and development strategies. The survey however revealed the need for technical assistance and training to local and national authorities on how to mainstream gender and diversity aspects in mine action.

3- National gender mainstreaming legal and institutional frameworks

Mainstreaming gender in mine action in Colombia is gaining momentum at the national level. In 2019, the national authority launched the National Mine Action Strategic Plan 2020–2025 with Guidelines for Mainstreaming the Approach to Gender (in mine action). For the development of these guidelines, the national authority organized technical roundtables with the organizations and

³ Of the 29 countries that reported in 2019, 38% provided technical training to national authorities on mainstreaming gender in mine action, and 41% did not.

institutions of the mine action sector, to determine how to include a gender perspective in the national strategic plan. The guidelines make it mandatory for the mine action sector to include gender mainstreaming into their projects and programmes.

National capacity for gender and diversity mainstreaming in mine action has greatly improved in recent years, however, more investment in building national capacity to prioritize gender and diversity mainstreaming in mine action is required. A national strategy on gender in mine action is under development, but no work plan or a system to monitor its implementation is planned at present. Also, the national authority did not receive technical training or support on how to mainstream gender & diversity aspects in mine action. Due to the security situation, many mine action operations have been focusing on cities rather than isolated rural areas, where the situation of women and people of diverse ethnic identities is most acute.

Currently there is no specific national coordination mechanism for gender in mine action. It is addressed within the Mine Action Area of Responsibility forum, which is part of the humanitarian architecture in the country. The group meets monthly to discuss humanitarian mine action, including gender mainstreaming.

The national authority collects sex, age, and disability disaggregated data for mine action planning. The datasets are used to make informed decisions in the planning and development of field-level activities in a culturally sensitive manner and target actual needs of the communities. The data is also used in the planning and monitoring of victim assistance and EORE activities, for example disaggregating the people who receive risk education by men, women, boys, girls, youth, persons with disability as well as by their roles and ethnic backgrounds. Other considerations include public services availability, registration and non-registration of explosive ordnance accidents, and the presence of illicit crops, etc. The database also makes it possible to determine the gender/diversity make up of mine action teams and whether there is a need to use mixed or ethnic teams for instance. The Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines (CCCM) reports that the datasets are fundamental to performing high quality activities and that the organization is already starting to use this data in informing community analysis for targeted interventions.

4- Gender and diversity mainstreaming in UN mine action operations in Colombia

In 2015, the Humanitarian Country Team established that all projects must have a Gender with Age Marker (GAM) score of 2a -2b (scores from 0 to 4) to be included in the Humanitarian Response Plan, or to receive funds from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) – Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPF).

In addition, in terms of peacebuilding and development, donors request a 2a-2b score to allocate funds. Other donors also require a specific GAM score. For example, mine action projects implemented with funds from the MPTF (UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Sustaining Peace in

Colombia) must incorporate a gender analysis, 2a-2b gender marker and at least 30% of their resources to activities that promote gender empowerment and equality.

Explosive ordnance risk education and victim assistance activities are developed using a gender mainstreaming approach. Capacity building for women is carried out for different mine action tasks, such as non-technical survey, technical survey, and clearance. Currently, Colombia has mixed gender teams operating for all those activities. Likewise, when carrying out advocacy, handover and quality management, the gender approach is considered.

This gender perspective takes into consideration the decision-making powers within communities. Usually, community-level decisions are made in participatory spaces such as meetings of Community Action Boards (Juntas de Acción Comunal) or in ethnic spaces, established by community councils and indigenous communities. Men and women participate in in these consultations, however, the degree of participation of each depends on the region. For instance, in the Pacific region and Antioquia, culturally women have a strong social status, which is reflected in their participation and decision-making role in the meetings. In other regions, such as the Atlantic, meetings are mainly dominated by men, since they are the ones who generally occupy leadership and power positions. These are trends - it is not possible to generalize and assume, which means UNMAS teams conduct an evaluation in targeted communities, especially for Risk Education activities.

As for victim assistance, including psycho-social support (peer support care and community-based rehabilitation), a person-to-person approach has been found to facilitate greater participation and a space to exchange and build trust between the different age and sex groups of the beneficiary communities. Also, experience has shown that when there are projects or interventions with indigenous people, afro-descendant communities, and peasant communities in the same territory, it is better to hold separate meetings with each of the groups due to the different customs of these groups, which must be respected and considered.

The largest humanitarian demining force is drawn from the Colombian army Brigade of Humanitarian Demining Engineers (BRDEH) and the Marine Corps Explosives and Demining Group (AEDIM). These groups employ soldiers, all of whom are men. The BRDEH has trained women to carry out demining tasks; however, they are not official soldiers, and are engaged in strategic or administrative activities but not deployed in the field. On the other hand, civil society organizations make efforts to include women in the tasks of humanitarian demining operations; however, as identified during the interview, culturally it is quite difficult, mainly because the tasks for demining are considered “male” tasks culturally and it can be hard to recruit women to carry out these tasks.

5- Proposed areas of focus to support progress towards achievement of UN Mine Action Strategic Cross-Cutting Outcome Two

UN Output Indicators in the UN Mine Action Strategy, CCO2	Proposed areas of focus to support progress towards achievement of Strategy Outcomes
<p><i>Countries/territories that integrate gender into national mine action strategy</i></p> <p><i>Countries/territories that have a national gender strategy for mine action</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for gender mainstreaming and diversity at the national level by finalizing the gender mainstreaming strategy that is currently in progress with focus on both gender and diversity of ages, persons with disability and ethnic groups. • Advocate for improved coordination on gender and diversity in mine action at the national level and for the prioritization of gender mainstreaming and diversity at the highest levels.
<p><i>Countries/territories that have a quality assurance mechanism in place to ensure gender-responsive programming and programmes cycles</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technical assistance to national authorities on gender and diversity mainstreaming in national institutional frameworks and on developing budgeted, implementable mechanisms and plans.
<p><i>UN mine action programmes that provided technical assistance/training/support to national authorities on how to mainstream gender & diversity aspects in Mine Action</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technical assistance to national authorities in coordination with other mine action actors on gender mainstreaming in programme, design, planning and implementation (e.g., Gender and Age Marker tools)

Gender Mainstreaming and Diversity in Mine Action in Myanmar

1- National context

Myanmar has ongoing conflict in some parts of the country. In some heavily contaminated locations, where the conflict is ongoing, and the context is humanitarian, the military undertake demining operations. No humanitarian demining operations are carried out by the UN. The conflict renders access extremely challenging and sometimes impossible in areas outside government control.

Humanitarian mine action is a relatively new sector in Myanmar. Humanitarian demining has not yet started and has never been permitted in the country. Access for mine clearance depends on peace negotiations. Although the ceasefire signed in August 2015 includes the provision of landmine clearance, no progress has been made to date. UNICEF and the Mine Risk Working Group continue to advocate with the Government and ethnic armed groups (EAOs). UNICEF along with key mine action actors have been actively involved in a series of advocacy meetings conducted with regional and State's authorities and NSAs to deliver a more comprehensive mine action programme in Myanmar. Myanmar is neither a signatory to the Anti-Personnel Mine-Ban Convention nor to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

The Mine Risk Working Group (MRWG), which is an inter-ministerial and inter-agency coordinating body, co-chaired by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (MoSWRR) and UNICEF, was established in 2012 and it oversees the involvement of diverse actors in the mine action sector. The MRWG aims at ensuring that interventions addressing mine risks are aligned with minimum standards and in accordance with lessons learned in Myanmar⁴. Since the establishment of the MRWG in 2012, the Government showed a high level of commitment to improving national leadership and management of mine action, including by establishing a national mine action authority.

Thus far, no comprehensive assessments of the national capacity have been conducted. Through the MRWG at Union level, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement – with UNICEF support – coordinated the work of almost all actors including ten Ministries, the National Army and around 40 I/NGOs and CBOs. Similar wide-range representation has been established as state level with coordination bodies operating in Kachin, Shan, Kayah and Kayin. The MRWG in Kayin was the most inclusive with the participation of the Tatmadaw along with EAOs and Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) members. Forums like the Kayin MRWG present unique and

⁴ Myanmar Mine Risk Working Group Strategic Workplan 2020-2021, p. 2.

valuable opportunities for advocacy and engagement for mine action, the peace process and a stronger gender and diversity agenda.

2- Gender mainstreaming and diversity in mine action in Myanmar: M&E country-level survey results

The results of the country-level survey on gender mainstreaming in Myanmar are reflected in the graphs below. As seen, the data shows that national authorities dealing with mine action collect age and gender disaggregated data for mine action planning and monitoring and the country is establishing a coordination mechanism that supports and integrates gender-sensitive needs of victims into mine action service delivery and programming.



Figure 3: M&E Country-Level Survey 2019
CCSO2: Gender Mainstreaming and Diversity Key Results in Myanmar

UNICEF and UNFPA work on ensuring equal access for both female and male survivors to education and learning opportunities, and the inclusion of female and male survivors and affected family members within employment and livelihoods, as well as national social protection and development strategies. However, the country does not yet have a gender mainstreaming strategy for mine action, and the work on gender mainstreaming and diversity in the sector in general has not been prioritized yet. The Strategy highlights the importance of providing technical assistance and training and how to mainstream gender and diversity aspects in mine action to ensure sustainable national capacity in this area and should be taken up when the situation allows

3- National gender mainstreaming and diversity legal and institutional framework

National authorities are working to advance the gender mainstreaming agenda in the country. Myanmar is a member of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Government has a national strategic plan for addressing gender equality. Myanmar has a designated strategic workplan for mine action 2020-2021; however, it does not reference gender and diversity in its text, and no designated gender in mine action strategy was developed, the former Government however welcomed the idea of designing the new mine action strategic plan for 2022-2023 in a way that reflects gender mainstreaming and

diversity priorities. Sex and age disaggregated data on casualties is collected and used by UNICEF to produce periodical facts sheets and disseminate information on accidents and to design and prioritize explosive ordnance risk education programmes.

4- Gender mainstreaming and diversity in UN mine action operations in Myanmar

UNICEF is currently the UN lead for mine action in Myanmar and is working on developing tools, using the gender in mine action guidelines, such as the common risk education toolkit, flipcharts, posters, leaflets, and users guides. Coordinating mainstreaming and diversity in mine action is covered in the victim assistance coordination group, which is a technical working group co-chaired by UNICEF and Humanity and Inclusion.

Over the past five years, UNICEF managed to expand coverage and increase risk education and victim assistance reach despite the challenges posed by the ongoing conflict. The survey shows that EORE in-person beneficiaries increased from 42,793 in 2018 to 179,756 in 2019. Beneficiaries of mine action activities are analyzed on quarterly basis.

Comparing the past years, the number of EO casualties is on the rise. In 2019, UNICEF and partners documented 227 casualties (57 killed) in 161 incidents of EO countrywide. These result from ongoing conflicts as well as improved injury surveillance by UNICEF and the members of the MRWG. From January to September 2020, there were 200 casualties (52 killed) in 112 incidents countrywide. Rakhine State accounts for 48% of the total casualties, followed by 27% in Shan and 10% in Kachin State. Children represent 35% of those casualties and Rakhine has the highest rate of child casualties with 47%.

Interviewees noted that it can be challenging to reach men, who constitute most explosive ordnance casualties, with explosive ordnance risk education because they are working most of the time. This required adaptation by programmes to design needs-responsive training that consider special gender circumstances and conditions.

In general, social norms require that men make most of the decisions in the community, but it can differ depending on location and ethnicity. Accordingly, activities (specifically EORE) are designed to take sex and age considerations into account. Implementing partners hire IDP camp facilitators and educators accordingly, while also considering cultural and religious sensitivities, which results in the training of female facilitators.

A Knowledge-Attitude-Practice (KAP) survey, which takes gender into account and addresses risky behaviour in the various groups, was undertaken in 2013-2014, the results of which were used to tailor EORE communication messages in a way that takes the audience into account. Pictures in toolkits for instance considered gender representation and addressed risky behavior for women such as collecting wood or cutting grass, and for children playing or walking from schools.

UNICEF designed tools and common EORE toolkits, which include flipcharts, posters, leaflets, and user guides, based on the findings of the KAP survey. Gender analysis is also performed in humanitarian response actions to look at age and gender-specific needs to develop the Humanitarian Needs Overview, upon which interventions are based.

5- Proposed areas of focus to support progress towards achievement of UN Mine Action Strategy CCO2

UN Output Indicators in the UN Mine Action Strategy CCO2	Proposed areas of focus to support progress towards achievement of Strategy Outcomes
<i>Countries/territories that integrate gender into national mine action strategy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate and support national authorities to prioritize gender mainstreaming and diversity in mine action and reflect commitment by mainstreaming gender in the new national strategic workplan for mine action for the years 2022-2023.
<i>Countries/territories that have a quality assurance mechanism in place to ensure gender-responsive programming and programmes cycles</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technical assistance to national authorities on how to develop implementation workplans and quality assurance systems for the strategy.
<i>UN mine action programmes that provided technical assistance/training/support to national authorities on how to mainstream gender & diversity aspects in Mine Action</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technical support to national authorities on gender and diversity mainstreaming in mine action.
<i>UN mine action programmes in which data disaggregated by gender and age, including related to estimates of MRE beneficiary data, amongst other data sets</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate and support national authorities in establishing a national injury surveillance system and support the collection of sex, age and disability disaggregated data on victims of explosive ordnance.

Key Findings and Best Practices to Scale Up Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming in UN Mine Action

“The whole-of-United Nations approach to mine action is embodied in the new United Nations Mine Action Strategy 2019-2023. Its objectives and outcomes reflect key global priorities, including gender, youth and diversity, which are also integrated into the humanitarian response framework and supportive of the 2030 Agenda”. Report of the Secretary General on Assistance in Mine Action – August 2019

Conflict and Gender Mainstreaming and Diversity:

Countries in ***conflict*** suffer harsher realities and more complex challenges that jeopardize the ***prioritization of gender mainstreaming and diversity***. Conflicts affect national capacities, availability of resources, coordination, access to services, and prioritization of gender mainstreaming and diversity over more pressing basic needs such as safety, shelter, food, and clean water for the wider population. This **compromises** both UN and national authorities’ efforts to ensure that mine action is **addressing the specific needs** of diverse sexes and groups while still facilitating their empowerment and inclusion.

Institutional Frameworks for Gender Mainstreaming and Diversity:

In some of the cases where **national institutional frameworks** are available, such as gender mainstreaming strategies, implementation mechanisms of those frameworks are not. It is essential to accompany sectoral strategy documents with **budget-bound actionable plans**. The absence of **implementable quality** institutional frameworks compromises the ability of national authorities to **employ gender and age-sensitive approaches** to mine action operations such as surveying, prioritization, handover, clearance, risk education, and victim assistance.

Prioritization and Coordination of Gender Mainstreaming and Diversity:

The **longevity and maturity of mine action** programming in the country greatly affects the prioritization of gender and diversity mainstreaming. **Prioritization** requires **advocacy** on the part of the UN at the highest levels and provision of support to national authorities on gender mainstreaming and diversity **coordination** within the mine sector with the participation of all mine action actors. Coordination is key to **defining and mapping out** the **specific needs** of women, girls, men, and boys from diverse groups and ethnic backgrounds.

Technical Support for Gender Mainstreaming and Diversity:

UN provision of technical support on gender mainstreaming and diversity in mine action is key to achieving strategic outcomes. Country and territories' programmes should use relevant gender and diversity **guidelines and tools** for standardization and quality assurance.

Gender Mainstreaming and Diversity and Cultural Setups

Gender mainstreaming and diversity are **sensitive cultural** issues that need understanding, respect, and tailored responses that offer **viable alternatives** that match societal norms. It is recommended the UN advocate and support a cross-cutting approach to **incorporate** socio-economic, cultural, and religious considerations **across mine action** operations.