

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



Thank you Madam President.

The first five years of the Convention have galvanised international effort on survey and clearance. It has demonstrated that the clearance of cluster munition remnants *can* be done, and that it can be done effectively and relatively quickly. This has been noted by the Coordinators Switzerland and Bosnia and Herzegovina, whom we thank for their thorough work on developing an ambitious and pragmatic Dubrovnik Action Plan and for engaging the CMC and expert mine action organisations when drafting the plan. Detailed recommendations were also included in the VAP Review earlier this year, and we encourage all states to refer to those in their programming.

Between 2010 and 2014, a total of more than 255km² of land was cleared and 295,000 submunitions destroyed. Approximately 74km² of land was cleared and 69,000 submunitions were destroyed during 2014. This is significant progress. Reporting of contamination extent and operational achievements has improved greatly during the review period, although it is still lacking in many states. Therefore a clear picture is not yet available of the global scale of contamination, the amount of land released through survey and clearance, and the number of submunitions destroyed. The CMC reiterates the importance of disaggregating cluster munitions from other items of UXO in national and operational reporting.

The efficient implementation of Article 4 relies *first* on good surveys, both non-technical and technical, to establish the real extent of the problem, and *second*, on prioritized clearance efforts, using the most efficient funding regimes and updated clearance methods. In the past five years there have been developments that are significant, and strategic partnerships in many ways emerging directly from the wish to implement the Convention effectively.

The land release approach has been introduced in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the removal of the threat of explosive remnants of war, including cluster munition remnants. National authorities have a key role to play to ensure that action plans, standards, and standard operating procedures incorporate the principles of land release. The Cluster Munition Coalition encourages states to use available standards and guidelines, such as guidance developed specifically for cluster munition contamination.

National mine action programmes should improve information management, ensuring that accurate data is collected and recorded. The Cluster Munition Monitor has found discrepancies in the data provided for several countries by different sources: the Article 7 transparency reports, the national mine action centers, and mine action operators. We must collectively improve our ability to measure progress made under this Convention, and this starts with good data. This will also help affected states to assess the financial resources

needed, and to approach donors with the assurance that funds will be used in a rational manner.

Good survey ensures that clearance activities are focused on areas of known contamination. It also ensures that scarce resources are prioritised in clearance efforts so that areas with the greatest impact on communities can be cleared first -- knowing that all contamination needs to ultimately be cleared to reach full compliance with the Convention. We strongly believe that resource allocation must be based on need and on the human impact of cluster munition remnants. This is relevant for all states, and in particular those with heavy contamination.

Deadlines for clearance are now approaching fast. The CMC said from the early days of the Convention that all states except for a very few should be able to complete clearance way in advance of their deadlines. We are concerned that a number of States Parties with looming deadlines have not yet presented comprehensive plans with timelines for survey and clearance.

The Cluster Munition Coalition encourages States Parties that possess expertise in programme management, information management, survey and clearance methodologies to provide capacity-building support to those states and other areas that are in need of such support to address their cluster munition contamination. The CMC and its member operators also stand ready to provide assistance.

The Convention galvanised cooperation and partnership between clearance organisations, donors and affected states. Constructive dialogue and challenges to the way we do things has seen practice improve so that there is an increase in donor value for money and, most importantly, greater and more immediate benefit to communities. The Dubrovnik Action Plan gives the potential for even greater partnership, cooperation and progress in the next five years and we call on all states, donors and organisations to seize the opportunities it gives.