

Reference will be made by Spain or Mexico to this paper

NON PAPER ON A COOPERATION PORTAL FOR THE CCM OFFICIAL WEBSITE

**Drafted by Mexico and Spain in their capacity as co-chairs
of the Working Group on Cooperation and Assistance**

Introduction

Article 6 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) stipulates that, in fulfilling its obligations under the Convention, each State Party has the right to seek and receive assistance, and that each State Party in a position to do so shall provide assistance. The provisions of this article, along with the objectives pursued by the Convention, imply that all parts have an obligation to cooperate and participate in international assistance activities.

The spirit of the Vientiane Action Plan, endorsed in Beirut, is that cooperation and assistance within the framework of the Convention on Cluster Munitions applies to all the provisions and objectives of the Convention, and goes beyond financial resources, including assistance and technical cooperation, exchange of information and good practices. Action 42 of the Vientiane Action Plan calls on the parties to report on the resources, capabilities and programs available for achieving the purposes of the Convention. This is the clearest expression of the dynamism that should prevail in our efforts for cooperation and assistance as part of the CCM.

Throughout the coordination process with our cooperation and international assistance group, Spain and Mexico have seen that there is room for improving the channels of contact between the parties of the Convention, and that the new technologies can play an important role in this regard. There are many completed and on going projects (as shown by the catalogue of good practices of cooperation and assistance). But there are also many projects and initiatives that do not even reach the formulation stage due to a lack of understanding of the needs, available resources, or the requirements to obtain them.

Definition

A valuable contribution to bridge this gap could be the creation of a section or link within the website of the CCM (clustermunitions.org), which would serve as a contact platform for potential recipients of cooperation and donors. In this space, on a voluntary basis, the parties could publish a detailed description of their potential needs and suggestions of projects to improve their compliance with the CCM. Donors could do the same, with the available resources, or provide information on the requirements to submit projects or consider possible support.

This will facilitate the mutual understanding and the flow of updated information, which could ultimately lead to the establishment of new cooperation projects.

Given that the discussion on this subject has been carried out within other treaties, this so-called "cooperation portal" could be guided by the following principles:

Zero-cost: its functioning should not require any additional resources nor an extension of functions from the future Implementation Support Unit. The portal should be designed in order to allow its self-management, being the participant states the ones held responsible for the content published in the webpage.

Simplicity: the objective should not consist in creating a complex database, but rather a virtual platform where those States interested in doing so could publish any information they consider appropriate. A certain uniformity of the various contributions could be achieved by creating a guidance pattern. However, enough freedom of manoeuvre should be allowed, being the states concerned the ones to organise the information in the most suitable way for each case.

Complementarity: This mechanism does not intend to replace any of the already existing ones.

Voluntary basis: the use of this platform would be subjected to the voluntary nature of the state parties which, ultimately, should determine the future of this new section.

Functioning

The "cooperation portal" would be a new section that could be accessed through the official website of the Convention, being its working language English in order to facilitate communication between all parts.

The States Parties involved, both potential beneficiaries and possible or future donors, could send by e-mail to the executive coordinator of the CCM, or to the Support Unit of the Convention when established, the texts to be published. These texts would contain either a description of requirements, an explanation of how to access support, or examples of on going projects that would work as an exchange of experiences. The coordinator, or the Support Unit, would publish them directly, without synthesising or editing it. This would avoid adding new workload to the coordination unit of the CCM or to the future Support Unit.

In addition, it is worth noting that the "cooperation portal" would be protected by a passcode, which would be changed regularly. States that would wish to access this section should request the entry code to the executive coordinator or future Support Unit.

In order to achieve a thematic order of the contributions, a list of countries that have published information would be established. Within a reasonable time frame, and in order to avoid out-dated information, they would proceed to delete it, allowing the state concerned to replace it with updated information if appropriate.

Consideration could also be given to enabling the entry of relevant international organizations and NGOs operating in the sector. However, our confidentiality should always be safeguarded, as this mechanism was conceived to facilitate communication and cooperation between signatory states.

Conclusion

It is important to highlight that this discussion paper is just an attempt to exchange ideas on possible improvements in the channels of communication, and on the establishment of cooperation and assistance projects under the CCM.

It is essential to have the benefit of the views and assistance of the parties and other stakeholders, as well as of the executive coordinator of the Convention, in order to launch this "cooperation portal".

Mexico and Spain have launched this idea on the assumption that any improvement in the field of cooperation and assistance is also an overall improvement in the functioning of our Convention, and, ultimately, of the living conditions of the affected populations. This is the ultimate goal that must guide our efforts.