

## Main report

### Gender review of the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS)

#### 1.1 Background

The Swiss Campaign to Ban Landmines (hereafter: the Swiss Campaign) was contracted by Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) to undertake a gender review of the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), during the period 1 December 2009 – 28 February 2009. The assignment included the following tasks:

- To develop a checklist for those drafting future IMAS on how to ensure gender is considered within each set of standards;
- To go through the current 45 standards and recommend minimum changes from a gender perspective based on selected criteria using track-changes;
- To write a report summarising main findings;
- To write, and present, an interim report; and
- To present the final report and its findings for the Review Board

As a result of a meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January 2009 between Faiz Paktian from GICHD and Marie Nilsson at the Swiss Campaign, it was agreed that the assignment would be expanded to include an analysis on the IMAS Review Board with concrete recommendations on how it could be more gender balanced. The Swiss Campaign's findings can be found in Annex 1.

#### 1.2 Rationale – why do the IMAS need to be gender sensitised?

The IMAS consist of an impressive 45 standards which guide mine actors worldwide in their daily work and cover in detail many core issues of mine action. However, currently all IMAS lack a thorough gender analysis, and do neither display nor elaborate on any aspect of discrimination or inequalities.

There is a growing awareness amongst the mine action community that the inclusion of a gender perspective is needed in all mine action activities to improve equality and outreach as well quality and efficiency. Mine action organisations need to ensure that their activities reach all members of communities, women, girls, boys and men. This could be done through regular gender analyses of the activities, but also through pro-active activities such as the implementation of sustainable, gender aware routines and processes and through ensuring gender balance amongst staff.

Consequently, the standards and the tools that are used in mine action activities need to be gender sensitised, including the IMAS. Topics on gender need to be integrated in the daily structures, routines and checklists to become an integral component to be considered as a natural part of mine action. The IMAS thus need to explain why and how mine action activities can, and should be, gender mainstreamed.

## 1.3 Process

### 1.3.1 Criteria for gender review

As a first step, the criteria for the gender review were established to set the framework of the gender review. The criteria were divided in two sets; language and content. These criteria were during the review process further developed and transformed into the requested checklist presented in Annex 2.<sup>1</sup>

### 1.3.2 External quality measurement

As a quality assuring measure of the gender review undertaken and to get a second opinion from a variety of experts, a Critical Review Group consisting of the following members was established (short biographies in Annex 3):

- Paktian Faiz, GICHD (m)
- Pehr Lodhammar, GICHD (m)
- Reecha Upadhyay, UNDP/BCPR (f)
- Gabriele Russo, UNMAS (m)
- Kristin Valasek, DCAF (f)

Shortly after the start of the gender review, the Critical Review Group received a “mini-report” based on the review of two (2) IMAS for comments. The mini-report was based on **IMAS 10.30 Safety & occupational health – Personal protective equipment** and **IMAS 12.10 Planning for mine risk education programmes and projects**. These two IMAS were chosen as they represent two very different topics, one in which the Swiss Campaign found many gendered dimensions and the other only a few.

### 1.3.3. Internal quality control

The review also included an internal quality control to ensure that no points were missing or misunderstood. One IMAS was chosen as a pilot case which the two gender experts at the Swiss Campaign both reviewed from a gender perspective. The findings and comments were compared to ensure a unified method and process. Thereafter the remaining 44 IMAS were divided between the gender experts who independently carried out the gender review based on the criteria and findings from the common discussion. To double check the gender review undertaken, one gender expert went through the other’s reviews and vice versa.

### 1.3.4 Checklist and main report

Parallel to this process, the Swiss Campaign received the comments and feedbacks from the Critical Review Group and incorporated them in the gender analysis. As per terms of reference, a checklist was developed to facilitate the drafting of future IMAS and to ensure that a gender perspective is included already in the drafting phase. Lastly, this main report addressing key issues and challenges, and suggesting general recommendations was drafted and submitted to the IMAS Review Board.

## 2. General comments and limitations

### 2.1. On language

- Throughout the IMAS there is a tendency of using the term “gender” when it actual refers to “sex”. The term “sex” refers to biological differences such as chromosomes and genitals - the “female and male”. The term gender “[...] refers to the social

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<sup>1</sup> Main comments and input has been provided by Kristin Valasek, Gender and Security Sector Reform Project Coordinator, DCAF, Geneva.

*differences between females and males throughout the life cycle that are learned, and though deeply rooted in every culture, are changeable over time and have wide variations both within and between cultures. “Gender” determines the roles, power and resources for females and males in any culture*<sup>2</sup> - “the feminine and masculine”. To avoid confusion or misunderstanding, these need to be clarified.

- IMAS should avoid words which refers to the male sex when referring to both women and men; manpower (alternative wording: staff), foreman (alternative wording: person in charge), man-made (alternative wording: manufactured) etc.
- IMAS often refers to the term “technical”, for example in the repeated phrase (which can be found in each foreword) “[...] *the work of preparing, reviewing and revising IMAS is conducted by technical committees, with the support of international, governmental and non-governmental organisations*”. Although this is considered as being out of the remit of the review, the Swiss Campaign feels that, used as it is in the IMAS, the term “technical” relates to pure mine action expertise and does not refer to areas of expertise such as gender, development or diversity, only to mention a few. It is the belief of the Swiss Campaign that this term should be avoided, or broaden.
- Worth mentioning is that in the translations of IMAS into, for example, French and Spanish, additional gender dimensions will appear. The term “deminer” in French is either “demineur” or “demineuse”, i.e. the words themselves are gendered. The IMAS Review Board needs to take these linguistic dimensions into consideration when undertaking the revisions as a result of this gender review. The Swiss Campaign is aware that the Review Board is only responsible for the translation of IMAS 01.10 and 04.10, but wants to raise this as a general point to ensure it is addressed, regardless who is undertaking the translation in the end.

## 2.2. On content

- When undertaking a gender review, other related topics such as diversity, ethnicity or development issues in broad may be touched upon. It has been difficult to draw the line where the gender review ends and another topic starts as these are interrelated and interdependent. This review therefore may discuss or raise points that may be considered at a first site as outside the mandate of this assignment, but which are part of the gender discourse as well. The IMAS Review Board has to decide whether these comments are relevant or not.
- The IMAS have a very technical focus in which human suffering – the women, girls, boys and men landmines affect – is not widely discussed. The “people” or “affected population”, i.e. the women, girls, boys and men, are not put in centre of attention of the IMAS and not discussed to the degree one could expect.
- The lack of “human focus” is visible not only in the language used, but also in **which** topics IMAS covers. Although this review should be limited to investigating the current IMAS, it is interesting to raise the question of the choice of topics for which an IMAS is decided to be developed. There is for example none on victim assistance (although under construction), but as many as three on mine detection dogs. Also, this review recommends the introduction of new topics, for example Code of Conduct. If this is done, the Review Board might want to consider developing a specific IMAS for this.
- There is a tendency in the IMAS to discuss in terms of “affected communities” as an entity, for example in IMAS 02.10, page 28, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph: “[...] *so that affected*

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<sup>2</sup> IASC (2006) Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action “Women, Girls, Boys and Men - Different Needs – Equal Opportunities”

*communities are aware...*”. It is not the communities that are aware; it is people – women, girls, boys and men - within the affected communities that are aware, or unaware.

- Whenever the IMAS lists various items or organisations, it should be ensured that all groups are represented through a variety of actors not limited to mine action organisations or national authorities but also including women’s organisations or field workers dominated by and/or having access to women, such as midwives.
- The Swiss Campaign has not brought up the issue of maternity/paternity leave in each IMAS, though it would be relevant for many of them. Although this might be seen as a small component of a larger human resources package which does not need to be addressed in IMAS, the Swiss Campaign believes that lack of proper policies on parental leave creates a major obstacle for employment of women, may it be as deminers or as MRE trainers. Hence, the IMAS should reflect this somewhere.
- Throughout the review, the Swiss Campaign addresses the issue of gender balance. Worth underlining here, is that the IMAS Review Board consists of 26 persons: 25 men and one woman. Gender balance has to be ensured, not only among mine action activities in the field, but also amongst mine action actors at headquarters and main offices. More details on this topic with concrete recommendations on how the IMAS Review Board can broaden its expertise, can be found in Annex 1.

### **2.3. Other comments**

- In addition to IMAS there are national mine action standards (NMAS), currently available for 10 countries. A gender review and the subsequent changes of IMAS will trigger changes for the NMAS as well. The Review Board needs to come up with a practical solution for incorporating the changes in all NMAS.
- The IMAS need to have a stronger reference and link to the UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes. Currently, this instrument is mentioned in one IMAS only, but has relevance for a majority of IMAS. The Swiss Campaign has only inserted this reference directly in one IMAS (12.10) as it is specifically mentioned in the text, but strongly recommends that these guidelines are mentioned in all IMAS.

### **3. The findings of the Critical Review Group**

Many of the comments and suggested wordings raised by the Critical Review Group have been inserted directly in each IMAS. Others have been discussed within the Swiss Campaign but not taken into consideration as they are not in line with the values and opinions of the organisation. Here follow some of the specific points the Critical Review Group made:

- A majority of the CRG members found the review undertaken as “comprehensive” and “relevant”.
- One member asked for references to external documents, such as UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes or the Swiss Campaign’s report “Gender and Landmines – From concept to Practice”.
- The two external members said that the review had captured the gender sensitive language well, but was lacking in terms of gender analysis. They both asked for deeper analysis, in text, on how and why landmines affect women, girls, boys and men differently. However, the Swiss Campaign has deliberately left out a deeper analysis, due to the conflicting request to keep the inserts short and brief.
- DCAF called for the risk of “over-adding gender issues”. *“If the point is already made in the paragraph/section, then there is no need to repeat. Otherwise in the end it will read as repetitious and "gender-heavy" in comparison with other issues”*.

- GICHD asked for consistency throughout IMAS, “[...] for example her/his, or s/he instead of his/her or he/she should be used in all IMAS. Also important to note that the terms we use should be in compliance with the UN gender terminology, and a reference should be made to the relevant UN document somewhere in the final report.”
- UNMAS suggested to “not unpack all collective nouns into a long list” (referring to the recommendation to break down gender blind terms such as people, persons, community etc into “women, girls, boys and men”) and that it could be mentioned once in the beginning as a reminder. The Swiss Campaign strongly disagrees with this and believes there is an urgent need to move away from gender blind formulations. “There is a relationship between our language use and our social reality. If we “erase” women from language, that makes it easier to maintain gender inequality. [...] Words matter, and our language choices have consequences. If we believe that women and men deserve social equality, then we should think seriously about how to reflect that belief in our language use.”<sup>3</sup> Therefore, this methodical way of mentioning women, girls, boys and men is a crucial step for systematically reflecting the beneficiaries of mine action in a fair and accurate manner, with their different vulnerabilities, needs, capabilities and roles.
- Both UNMAS and GICHD moreover reacted on the Swiss Campaign’s recommendation to include something on “not tolerating harmful traditional practices” saying it is about “cultural relativism” and “subjective”. The Swiss Campaign disagrees with this comment and refers to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, in which the term is clearly defined.
- UNMAS had a similar comment on gender balance, stating that it is “not the aim of IMAS”. On this point, the Swiss Campaign would like to refer to the UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes.
- UNMAS raised an interesting point on adding a legal definition of “children”, i.e. girls and boys. The Swiss Campaign agrees with this, but thinks it is outside the mandate of the gender review.

#### 4. Format for the Gender Review

- The review is undertaken directly in each IMAS in Word. All 45 revised IMAS are submitted together with this report. The recommendations/suggestions for new text pieces have been inserted directly in the Word document in track changes mode. When the Swiss Campaign wants to raise a question or a larger concern this has been made through the use of the Word function “Comment”.
- For the annexes which refer to the glossary in IMAS 04.10, all changes are made in the IMAS 04.10 itself and not in each separate IMAS. The changes in IMAS 04.10 have consequences for all the other IMAS. The IMAS Review Board hence needs to go through IMAS 04.10 first and decide which changes to accept and thereafter do the consequent changes in all the other IMAS. This is required for both changes of existing terms as well as the introduction of new ones.

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<sup>3</sup> Gender sensitive language, available at <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/gender.html>

- The Swiss Campaign has chosen to follow the format of Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) on which order to mention the sexes, namely: “women, girls, boys and men”.<sup>4</sup>
- The Swiss Campaign has also chosen the following other formats and orders:<sup>5</sup>
  - “women and men” instead of “men and women”
  - “female and male” instead of “male and female”
  - “she/he” instead of “he/she”
  - “her/his” instead of “his/her”
  - “her/him” instead of “him/her”

## 5. Disclaimer

The recommendations and suggested changes in terms of language and content are suggestions from the Swiss Campaign’s Gender and Mine Action Programme. The final decision however, on what to include and what to leave out, is to be taken by the IMAS Review Board and will reflect their views and opinions. The Swiss Campaign therefore takes no responsibility of the final products as they may not reflect the values of the Swiss Campaign.

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<sup>4</sup> IASC Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action, <http://ochaonline.un.org/HumanitarianIssues/GenderEquality/KeyDocuments/IASCGenderHandbook/tabid/1384/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> This choice has no specific reference, but is a consequence of and a consistent order if we agree on following IASC’s phrasing of “women, girls, boys and men”.

## **Annex 1: A gender balanced IMAS Review Board?**

Currently, the IMAS Review Board consists of 26 members and 2 observers. These are representing a variety of mine action stakeholders; UN, NGOs (national as well as international), donors, commercial companies, among others.<sup>6</sup> Of the 26 members, currently only one (1) is female (the representative from UNDP) and only five (5) represent a mine affected country.

The explanation for this is, according to GICHD, that a certain background, in this case extensive background from working in mine action, is needed to carry out the tasks assigned to the Review Board. The Swiss Campaign fully agrees that technical mine action expertise is needed in the Review Board from a majority of members, but that the technical parts of mine action do not represent the whole picture. The Swiss Campaign recommends the following three actions to be carried out to become more gender and diversity balanced:

As a first point, the Review Group may consider other skills and knowledge than pure technical as crucial for its work. Consequently, non-technical, expertise from the field of mine action, or other sectors, may be needed. The following list represents some of the expertise the Review Board may want to include in its work:

- Gender expert
- Diversity expert
- Development/livelihood expert
- Disability expert
- Expert on guidelines, tools, texts

Secondly, for a greater gender balance and a more varied board in terms of diversity, the Review Board may consider recruiting members outside their traditional fields and channels (for example, through UNIFEM, the Women and War section at ICRC or local women's organisations, only to mention a few). Moreover, the Board may consider reversing the current numbers of each category. For example, there are only two (2) national NGOs, whereas there are four (4) international. Also, all "independent" experts represent a very narrow group of Western, male, non-mine affected, technical experts.

Thirdly, the Review Board may want to consider having a rotating system for its members. Having said that, the Swiss Campaign realises that the Chair is reserved for UNMAS and the post of secretary to the GICHD, but these positions could be rotated within the organisations. The other members may either be rotated fully, i.e. replaced after a number of years, or at least within its organisation. In this process, the Review Board could encourage, in writing, that the organisations should consider the composition of the group in terms of gender balance and diversity when nominating its candidate.

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<sup>6</sup> List of members of the Review Board and their terms of references can be found at: <http://www.mineactionstandards.org/reviewboard.htm>

## Annex 2: Checklist for developing new, gender sensitive IMAS

### A. Language analysis

1. Does the text have gender inclusive language?
  - Have terms such as “man” or “men” been used or words containing one of them used to refer to people who may be female?<sup>7</sup> Substitute “she/he”, “her/him” or other words, such as “chair”/“chairperson” instead of “chairman” or “police officer” instead of “policeman”.
2. Does the text lack explicit references to women, girls, boys and men?
  - Are gender blind terms such as population/affected communities/people divided in women, girls, boys and men, when needed?
  - Are these mentioned by women and girls first, as in “women, girls, boys and men” or “female and male” and “her/him”?
3. Does the text reinforce stereotypes by making unnecessary or tokenising references or linkages, for example in expressions such as “vulnerable women” or “women and children”?
4. Are the terms “gender” and “sex” used correctly?

### B. Content analysis

5. Is the term “gender” mentioned and explained in its various contexts, when needed?
  - If gender terms are mentioned, such as “gender” or “gender balance” or “gender perspective”, are they explained the first time they are mentioned in the text or in the glossary?
  - In addition to explaining the meaning of the terms, is the practical application in the context or situation included? For example, if the text mentions “*when conducting mine risk education, gender dimensions have to be taken into consideration*”, these “gender dimensions” need to be explained and addressed, e.g. use of gender aware mine risk education material, ensure gender balance among trainers as well as audience and provide separate sessions for women and men, when needed.
6. Are the different impact/needs of women and men addressed?
  - Women, girls, boys and men are affected differently by landmines and hence need to be assisted in different ways. For example, gender influences the likelihood of becoming a landmine victim, the ability to access medical attention or risk education and awareness, the ability to access and use cleared land. This has to be explicitly addressed in texts dealing with mine action.
7. Are women, men, girls and boys included as actors in mine action?

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<sup>7</sup> “[M]ale-based generics are another indicator—and, more importantly, a *reinforcer*—of a system in which “man” in the abstract and men in the flesh are privileged over women”, to be found at <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/gender.html>

- Are women, girls, boys and men within communities affected by mines involved and consulted in the entire mine action project cycle?
  - Is the need for gender-balance explicitly recognised and addressed?
  - Are women, girls and boys portrayed as victims rather than actors?
8. Are women's grass roots organisations recognised as relevant mine action partners within the various mine action processes?
- For example, when the actors to which mine action can turn for assistance, expertise and referral are mentioned, ensure that women's grass roots organisations are amongst them.
9. Are mine action programmes, including internal personnel and policies, able to meet the needs of women, girls, boys and men affected by mines?
- Is the need for gender training of mine action personnel mentioned?
  - Is reference made to recruiting both women and men for mine action positions?
  - Are internal policies and procedures within mine action organisations gender-sensitive (HR policies, equipment, recruitment procedures etc.)?
  - Is gender recognised as a necessary expertise in mine action and is the need for gender experts mentioned?
  - Is allocation of the budget towards gender issues addressed?
10. Is data collected in a sex and age disaggregated manner? How is the data analysed?
- When any kind of data is collected, may it be landmine casualties or number of recipients of mine risk education, these have to be gathered segregated by sex and age to provide a foundation for targeted and effective mine action programming and to be able to trace the impact in terms of gender.
11. Is the text in line with international instruments and standards on gender, such as the UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes?

## **Annex 3: Biographies of the Experts**

### **A. Experts who will undertake the gender review**

#### **Marie Nilsson, Swiss Campaign to Ban Landmines (f)**

Marie has been working as Programme Officer with the Gender and Mine Action Programme since September 2007 where she is responsible for the programme, through field research, analyses and the production of information material and issue briefs on gender and mine action, including the recently launched publication “*Gender and Landmines – From Concept to Practice*”. Before joining the Swiss Campaign, Marie worked as Gender Advisor for Swedish Rescue Services Agency with gender sensitisation of humanitarian assistance activities. Previous employers also include Swedish International Development Agency in Stockholm, New Delhi and Hanoi, and various NGOs primarily working with women’s rights.

#### **Virginie Rozès, Swiss Campaign to Ban Landmines (f)**

Virginie has been working as a Programme Assistant with the Gender and Mine Action Programme since March 2008. Before joining the Swiss Campaign, Virginie worked as a Women and War Research Assistant for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) where she undertook research on sexual violence in armed conflict. Previous positions also include researching on Sexual and Gender Based Violence for UNHCR and on Gender History for the Academic Research Center on Gender Studies in Lyon - France.

### **B. Experts of the Critical Review Group**

#### **Paktian Faiz, GICHD (m)**

Faiz Paktian joined the GICHD in September 2006 as the head of standards and quality management section. He has been involved in humanitarian mine action since 1990. He worked in a variety of positions in the field and at senior manager level for the Afghan programme in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and also in Iraq and Yemen. He worked for NGOs, commercial demining organisations and the United Nations. Prior to joining the GICHD, he worked as Chief Technical Advisor for UNDP Mine Action Programme in Yemen. Faiz Paktian holds a Masters in Mechanical Engineering and a Masters in Business and Administration.

#### **Pehr Lodhammar, GICHD (m)**

Pehr has been active in clearance of landmines and unexploded ammunition since 1990, initially as an EOD Officer with the Swedish Army and since 1999 with various commercial demining firms, Swedish Rescue Services Agency (SRSA) and United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in various mine action positions in head quarters and in the field. Pehr has previously worked in Iraq, Eritrea, Kosovo, Lebanon, USA and, most recently, with UNOPS in Jordan running a project in support of the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA). Pehr is the mechanical Project Officer with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).

#### **Reecha Upadhyay, UNDP/BCPR (f)**

Reecha Upadhyay is a gender and conflict specialist and has worked with the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), UNDP for over two years. She provides programmatic support to BCPR’s intervention on gender equality in crisis situations. She has

worked in India and Nepal on prevention and response to cross-border sex trafficking. Reecha has a Master's in International Affairs from the New School University.

**Gabriele Russo, UNMAS (m)**

Gabriele Russo, Policy Coordination Officer with the UN Mine Action Service, has a background in international human rights and humanitarian law, experience with the OSCE in the Balkans and with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in the field - serving with UNMIK (Kosovo) and UNAMA (Afghanistan). He has also worked with DPKO at headquarters since 2006, where he contributed to the development of guidance materials for peacekeeping and political missions and provided support to DPKO Gender Advisory Team in the field. At UNMAS he works to ensure support for the inter-agency coordination processes, advance the gender and mine action initiatives, support efforts to ensure universalisation and compliance with relevant treaties, and ensure that mine action considerations are raised in all relevant UN inter-governmental and inter-agency forums.

**Kristin Valasek, DCAF (f)**

Kristin Valasek is the Gender and Security Sector Reform Project Coordinator with the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces. She is responsible for the development of research, field projects, policy and training on integrating gender issues into security sector reform. Prior to joining DCAF, Kristin coordinated gender, peace and security work at the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and gender mainstreaming with the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs. In addition, she has grassroots NGO experience in the areas of domestic violence, sexual assault and refugee support.