



**European Union
Statement**

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**Sixth Meeting of the States Parties
to the Convention on Cluster Munitions
EU statement on international assistance and cooperation**

Geneva, 7th September 2016

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Mister President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

As this is the first time we take the floor we would like to thank you for your commitment as President of the Sixth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and pledge our cooperation and support in your work.

The First Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Dubrovnik, Croatia, last year provided an important opportunity to State Parties to evaluate the progress made and take decisions regarding the practical implementation of their commitments under the Convention. We take note of the Geneva Progress Report in implementing the Dubrovnik Action Plan which identifies the remaining key challenges to be addressed by the State Parties.

The European Union supports the humanitarian goal of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The European Union calls upon all actors to fully observe the principles of International Humanitarian Law. We take note of the 2015 UNGA First Committee Resolution entitled 'Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions', the first of that kind, as a contribution to efforts to put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by cluster munitions.

Since its entry into force, a significant number of States from every region of the world have ratified or acceded to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, including a wide variety of States with different political, economic and security perspectives. The Membership of the Convention has further increased since the Dubrovnik Review Conference.

The European Union remains committed to supporting mine action, especially in the fields of clearance, stockpile destruction, mine risk education and victim assistance. Since the Convention entered into force, several EU Member States which are parties to the Convention declared obligations to destroy stockpiles of cluster munitions in accordance with Article 3.

They have endeavoured to do so as efficiently as possible, with several having already declared the completion of their destruction plan, well ahead of the set deadline, most recently Germany, Italy and France.

The European Union and its Member States are the largest donor in mine action in almost all heavily affected countries and regions of the world. These contributions are paving the way for reconstruction and sustainable economic and social development and are enhancing local and regional capacities. Integration of mine action in wider development initiatives could ensure an increasing positive socio-economic and developmental impact. In the EU a gender based approach is also part of our humanitarian actions. Where possible, we recognize the value of the development of synergies in the implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and other humanitarian disarmament instruments, as applicable.

We are fully committed to improving the quality of life of affected people in a sustainable way and to provide concrete and sustainable assistance to survivors, their families and communities and assist victims according to their rights and needs. The EU believes that in order for victim assistance efforts to be sustainable in the longer term they need to be integrated into broader disability policies. We would like to underscore the linkage with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which sets a wider framework to address comprehensively the needs of survivors and their full and equal participation in society. From its part the EU, which is a full party to the CRPD, continues to increase the attention paid to persons with disabilities in its development cooperation policies and programmes, while ensuring that the rights and needs of anti-personnel mine and cluster munition survivors are taken into account.

Enhanced ownership by affected States, improved coordination between donors and recipient countries and amongst all stakeholders is essential in order to make our work as effective as possible and increase the impact of available resources.

The European Union will continue to cooperate and where possible extend assistance to help countries address the challenges they face in the mine action area, with a particular focus on support to the affected populations.

Thank you.