

**Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions
(2-5 September, 2014, San José, Costa Rica)**

EU general statement

Mr. President,

I am speaking on behalf of the European Union.

The following countries align themselves with this declaration: the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland†, Serbia*, Albania*, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, the Republic of Moldova.

Mr. President,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you for presiding over the Fifth Meeting of States Parties of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. I would also like to express our gratitude to the government of Costa Rica for organising and hosting this important event. I would also like to convey our gratitude to the outgoing Zambian president for his efforts and commitment over the past year.

Mr. President,

The European Union has consistently supported international efforts addressing the humanitarian, socio-economic and security, impact of conventional weapons and their indiscriminate use on civilian populations. We are deeply concerned about reports of alleged use of cluster munitions against civilian populations in Syria and we call upon the Syrian regime to refrain from such use. We are also deeply concerned about worrying reports concerning South Sudan and Ukraine.

The number of States Parties to the Cluster Munitions Convention has grown rapidly. 84 States have by now ratified the Convention and 29 more signed it. We took note of the San Jose Progress Report, monitoring progress and identifying key questions which were addressed by States Parties with regard to implementing their commitments. In supporting the overall goal of the Convention, the European Union puts specific emphasis on the objectives of reducing the cluster munitions threat, alleviating victims' suffering, providing socio-economic reintegration and enhancing local and regional capacities. While recognising the sovereign right of States to be bound only by the treaties to which they have acceded to, we support the development of synergies in the implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and other humanitarian disarmament treaties, as applicable.

Mr. President,

The European Union takes a comprehensive approach to mine action. In providing assistance for clearance operations and victim assistance we do not differentiate between the types of

* The Candidate countries former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia as well as potential candidate countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

† Candidate Country Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

explosive remnants of war, including cluster munitions remnants.

Complementing our humanitarian mine action, the EU promotes the integration and streamlining of mine action into broader cooperation and development policies in order to ensure sustainable results. Humanitarian mine action can facilitate the development of economic opportunities thus contributing to the integration of communities, including through the removal of barriers on access for persons with disabilities. In order to ensure adequate integration of mine action into bilateral cooperation, it is necessary that countries affected by explosive remnants of war prioritise or sufficiently take on board mine action in their requests for general assistance, and that they make it a priority in their national indicative programmes. In addition to cooperation with governments at national level, international and regional cooperation is essential to the success of work on the ground. Coordinated assistance by international actors can increase the impact of the different kinds of support that can be made available.

Mr. President,

Victim assistance is a core component of the European Union's Mine Action Strategy and we are committed to providing concrete and sustainable assistance to victims, their families and communities. The EU believes that the sustainability of victim assistance in the longer term requires that these efforts be integrated into broader disability policies. The EU particularly emphasises the importance of the full participation of survivors and their representative organisations in decision-making and policy-making on issues affecting them.

Our ultimate promise to them is to ensure their full participation in all spheres of society on an equal basis with others and in a sustainable way. This goal can be better achieved taking also into consideration the continued relevance of and synergy with other international instruments and norms. In this regard, we wish to underline the strong linkage with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which provides a wider framework to comprehensively address the needs of survivors, the realisation of their political, social and economic rights, and to ensure respect for their inherent dignity.

Mr. President,

The European Union and its Member States have contributed more than 500 Million Euro to Mine Action since 2010, representing more than one third of the world's financial assistance to mine action, demonstrating our continuing commitment to a safer world and thus making the EU and its Member States the leading donor in this area.

We are aware that full compliance with the obligations of the Convention on Cluster Munitions can be a significant challenge for affected States Parties. The European Union will continue to work in cooperation with the countries concerned. We need to join our efforts to develop constructive ideas and carry out concrete action to achieve our common goals with a particular focus on the support of the affected populations. For its part, the European Union is ready to do so.

Thank you.