

**Statement on Universalization
First Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions
Dubrovnik, 8 September 2015**



Thank you Madam President.

Universal adherence to the Convention and to its norms is the number one priority for the Cluster Munition Coalition.

In the past days, states have clearly reiterated their resolve to eliminate cluster munitions and to address the consequences of past use. There is no better way to meet these goals than by bringing all states on board the Convention and making sure it is fully respected. Expanding membership of the Convention is in our collective interest because with every new State Party, we strengthen the norm against these horrid weapons and decrease the likelihood that they will be used again. Every country in the world can and should join the Convention: it is a question of political will and placing a priority on the protection of civilian lives.

We are happy to welcome on board Canada, Guinea, Guyana, Iceland, Palestine, Paraguay, Rwanda, Slovakia, and South Africa, which have ratified or acceded since the Fifth Meeting on States Parties. A number of them are former or current stockpilers, or have produced and used the weapon. Their adherence to the Convention will have a significant impact on reducing the risk of future harm from cluster munitions. Their participation shows that a variety of states with different political and security perspectives all support the ban on cluster munitions. A number of the new States Parties are not affected and have never owned cluster munitions. Their participation is important too: it is essential for the strength of the ban that all states join the Convention -- each new voice counts.

When preparing for accession, one of the new States Parties noted that, I quote, "the inflexible and vague approach of non-signatory countries is unsustainable and may result in unnecessary isolation." This country has in the past produced, imported and exported the weapon, and it has a stockpile. But it has recognized that the horrific consequences of the use of cluster munitions on civilian populations far outweigh any perceived utility they might have. We have seen these consequences all too clearly this year as cluster munitions have fallen on people's homes and where the remnants lie in wait, ready to be set off, in their villages -- in Yemen, where shepherds were fatally wounded, in Ukraine, where school children were killed while playing and elderly people injured, in Syria, where the civilian casualty toll in the past five years is higher than in the rest of the world combined.

The CMC welcomes the presence of many states not party here this week, and we certainly hope you will have fruitful discussions that will convince you of the necessity of adhering to the Convention without further delay. Civil society representatives are at your full disposal to facilitate these discussions and support your next steps. With regards to signatories in particular -- we trust that the past seven years have given you plenty of time to conduct any internal consultations and other steps necessary to ratify. With adequate political will, all signatories should have ratified by now. We heartily encourage you to deposit an instrument of ratification at the UN Treaty Event in New York at the end of this month.

We were delighted to hear from Colombia and Madagascar that ratification is imminent, and to hear Palau's announcement that the Senate has probably discussed ratification this morning in Capital. We need to hear from all other signatories an update on their current status and a timeline for ratifying.

We heartily welcome Cuba's announcement about steps taken towards accession.

A number of other non-signatories are also here, most of which either this week or in the past have expressed concern at the unacceptable harm that cluster munitions cause. We would like to ask: what steps are you taking to address those concerns? Please do engage on this issue with your neighbors; put in place a moratorium on use, production, and transfer; start destroying your stocks; start internal consultations on accession. The CCM is the only comprehensive international agreement addressing cluster munitions. Taking steps now towards acceding to the convention is the best way to way to express your concern at the unacceptable harm that cluster munitions cause.

We thank Costa Rica for its enthusiastic leadership on universalization, as well as the Coordinators Ecuador and Norway, and all those that have undertaken bilateral outreach. If you believe that some of your bilateral efforts have been particularly successful, please draw lessons from those successes and replicate them with other neighbors or other states with whom you have special ties. Regional efforts paid off to make Central America our first cluster-free region, we hope many other regions will follow this example. The CMC stands ready to lend assistance and to multiply your efforts, and we believe other partners like the ICRC, UN, and ISU do so as well. All States Parties have a legal duty under Article 21 to promote universalisation. The first action listed in the Dubrovnik Action Plan calls on all States Parties to seize all opportunities to increase the number of States Parties to 130 over the next five years. Please do seize every possible occasion to tell non-signatories to join without further delay, and to ask signatories to make ratification a top priority.

The Cluster Munition Coalition remains committed to making universal adherence to this Convention our number one priority and we know this priority is shared by all of you. Together, we can save many lives and livelihoods, preventing those atrocities that we all recognize as unacceptable, wherever they may occur.