

## **BACKGROUND NOTE**

### **Plenary Session VI. Inclusion and Diversity: Racial Equity in Mine Action**

- Date and time: Thursday, 27 May 2021, 4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. (CEST)
- Chair: **Mr. Bruno Donat**, Chief, UNMAS Geneva Office and Global Coordinator, Mine Action Area of Responsibility
- Speakers: **Under-Secretary-General Bintou Keita**, United Nations  
**Brig. Gen. Khalid Hamdan Adam**, Director of the National Mine Action Center, the Republic of the Sudan  
**Mr. Wolfgang Bindseil**, Chair of the Mine Action Support Group, German Federal Foreign Office  
**Ms. Valentina Stivanello**, Country Director, Mines Advisory Group (MAG), Sri Lanka

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### **Introduction**

This session aims to showcase and encourage leadership in diversity, inclusion and racial equity in the mine action sector by taking stock of the current situation and discussing related issues.

Inspired by the call of the United Nations Secretary-General for global engagement to understand and address the way racism and discrimination manifest themselves in the work environment, this plenary will offer a space for an initial exchange and dialogue on equality, equity, discrimination and intersectionality. It is hoped that this discussion will pave the way for concrete initiatives to increase inclusivity, diversity and respect in mine action.

Various organizations are committing to internal action to achieve racial equity in the workplace. Taking into consideration the importance of raising awareness and spearheading improvement, it is particularly relevant for the mine action sector as a whole to review its way of working and make progress in terms of inclusion and diversity. Ensuring a more diverse and inclusive workplace is beneficial for all. It improves the quality of work by offering a larger range of skills, knowledge, and creativity.

### **Purpose of the Session**

**1. Promoting racial equity in the mine action sector**

In February 2021, a call to action entitled “*Standing Together to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, and All Other Forms of Intolerance, at the United Nations*”, was submitted to the UN Secretary-General. The document highlighted various discrimination issues within the United Nations such as the creation of barriers to the recruitment and promotion of certain individuals, the fear of retaliation when a complaint is made, disrespect, exclusion, disproportionate sanctions and harassment. The mine action sector may not be exempt from these issues and urgent actions must be taken to improve racial equity, inclusion and diversity.

**2. Implementing measures to ensure a more diverse workforce in mine action**

Currently, the measures in place may not be sufficient as discrimination and inequality persist. There is a need for reform in the modus operandi of many organisations in the mine action sector. In recent years, changes have been made to ensure more diversity and inclusion especially regarding the participation of women. It is important to maintain this momentum and extend efforts to fight against other forms of discrimination by offering a space for dialogue, where people feel safe and can share ideas on potential solutions to improve the situation.

**Format for the Plenary: (60 minutes)**

Introductory remarks by Chair	07 minutes
Presentation by USG Bintou Keita	07 minutes
Presentation by Brig. Khalid Hamdan Adam	07 minutes
Presentation by Mr. Wolfgang Bindseil	07 minutes
Presentation by Ms. Valentina Stivanello	07 minutes
Discussion and Q & A	20 minutes
Closing remarks by the Chair	05 minutes

**Food for thought**

The session will address the following issues:

- Do biases and racial discrimination affect the mine action sector? If so, how?
- Do we need to create a more diverse working environment in mine action operations? If so, how?

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- What tools are currently available, if any, to address racial discrimination in the workplace, should it occur?
- Are changes being made within the sector to promote racial equity? If so, are there good examples to emulate?