

Statement on Clearance
8th Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions
3-5 September 2018



Thank you Mr President.

Last year, more than one hundred and fifty-three thousand (153,000) submunitions were destroyed during the clearance of ninety-three (93) square kilometers of contaminated land. This represented an increase of nine percent more submunitions destroyed, compared with the previous year. The vast majority of clearance happened in Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Vietnam, which are also the world's most contaminated states due to cluster munitions used by the United States in the sixties and seventies.

This progress on clearance is good news for all the people who live in affected communities. As a former deminer myself, I can testify to the hard work of clearance units worldwide. But this work can only be successful if backed up by adequate methodologies, accurate databases, and comprehensive national plans.

It is essential that methodologies adapted to cluster munition remnants clearance be implemented: survey should be used to confirm the location and extent of contamination, and clearance should only be focused on areas where the presence of cluster munition remnants is proven. Information management systems must precisely record data on contamination, survey, and clearance. They must disaggregate cluster munition remnants from other types of explosive remnants of war. Each year we are puzzled by the major discrepancies on survey and clearance results that we find across data sources in many countries. My organization would also like to remind stakeholders to consider assessments of and recommendations for national mine action programs as found in "Clearing the Cluster Munition Remnants", a publication of the Mine Action Review, and in the Cluster Munition Monitor.

Mr President -- The first deadlines for clearance are approaching fast. Only states facing exceptional circumstances, such as massive contamination or large-scale humanitarian crises, should ask for a deadline extension. Such states that have deadlines in 2020 need to submit an extension request in December 2018, nine months before the MSP that will decide on the request. The CMC supports the guidelines put forward by Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a good basis to frame the work of states in charge of analyzing requests. When further tweaking its methodology, the Analysis Group should make sure to leave plenty of time in the calendar for exchanges between the requesting state and the committee. These exchanges should lead to the submission of amended requests or additional information as appropriate. We remind everyone that requests must include a comprehensive plan stating "who will work where, and when", as well as a budget and a resource mobilization strategy.

In closing, I wish to speak about the need for Chile to start clearance. Article 4 applies to any type of cluster munition contamination, including at training ranges and on land belonging to the armed forces. We trust that Chile will survey and clear its training range to humanitarian standards, and will report on steps taken to this end.

Thank you.