



ICRC

Ninth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions Geneva, 2-4 September 2019

International Committee of the Red Cross Statement on clearance and destruction of cluster munitions remnants and risk reduction education

Thank you Mr. President.

The ICRC applauds the work that has been done to date to clear cluster munition remnants from the territories of affected States – 8 States Parties have so far completed clearance. Yet the past year has seen no new completion of clearance, and a total of 12 States Parties and two signatories are still contaminated by cluster munition remnants. In the lead up to the second Review Conference next year, we cannot be complacent about the challenges that remain before us. Efforts must be increased to get the job done and complete clearance within the Convention deadlines.

The ICRC took note that two States Parties have submitted requests for extension of their clearance deadlines to this Meeting, and we commend the Article 4 Analysis Group for its thorough and diligent assessment of these requests. As this is the first time the Meeting of States Parties is seized with an extension request under Article 4, it should make good use of the opportunity to discuss how to ensure obligations under the Convention are implemented by all States Parties in good faith and without undue delay. All States Parties with clearance obligations must take stock of their progress and establish clear, resourced plans for completing clearance within their treaty deadlines. While the ICRC welcomes the Methodology for analysing requests of deadline extensions under Articles 3 and 4 which aims to ensure consistency in assessments of extension requests according to objective criteria, we expect it would be applied only on an exceptional basis. Indeed, extension requests must not become routine.

The ICRC stresses the importance of risk education in protecting affected communities from explosive risks, especially when clearance is not immediately feasible. The ICRC, on its part, endeavours to mitigate the impact of contamination of landmines, cluster munitions and ERW on the civilian population through a flexible and multidisciplinary approach. In 2019, the ICRC, often in cooperation with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, carries out projects to address the threat posed by weapon contamination in 42 contexts, such as training in risk awareness and safer behaviour, data collection and information management, and other risk reduction initiatives.

Finally, Mr. President, the fact that new cluster munition victims have been reported by three States Parties over the last year underscores the critical importance of completing clearance

of contaminated areas, and of international cooperation and assistance to make this happen as soon as possible. Every remaining cluster munition remnant threatens lives and limbs, and affected communities.

Thank you.