

**CMC Statement on Universalization
Second Meeting of States Parties, Convention on Cluster
Munitions
Beirut, Lebanon
14 September 2011**



Thank you Mr. President,

Last month, hundreds of CMC campaigners in more than fifty countries celebrated the first anniversary of the Convention on Cluster Munitions becoming binding international law. United under the theme of “Join the team,” their message was clear: urging all states to ‘join the team’ of countries that are already part of the Convention and are committed to a global ban to end suffering caused by cluster bombs.

Here in Lebanon, football players had a match with a team of cluster bomb survivors to celebrate the progress of the ban. In Laos campaigners held a football tournament with sixteen teams competing for the “Adieu Bombe” cup. More celebrations included wheelchair basketball matches in Australia, the Gambia, and Switzerland; a sitting volleyball tournament in Serbia; a cheerleading event in The Hague; and a chess game in Macedonia. These, and the many more events held, attracted support from governments, the media and civil society supporters.

This activity demonstrates the will of individuals, organisations and political figures around the world for this Convention to work. Indeed, the high number of states that have signed, ratified or acceded to the Convention, now 109, is proof of a strong commitment by the international community to end the use of cluster munitions.

Adding to these summer celebrations was the news that two more countries have ratified the convention – Senegal and the Cook Islands, bringing the number that have ratified since we met in Vientiane for the First Meeting of States Parties, to fourteen. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate these countries [*Bulgaria, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Lithuania, Mozambique, The Netherlands, Panama, Portugal, Botswana, Senegal and the Cook Islands*] for becoming States Parties to the Convention.

We congratulate Grenada for becoming the first state to accede to the Convention. Although this was the only accession in the Convention’s first year, there are many positive signs that it will soon be followed by many others.

In addition CMC would also like to give special congratulations to Swaziland for acceding to the Convention here in Beirut and to Afghanistan for their ratification last week.

Despite the progress, we must ask, during this past year, how many men, women and children have lost their lives and limbs due to these horrific weapons? How many communities have continued to face economic hardship because remnants continue to lie un-cleared in land desperately needed for subsistence and development? How many military personnel and clearance workers have been

injured, or as happened to my son Travis in 2003, died, because we've realised too late that cluster bombs are not the answer? And how many survivors have struggled because victim assistance has not been prioritised in their country or by other countries who could lend support? It is only through universal adherence to the Convention on Cluster Munitions - through us working globally together - that we can end the suffering that these indiscriminate weapons cause.

During this first year since entry into force, we have sadly seen the use of cluster bombs in Libya, and we also documented the use of cluster munitions by Thailand in Cambodia. These instances of use were publicly condemned by some States Parties and in the case of Libya by the European Union, but we would like to see more States Parties condemning any use of cluster munitions by any actor. Further stigmatization of cluster bombs is essential to prevent new use in the future. We welcome Thailand's positive statement at the June intersessional meetings committing to work towards joining the Convention, and also hope that developments in Libya will bring future progress on the Convention too.

Meeting this week in Lebanon - a country that still suffers the consequences of cluster munition contamination - gives us an opportunity to take stock of this first year of the Convention, and to make firm commitments to progress in this second year since entry into force. We know that a good number of countries *are* making significant progress to ratify or accede to the convention and we welcome the statements to that effect given by number of states this week. We were pleased to hear Cameroon, Czech Republic, Italy and Mauritania will be ratifying the convention in the coming weeks.

We're pleased that 34 countries that have not yet joined the Convention are participating this week.

Article 21 of the Convention makes it a legal requirement for States Parties to promote universalization, and all States Parties should carry out the universalization actions contained in the Vientiane Action Plan. The CMC will monitor States Parties' fulfillment of these obligations in the same way as any other of the CCM's obligations, with an expectation of reporting by states on their activities to promote universal adherence to the convention. We believe *all* States Parties and signatories can contribute something to promote this Convention, including in multilateral fora and through diplomatic representations abroad.

Some states could engage in one-to-one military discussions with states that still hesitate to join because of military concerns, to show cluster munitions are not necessary to ensure their national security and to explain the multiple benefits that can be gained by relinquishing this weapon. Others could work with those concerned with clearance or stockpile destruction obligations to understand their concerns and help to identify solutions, demonstrating that the best way to get assistance with these obligations is to join the Convention. Others could focus on making accession or ratification a national priority for States not Party, including those who do not stock or are not affected by cluster munitions. The more countries that join the Convention, the stronger the stigma against the weapon becomes, and the more difficult it will be for states that have not yet joined the Convention to use these weapons without a public and political backlash.

The power of the stigma against cluster munitions comes in part because of the comprehensive nature of the Convention and its categorical ban. While the CMC encourages countries that have not yet joined to take interim steps at a national level, all States Parties to this Convention should acknowledge that there can be no alternative legal standard on cluster munitions. Only the Convention on Cluster Munitions can provide a meaningful framework for ending the suffering caused by these weapons.

In addition CMC would also like to take this opportunity to call on all States Parties to the CCM, including the host, to join the Mine Ban Treaty, which is guided by the same humanitarian principles.

A small proportion of countries, including my own, the United States, have thus far distanced themselves from CCM. While acknowledging the harm cluster bombs can cause, they justify use, stockpiling and production on military grounds. My son's story demonstrates that this stance is short sighted. Travis was a US Marine who volunteered to stay on in Iraq to clear a horrific weapon used by his own country. This choice led to his death and to the critical injury of fellow soldiers. Today's combat often takes place in urban environments, where the humanitarian harm of cluster munitions is multiplied. Unsuitable to modern warfare, cluster bombs not only put at risk civilian lives but also those of friendly troops and military personnel involved in post-conflict clearance. What justification can there really be for continuing to contribute to wholly preventable loss of life?

The CMC believes that every country in the world should be able to join the Convention on Cluster Munitions. It is a question of political will and placing a priority on the protection of civilians over the use of indiscriminate weapons. To return to our "join the team" analogy – the rewards of a strong team, united by one humanitarian goal, are truly quite amazing. For those states not quite there yet, or indeed not even feeling like you're in "training," we would urge you to take inspiration from the testaments you have heard this week – to join this awe-inspiring team of countries making a stand against an indiscriminate weapon that has caused, and still has the future potential to cause, so much human suffering.