**BACKGROUND NOTE**

**Plenary Session 4: “Building Stronger Communities - Youth and Women in Mine Action”**

Date and time: 11:45 to 13:00, Thursday, 7 February 2019

Chair: **Ms. Hiba Qasas**, Chief of Humanitarian Crisis and Response Office, UN Women

Speakers: **Ambassador Abdulkadir Abdulle Hooshow**, Director, Somalia Explosive Hazard Management Authority, Federal Government of Somalia

**Ms. Zahra Abdihagi Mahamed**, Operations Assistant and Volunteer Chairperson for Somali Youth United

**Ambassador Stefano Toscano**, Director, GICHD

**Ms. Erin Hunt**, Programme Manager, Mines Action Canada

Location: Room XVIII, Palais des Nations, Geneva

**Introduction**

Gender inclusion and diversity is a cross-cutting strategic outcome of the United Nations Mine Action Strategy 2019-2023, in line with SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 10 (reduced inequalities). A core UN priority is to ensure equal participation, consultation and inclusion of all affected populations in the planning and implementation of mine action programmes. The UN Strategy aligns more closely with broader initiatives that aim to address gender in humanitarian action, peace and security, development (notably UN Security Council Resolution 1325), as well as international normative frameworks. Women, girls, men, and boys from diverse groups are affected differently by explosive devices, and it is critical to identify and consider their specific needs and priorities to address the consequences of discrimination, inequalities and injustices. Conversely, women, girls, men and boys can make critical contribution to the planning and implementation of mine action programmes – just as mine action, in turn, can contribute to empowerment of women and youth.

**Purpose of the Session**

The plenary will emphasize the criticality of ownership to efficiency, impact and sustainability, both at the national and local level, and generate discussion on how the active participation and involvement of women and youth can play an essential contribution for a peaceful reconstruction and more secure environment. The plenary will also illustrate how mine action can unlock the potential of women and youth through effective programming to build resilient communities.

**Format for the Plenary: (75 minutes)**

Introductory remarks by Chair 10 minutes

Presentation by Ambassador Hooshow 10 minutes

Presentation by Ms. Mahamed 10 minutes

Presentation by Ambassador Toscano 10 minutes

Presentation by Ms. Hunt 10 minutes

Discussion and Q & A 20 minutes

Closing remarks by Chair 5 minutes

**Food for Thought:**

* What are the benefits and advantages for mine action programmes to mobilize the skills and capacities of affected people, particularly youth and women, in the implementation of mine action activities? Building trust with local communities? Enabling a more effective response to the specific needs and priorities of the various groups and communities?
* How can we link concrete contribution and success of the Sustainable Development Goals and the engagement of women and young people to mine action programmes? Does it provide opportunity to youth to serve as positive role model with the power to support community recovery and efforts towards the SDGs?
* What is the role of mine action in acknowledging the role of women as agents for change towards peaceful and resilient communities?