



"CCM – preventing and alleviating human suffering from Cluster Munitions"

First Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions
(Dubrovnik, 7-11 September 2015)

High-level Segment

Statement by
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On behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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Mr. President,

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) congratulates you on your appointment as President of the 1st Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

This first Review Conference is an opportunity to assess progress against the Vientiane Action Plan that was adopted in 2010, and to look ahead to see how we can do even more to prevent the use of cluster munitions and to help those already suffering from their dreadful consequences.

The International Federation with its member National Societies in 189 countries, including the Croatian Red Cross, fully supports the Convention and the need for greater cooperation to implement it. We know first-hand the terrible and indiscriminate consequences of these weapons in Croatia. In 1995, Orkan rockets fitted with cluster warheads shelled the centre of our capital Zagreb. During the war between 1991 and 1995, 14 of my country's 21 counties were polluted with landmines. Today it is estimated that there are 60,000 explosive remnants of war remaining in my country. Two decades after the cessation of hostilities, communities across Croatia live with the daily fear of what is buried under the ground.

In the spring of 1996, in cooperation with the ICRC, the Croatian Red Cross introduced a mine risk education programme to help communities affected by these deadly remnants, to prevent injuries and death. To date, the programme has reached an estimated 550,000 adults and children. We have also built 87 playgrounds for children that function as safe places in areas threatened by explosive remnants of war. Since 2001, the mine risk education programme has been one of our core activities and is integrated in the National Mine Action Strategy in Croatia.

Together with our sister National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, we believe that we are impelled by the humanitarian imperative to do all we can to ensure that future generations are protected from the scourge of cluster munitions and that those who are injured receive the assistance they need to fully recover and reintegrate into their societies.

We need to do more, collectively, to make sure that the treaty is fully implemented and is universalized. We need to do this together. The Croatian Red Cross, the Norwegian Red Cross and the ICRC, are running a workshop this week to assist National Societies from a number of States not party to promote adherence to this Convention.

We are deeply concerned about the recent use of cluster munitions in several countries. We urge States Parties to join together to condemn the use of Cluster Munitions by anyone and to state clearly that all cluster munitions, as defined by the Convention, cause unacceptable harm to civilians.

Operationally, there is still much that remains to be done before the treaty is fully implemented. Large areas of contaminated land in the most heavily affected countries still need to be cleared. We need to do more to inform people and communities living in these areas of the risks they face and the steps they can take to avoid injury and death. The Movement is doing this in several contaminated contexts, including in Iraq, where, over the past 18 months the Iraqi Red Crescent has conducted extensive risk education, and risk reduction measures following the armed conflict that broke out in June 2014.

In addition, Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies and the ICRC have set up programmes that provide alternative livelihood options for people whose normal work puts them at risk. Local branches of the Cambodian Red Cross are providing funds and training for people that have reduced their exposure to unexploded ordnances while at the same time maintaining their ability to live their lives.

The human toll of cluster munitions, together with the unused potential of contaminated land, makes this work a critical part of global efforts to strengthen the resilience of communities and to support sustainable development. In our collective efforts, it is important to recognize that some regions suffer more than others. Although only 3 per cent of the world's population lives in South East Asia, they have since 2006 experienced over 50 percent of the casualties resulting from cluster munitions, according to the Landmine Monitor.

As a way of responding to this, a southeast Asian regional meeting involving National Societies from the region, the ICRC and civil society partners was held in March of this year to identify how our Movement can better meet the challenges of landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war in the region. A key insight from this workshop was that even where physical rehabilitation services for victims exist, we must do far more to ensure the social and economic reintegration of victims in their local communities and economies.

A variety of commitments were made in this field. Significant for achieving this is the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD). A successful economic and social integration of victims of Cluster Munitions is a key factor for sustainable development at the local level.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in its 2013 statutory meeting, committed through a resolution, to the promotion of inclusion of people with disabilities in the society, including within our own organizations. An action plan will be adopted this year and we urge governments and other partners to work with Red Cross and Red Crescent for CRPD to be realized at the community level.

Mr. President,

The global humanitarian problem associated with cluster munitions was created over decades of use and decades of victims. The Convention on Cluster Munitions is the correct response to this humanitarian problem. However, the problem cannot be solved in five years. We must commit ourselves here to work in the medium and long term to ensure that this Convention's norms become universal, that the use of these weapons are stigmatized regardless of who uses them, that all contaminated lands are cleared and that the victims of these terrible weapons receive the support they need.