



Dear States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM),

We would like to take this opportunity to wish all States committed to the CCM a happy and successful year 2017.

Unfortunately, cluster munitions are still exacting their toll in the form of indiscriminate suffering and death, especially among the civilian population. Since Germany assumed the Presidency of the Convention in September 2016, there have been new cases of cluster munition use in the on-going conflicts in both Syria and Yemen. Additionally, civilian populations in many countries continue to suffer from the existence of cluster munition contamination from previous conflicts.

In this context, the First Committee of the UNGA was a big success in that an overwhelming number of countries voted in favour of the full implementation of the CCM. That the resolution was finally adopted by the UNGA by a 141/2/39 (abstentions) vote, paves the way for universality of the Convention.

Our goal is clear. We want to turn the objectives of this Convention into a universally accepted norm of international law and enhance its humanitarian impact. Our efforts in this respect are focused both on the expansion of the membership base and a strategic dialogue with those States, which still possess, develop, own, trade and use cluster munitions. Soon, another demarche campaign will set off and endeavor to gain new members. In addition, to strengthen the strategic dialogue, a series of meetings are planned for this spring under the leadership of the Presidency.

In order to implement the provisions of the Convention and notably the Dubrovnik Action Plan of 2015, the Convention needs sound finances. Currently, the financial situation of the CCM is in a rather stable situation. However, there is no room for complacency. Shortly, the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) of the Convention is going to issue invoices based on the current UN rate of assessed contributions to finance its 2017 budget. This will enable the ISU carry out its mandate to provide the necessary support to the full implementation of the Convention.

Additionally, the 7th Meeting of States Parties (7MSP) needs to consolidate its finances through respective separate payments according to the agreed scales of contribution to be paid through the UN-system in order in order to provide for a smooth preparation and conduct of the conference. We count on the support and solidarity of all States Parties, Signatory States and observer states when it comes to providing it the necessary financial resources towards the organisation of the annual CCM meetings serviced by UNODA.

We would like to mention that, the German Presidency together with the ISU in past months developed a template for a more standardized MSP logo for use by the current and future Presidencies. This logo is intended to allow each subsequent presidency to incorporate its national logo alongside that of the CCM. We hope that this initiative will provide for a more recognizable CCM MSP logo which in turn will strengthen in the Convention's identity.


Regarding other scheduled activities, it should be mentioned that 3 coordination meetings have taken place where the Presidency, together with the ISU and respective coordinators have developed a substantive work plan for the period up to the 7MSP in September 2017.

We would also like to highlight that soon, invitations will be sent out for a regional seminar in Bangkok where the discussions will focus on a new country coalition concept.

We would like to take this occasion to thank all States Parties who have submitted their national reports according to the Convention's reporting provisions. However, to date, 22 States Parties still have to submit their Initial Transparency Reports while 20 have not submitted their 2015 Annual Reports. We would like to remind that reporting under Article 7 of the CCM is a legal requirement for every State Party. Furthermore, Article 7 Reports are a crucial tool in the monitoring and evaluation of the general status and overall implementation of the Convention. In order to ensure that it is achieving its goals, the Convention relies on transparency and cooperation. Article 7 requires each State Party to report on the measures that it has taken to fully implement the Convention and ensure compliance with its provisions. Accurate and substantial reporting focused on essential aspects can support merging existing needs with available resources and thus optimize resource allocation. States Parties are reminded that the deadline for the submission of the 2016 Annual Transparency Report is 30 April 2017. The ISU remains available to support any States that may require assistance in the completion of their reports.

We look forward to welcoming as many States Parties, Signatory States and observer States as possible to the 7MSP which will take place from 4th to 6th September at the Palais des Nations in Room XIX in Geneva. Looking forward to the 8MSP we would like to encourage States Parties to volunteer for the next Presidency. In order to ensure continuity we intend to start consultations on this issue no later than Mid-February 2017.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "M. Banha".