

Convention on Cluster Munitions

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Twelfth Meeting of States Parties**Geneva, 10-13 September 2024**

Agenda item 10(j)

**Review of the status and operation of the Convention and other matters
important for achieving the aims of the Convention****Implementation support**

Convention on Cluster Munitions Implementation Support Unit - 2023 Annual Report^{*, **, 1}

I. Narrative Report on the ISU Work Plan activities and outcomes

A. Summary

1. The Implementation Support Unit's 2021 to 2026 work plan and budget was approved in September 2021 by the States Parties to the Convention at the Second Review Conference (2RC) of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), therefore the 2023 Implementation Support Unit work plan and budget was derived from this earlier sanctioned multi-year work plan and its corresponding budget.

2. This report outlines the key objectives and outcomes for the period under review - 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023- and is aligned with the period covered by the financial audit reports of the CCM Implementation Support Unit Trust Fund and Sponsorship Programme accounts.

B. Key objectives

3. The ISU was established in 2015 to support and coordinate the work of the CCM with the objectives and expected impact of results being that:

- Key results impact on the implementation of the Convention with respect to strengthening the processes, partnerships and projects charged with supporting the implementation;
- The work enhances the alignment of the activities of the ISU with the current five-year Action Plan and subsequent documents of similar nature and orientation to that effect; and
- Effective representation of the CCM at relevant meetings and consultations and advocacy for the CCM ensures the Conventions' universalization among States.

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

** The present report was submitted after the deadline in order to reflect the most recent developments/information.

¹ Please note that the Twelfth Meeting of States Parties will follow a rolling agenda, therefore all times are indicative.



4. The 2023 work plan developed on the general directive articulated upon its establishment mandates the ISU to support States Parties *through, inter alia*, assisting the President in all aspects of the Presidency; supporting Coordinators in efforts to advance thematic implementation; assist, prepare, support and follow up on formal and informal meetings of the Convention; offer advice and support to States Parties on the implementation of the Convention; develop and maintain a resource base of relevant technical expertise and practices and, upon request, provide States Parties with such resources; facilitate communication among States Parties and other relevant actors, cooperate and coordinate amongst these and maintain public relations, including efforts to promote the universalization of the Convention; keep records of formal and informal meetings under the Convention and other relevant knowledge products, expertise and information pertaining to the implementation of the Convention; and manage the Sponsorship Programme.

C. Key outcomes

5. Charged to enhance the alignment of the activities of the ISU with the current Action Plan (Lausanne Action Plan, LAP) and subsequent documents of similar nature and inspired by the humanitarian achievements of the Convention while realising much remains to be done, and the subsequent call by States parties to “*redouble efforts to promote further the norms established by the Convention, engage States still relying on cluster munitions and reinforce the growing stigma now associated with these weapons*”,² the ISU has worked diligently to meet all the main objectives outlined in its 2023 work plan.⁶⁷

6. In providing substantive and administrative support for the Convention’s Presidency and Coordination Committee members to effectively facilitate the implementation of the Convention’s objectives, efforts are underway to ensure strengthened advocacy and enhanced universalisation support with a view to discouraging any new use of these weapons as outlined in the LAP.³ Nonetheless, and in meeting other substantive and administrative objectives, including supporting the President of the 11th Meeting of States Parties (11MSP), Ambassador Abdul-Karim Hashim Mostafa of Iraq, the work contributed to the successful hosting of the MSP in Geneva from 11 to 14 September 2023. Additionally, support was provided to the incoming President of the 12th Meeting of States parties to the CCM, Permanent Representative of Mexico to UN in Geneva, Ambassador Francisca Méndez Escobar who succeeded Ambassador Abdul-Karim Hashim Mostafa (Iraq) presiding over the work of the CCM.

7. During the reporting period, the ISU delivered the requisite substantive and technical support to the 17 States Parties that constitute the Coordination Committee of the Convention, aiding them in steering the implementation of various thematic priorities.

8. Implementation support was also made available to States Parties and Signatory States as needed, as well as to States not Party that requested additional information or clarification. The ISU facilitated communication among States Parties and other relevant actors, cooperated and coordinated with stakeholders, and maintained public relations through Convention-related publications and promotional materials.⁴ The ISU also participated in numerous meetings in Geneva and abroad.

9. Noting that Ms. Sheila Mweemba came to the end of her appointment as ISU Director after having exhausted the stipulated 4 years, with possibility to renew once for 4 years, the ISU underwent the process of renewing its leadership. On 2 May 2023, Ms. Pamela Moraga took office as new Director of the CCM ISU having been selected following the recruitment announced in 2022.

10. The CCM Sponsorship Programme, managed by the ISU with the administrative support of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), and

² CCM/CONF/2021/6, Annex I, Lausanne declaration – Protecting Lives, Empowering Victims, Enabling Development, paragraph 9.

³ CCM/CONF/2021/6, Annex II, Lausanne Action Plan, paragraph 6-7 and actions 10 and 11.

⁴ CCM-related informational material can be accessed under “RESOURCES” section of the website: <https://www.clusterconvention.org>.

predominantly aimed at low-income country participation, enabled the participation of 16 government delegates, with the aim to enhance gender-balanced and diverse representation at the 4-day 11MSP.

11. In accordance with the Hosting Agreement signed in 2014 between CCM States Parties and the GICHD, the ISU continued to benefit from the administrative, logistical and infrastructural services provided by the Centre. Noteworthy, with the objective to continue a value-added assistance in the years ahead, it will be critical to maintain the continued independence of the ISU. In the ongoing review of the GICHD's administrative and organisational policies and process to align them with Swiss legislation, it will be critical for States parties to secure ISU support and synergies of the work of administrative and logistical nature that can be offered by the Centre, similar to that afforded to other independent support units, while conducting its work on the basis of the principles of independence, inclusiveness, transparency, accountability to the States parties, efficiency and effectiveness, as established in the directive adopted by the States parties at the 2MSP.⁵

D. Detailed Report on the 2023 activities of the ISU

Objectives, Outputs and Outcomes:

12. The 2023 work plan of the ISU was designed to enhance the implementation of the Convention by advancing the priorities outlined in the Lausanne Action Plan (LAP). It also adhered to the decisions taken at the 2RC and subsequent Meetings of States Parties. In keeping with its mandate, the ISU endeavoured to:

- Provide advice and guidance to the Presidency in all aspects of its role and mandate in leading the work of the Convention.
- Provide support all States Parties through the Convention's implementation machinery and Coordination Committee, as well as through the Sponsorship Programme.
- Provide advice and technical support to individual States Parties by sharing relevant expertise and best practices on the implementation of the Convention.
- Prepare for and keep records of formal and informal meetings under the Convention, and other relevant knowledge products, expertise and information pertaining to the implementation of the Convention.
- Facilitate communication amongst States Parties and other relevant actors, cooperate and coordinate amongst these and maintain public relations, including efforts to promote universalization and other work of the Convention.
- Serve as an interface between the States Parties and the international community on issues related to the implementation of the CCM.

13. The ISU's activities in 2023 were targeted to promote universalization, stockpile destruction, survey and clearance, risk education, victim assistance, international cooperation and assistance, transparency measures, national implementation measures, as well as mainstreaming gender and diversity of populations.

1. Provide support to the Presidency and Coordination Committee.

14. The ISU continued providing substantive support to Iraq, in its role as President of the 11th Meeting of States Parties (11MSP), across all Convention-related functions. This comprised, *inter alia*, the provision of technical, logistical, administrative and secretarial support at six Coordination Committee meetings in 2023, in addition to two informal Coordination Committee meetings in preparation for the 11MSP.

15. In the final quarter of 2023, the ISU extended its support to Mexico, the incoming President of the 12th Meeting of States Parties (12MSP), facilitating substantive assistance at one Coordination Committee Meeting, as well as two informal Coordination Committee

⁵ Ref CCM/MSP/2011/WP.9

meetings chaired by Mexico. Mexico assumed leadership responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the CCM immediately following the conclusion of the 11MSP on 14 September 2023 and will remain presiding over the CCM until the handover to the 13MSP President-designate, at the end of the 12th MSP on 13 September 2024.

16. In the reporting period, the ISU offered in-person and remote guidance and substantive support to individual CCM Coordinators in their efforts to accomplish the objectives outlined in their respective thematic work plans. This involved providing substantive advice and information derived from the Convention's multi-year LAP and formal and informal meetings of the Convention. Moreover, the ISU provided the Coordinators with the necessary tools, technical resources and analytical data to perform their functions and fulfil their responsibilities effectively.

17. More specifically, the ISU provided assistance to the Coordination Committee in the following ways:

Support on Universalization

18. The ISU continued to provide information and clarification as necessary to States Parties, Signatory States and States not Party upon request. This included organizing and participating in events around the world as well as undertaking bilateral outreach in support of the Coordinators' work in Geneva.

19. The ISU organized the CCM Francophone Africa Universalization Workshop in Yaoundé, Cameroon, from February 15 to 16, 2023. Hosted by Cameroon, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, this event followed the Africa Regional CCM Universalization Workshop held the previous year in Abuja, Nigeria. Representatives of francophone African nations had specifically requested a French-language workshop on the CCM. Representatives from four francophone African states attended the workshop to deepen their understanding of the Convention and discuss regional challenges and solutions related to joining and implementing the Convention. Additionally, a closed-door military-to-military exchange, restricted to military personnel, was held on the second day of the programme. Expert resource persons included representatives from France, Iraq, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), the GICHD, and the ISU.

20. The ISU organized the Commonwealth CCM Universalisation Workshop hosted by the United Kingdom in London, England, on 2 March 2023. Representatives from eight Commonwealth member states met to discuss the universalization of the Convention within the Commonwealth. The workshop aimed to advance universalization and national implementation efforts across the Commonwealth by taking concrete steps toward achieving the goals established in the Lausanne Action Plan (LAP). Expert resources included representatives from the United Kingdom, Spain, the ICRC, the Cluster Munitions Coalition (CMC), and the ISU.

21. The ISU organized the CCM Arab Regional Workshop on "Peace Building and Development Through the Convention on Cluster Munitions" in Baghdad, Iraq, on 19 March 2023. Hosted by Iraq, Norway supported by NPA, and the United Kingdom, the event gathered representatives from seven regional States to exchange views on enhancing peacebuilding and development through joining and implementing the Convention. Additional attendees included representatives from Mexico, Spain, the United Kingdom, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), the ICRC, the CMC, NPA, and the Danish Demining Group (DDG).

22. The ISU supported the United Kingdom, in its capacity as President of the 10th Meeting of States Parties in its universalization efforts in Southeast Asia from 13 to 17 March 2023. In Kuala Lumpur, meetings were held with officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Jakarta, discussions regarding Indonesia's ratification status took place with representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), and the Foreign Policy Community of Indonesia (FPCI). In Bangkok, discussions were held with a cross-agency team led by the Deputy Secretary General of the National Security Council (NSC) of Thailand. These visits aligned with the United Kingdom's commitment to universalize the CCM, initiated during its presidency of

the 10MSP, and included providing information on key CCM provisions and addressing any uncertainties.

23. On 19 June 2023, the ISU supported the Universalization Coordinators, Malawi and Spain, in organizing a meeting of the Informal Working Group (IWG) on Universalization. Eighteen States Parties and nine organizations participated in the event to exchange ideas, cultivate synergies, and align efforts to promote the CCM and its norms. Established in 2020, the IWG serves as a platform for sharing experiences on promoting the CCM and its norms. Its membership is open to all interested States Parties, relevant institutions, and other partners.

24. The work on the draft 2023 Resolution on the “Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions” was undertaken by Iraq in its role as the 11MSP President. The ISU organized an informal consultation on the draft resolution on 27 September 2023 with the Coordination Committee. The final draft was co-sponsored by all States Parties represented in the Coordination Committee and approved by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) First Committee with a vote on 1 November 2023. The resolution was adopted by the UNGA on 4 December 2023 with a vote of 148 in favour, 36 abstentions, and 1 against. This marked a record achievement for the CCM Resolution at the UNGA since its introduction in 2015.

25. The ISU actively promoted the CCM throughout the reporting period. Their efforts targeted Signatory States and States not Party in Geneva. The ISU conducted various outreach activities to discuss challenges raised by countries considering accession or ratification of the CCM. Additionally, the ISU presented detailed information about the Convention to government officials, new diplomats, mine action fellows and disarmament fellowship participants. The ISU remained responsive to individual State requests for information on the Convention. Its efforts directly contributed to the ratification of the CCM by one Signatory State (Nigeria) and accession by one State not Party (South Sudan).

Support on Stockpile Destruction and Retention

26. The ISU continued to provide thematic Coordinators with substantive and technical support for analysis of Article 7 Transparency Reports and other country documentation. The ISU also facilitated their communication with States Parties with impending Article 3 obligation deadlines.

27. The ISU conducted several meetings with South Africa regarding its Article 3 implementation in 2023 as South Africa had a deadline for meeting its obligations under Article 3 on 1 November 2023. Following an extraordinary meeting of the CCM Coordination Committee to discuss the matter, the ISU organized an informal meeting in early September with the Committee to discuss how to report on this in the final report of the 11MSP. As a result of concerted engagement with South Africa, it confirmed the completion of its destruction on 7 September 2023 and submitted its Article 3 Declaration of Compliance on 29 September 2023.

28. Throughout the period under review, the ISU, supported the other remaining States Parties with Article 3 deadlines (Bulgaria, Slovakia, and Peru). Its efforts contributed to the completion of Peru’s article 3 stockpile destruction obligation in December 2023. Overall, in 2023 all CCM States Parties with Article 3 obligations declared the completion of their cluster munition stockpile destruction well ahead of their deadlines. All these States used the declaration template that was adopted by States Parties at the 8th Meeting of States Parties.

Support on Clearance and Risk Education

29. In assisting the thematic Coordinators, the ISU provided substantive and technical support for analysis of Article 7 Transparency Reports and engaging regularly with States Parties under time bound Article 4 obligations to ensure up-to-date information of their progress and need of further support.

30. In line with its annual work plan, the ISU also provided support to two States Parties (Iraq and Mauritania) requiring extensions to fulfil their Article 4 obligations. The support was provided in-country, through bilateral engagements, in the margins of other disarmament

meetings and online consultations. Iraq, one of the world's most heavily cluster munition contaminated countries, submitted its first request for an extension of five years up to 1 November 2028. Mauritania sought an additional two-year extension to that previously submitted in 30 June 2021, citing limited international financial support as the primary reason for extending its deadline until 1 August 2026. Noteworthy, a number of affected State parties have cited the lack of international finance support as the main obstacle in fulfilling their article 4 obligations under the Convention. This is a key aspect that should be addressed in a comprehensive manner by all State parties to the Convention.

31. The ISU provided substantive, logistical and technical support to the Article 4 Analysis Group in evaluating these requests that were considered by the 11MSP. Throughout this process, the ISU also kept other CCM States Parties regularly informed of any additional information provided by the requesting states. The 11MSP considered and granted both requests.

32. Furthermore, the ISU maintained ongoing engagement with Bosnia and Herzegovina to ensure compliance with its Article 4 deadline of 1 September 2023. Bosnia and Herzegovina consequently declared compliance on 31 August 2023.

33. The ISU also conducted bilateral meetings with delegations from Chad, Germany, and Lao PDR to discuss their anticipated submission of extension requests for the 12MSP. These discussions focused on ensuring compliance with Article 4.6 of the Convention by submitting quality extension requests more than nine months prior to the meeting.

Support on Victim Assistance

34. The ISU provided substantive and technical support to the Coordinators through the analysis of Article 7 Transparency Reports and regular updates on the implementation of Article 5 by States Parties providing for cluster munitions victims. As in previous years, with the objective of sharing experience and nurturing the synergies of similar provisions for victims across the two instruments, the ISU participated in the annual Victim Assistance retreat of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) held on 14 March 2023. The retreat provided an opportunity to share plans and objectives, discuss priorities and identify potential opportunities for cooperation. The overall objective was to promote concerted and synergistic approaches to victim assistance. Throughout 2023, the ISU met with various States Parties to monitor progress on Article 5 implementation and to assess the presence of cluster munition victims.

Support on International Cooperation and Assistance

35. The ISU supported thematic Coordinators by regular analysis of Article 7 Transparency Reports, which helped track states seeking and requesting assistance as well as those in a position to provide it, updating relevant databases and the Coordinators as needed. It also provided guidance and advice to the Coordinators to enhance their understanding of cooperation and assistance in the context of the Convention. The ISU continued to promote the "Country Coalition Mechanism", which is an institutionalised national platform for dialogue and coordination that brings together all stakeholders on a regular basis to coordinate their efforts in a voluntary and informal manner, discuss priorities and needs and exchange information. On 7 March 2023, the ISU met with the Iraqi delegation to discuss the potential establishment of a country coalition to facilitate the full compliance of Iraq's CCM obligations.

36. The ISU, in collaboration with the 11MSP Presidency and the Thematic Coordinator on Transparency Measures, supported the work to adapt the reporting templates in compliance with Action 45 of the Lausanne Action Plan. The 11MSP adopted the new reporting forms, as contained in CCM/MSP/2023/7, for future use by States Parties.

37. The ISU, in collaboration with the Thematic Coordinator on Transparency Measures, continued to engage with States Parties that have yet to submit initial transparency reports, among them Cabo Verde, Comoros, Congo, Guinea, Madagascar, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Togo, some of which have been overdue for over ten years. As a result, one State Party, São Tomé and Príncipe, submitted its overdue initial report in July 2023.

38. The ISU continued to encourage and recognize efforts by States parties at ensuring best practice in timely transparency reporting. State parties acknowledged include Australia, Guinea Bissau, Lichtenstein and Saint Kitts and Nevis (“gold medal”); Croatia Dominican Republic, Lebanon and Mauritius (“silver medal”); Botswana, Iraq, Mexico and Montenegro (“bronze medal”).

Support on National Implementation Measures

39. The ISU provided substantive and technical support to the thematic Coordinator by providing updates obtained through the analysis of Article 7 Transparency reports and regular follow up with States Parties still to comply with and report on Article 9 obligations.

40. The ISU continued to regularly update the table on the Convention website highlighting the status of the national legislation of those States Parties with specific implementation law on the CCM, including the prohibition of investments in cluster munitions.

2. Provide advice and technical support to individual States Parties by sharing relevant expertise and best practices on the implementation of the Convention.

41. In line with its mandate, the ISU responded to requests from individual States Parties and other States requiring additional information and guidance on the Convention. This included the provision of guidance and clarification on interpretation of CCM Articles, guidance on obtaining information pertaining to the Convention, as well as facilitation of communication between requesting parties and relevant stakeholders. The ISU regularly updated the existing contact list of national focal points and key stakeholders to better facilitate outreach and support.

42. During the period under review, the ISU continued to provide technical advice as relevant to the five States Parties that announced that they would submit Article 4 deadline extension requests for consideration at the 11MSP and the 12MSP. This support was in the form of providing substantive advice on the rationale and process as well as on the content of the submissions. Besides providing advice and substantive support at Analysis Group (AG) meetings, the ISU also acted as the liaison between the AG and the requesting States.

43. During the year under review, the LAP booklets in Arabic, English, French, and Spanish were reprinted. These booklets were distributed at all events the ISU took part in and are expected to facilitate easy reference. They can also be downloaded from the CCM website.

44. On 3 April and 11 July 2023, the ISU published and circulated two electronic versions of the CCM newsletter highlighting key events of the Convention. As is mentioned in the following sections of this report, the newsletter as well as all relevant ISU communication tools, is being reviewed with the aim of improving their content and overall value to further advance the implementation of the Convention.

3. Prepare for and keep records of formal and informal meetings under the Convention, and other relevant knowledge products, expertise and information pertaining to the implementation of the Convention.

45. The ISU prepared, supported, kept records of and conducted follow-up activities associated with six meetings of the Coordination Committee under the Presidency of Ambassador Abdul-Karim Hashim Mostafa Permanent Representative of Iraq to the UN in Geneva, in addition to two informal Coordination Committee meetings in preparation for the 11MSP. Similarly, after the conclusion of the 11MSP up to December 2023, the ISU provided support to the one Coordination Committee Meeting and two informal Coordination Committee chaired by the Mexican 12MSP Presidency.

46. During the period under review, the ISU provided additional information and continuous updates to individual members of the Coordination Committee, complementing their efforts in implementing their work plans leading up to and following the 11MSP. In a spirit of transparency and accountability as well as to preserve the Convention’s institutional memory, all minutes of the Coordination Committee and reports of other meetings held

during the period were uploaded onto the Convention website after approval by the Committee.

4. Facilitate communication amongst States Parties and other relevant actors, cooperate and coordinate amongst these and maintain public relations, including efforts to promote universalization and other work of the Convention

47. In line with its mandate, the ISU continued to administer and maintain the official website of the Convention, regularly creating content and providing updated information on the Convention. The ISU also continued to communicate updates on matters related to the Convention such as extension requests and events on its website and via other media. The ISU updated, as relevant, Convention-related publications and other promotional materials including brochures on specific obligations under the Convention to further provide practical tools to CCM States Parties and others seeking to understand the Convention better. These brochures/tools are available for download in pdf format on the Convention website.

48. In 2023 the ISU continued leverage of the CCM's social media platforms, Facebook and X (formally known as Twitter) to further raise the visibility of the Convention and to share key information and updates. As of June 2024,⁶ the CCM has 2010 followers on X, which is an increase of 294 since December 2022. The Facebook platform also registered an increase in followers, from 801 to 883. Since the launch of the new website on 14 February 2022, the number of website views have significantly increased. In 2023, the CCM website registered 93,649 views, which is an average of 257 views per day.

49. As part of a longer-term project, to be completed in 2024, in the absence of an ISU communication strategy to support implementation of the Convention, towards the end of 2023 an initial audit of current communication channels and materials was undertaken to determine their fit and purpose. This included a review of content/messaging to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement, and engagement with stakeholders to evaluate effectiveness of communications, audience interests and preferred channels for communication. The following gaps were identified in overall communication processes and initiatives: a lack of clear strategy for regularly leveraging existing platforms/resources to support communication objectives; limited platforms and use of communications channels; need for stepped outreach approach to address diverse audiences; irregular communications schedule; need to enhance people/community centred communications *vis a vis* Convention work; limited human resource allocation for stakeholder engagement and outreach; limited visibility of CCM initiatives and State Parties' work among stakeholders overall; lack of visibility in ISU communications of key stakeholders, namely affected communities and survivors; and an overall need to broaden communications to reflect a holistic approach to Convention promotion and implementation emphasizing cross-cutting linkages with peace, development and human rights themes and partners.

50. Based on this initial assessment, the ISU engaged a communications consultant with a view to implement the following during the 2024 reporting period:

- Contribute to enhanced visibility of the CCM norm and its relevance through timely, engaging, and wide-reaching information on the cross-sectoral impact of Convention/State Party implementation efforts.
- Establish clear, actionable and sustainable processes for enhancing CCM ISU communications outreach, with measurable impact.
- Expand CCM ISU audience reach and take-up of key messaging.
- Broaden and strengthen communication partnerships for promoting State Party implementation objectives through a diverse stakeholder lens inclusive of voices from affected communities and other key stakeholders.

⁶ Since the rebranding of Twitter to X, analytics have become accessible only to Premium members. As a result, the CCM ISU no longer has access to data such as the number of new followers per month and post interactions, as it did in previous years. Therefore, the report includes only the number of followers at the time of drafting in June 2024.

- Realize greater synergies and complementary efforts towards State Party implementation objectives, among peace, development and human rights actors.

5. Serve as an interface between the States Parties and the international community on issues related to the implementation of the CCM

51. The ISU continued to deliver presentations or briefings at various fora including to donors, government officials and new diplomatic representatives in Geneva, as well as to mine action fellows and disarmament fellowship participants. These activities aimed to raise awareness of the CCM and disseminate understanding of the Convention's obligations and implementation status. This included sharing lessons learned and highlighting key challenges in implementing the Convention. Additionally, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the ISU co-organized an event in the margins of the 11MSP, focusing on the impact of cluster munition contamination on the economic, social and cultural rights of affected communities, as well as on the environment using Vietnam as a case study.

52. In its ongoing efforts to assist State parties in their continued and intensified efforts to promote the observance of the Convention's norms in July 2023, the ISU informed States Parties the United States Government's decision to transfer cluster munitions to Ukraine. The communication, consistent with paragraph 9 of the "Lausanne Declaration" encouraged States Parties to reaffirm their commitment to promoting the norms of the Convention and advocating for the stigmatization of cluster munitions. State parties expressing concerns about the transfer included: Austria, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Iraq, Italy, Lao PDR, New Zealand, Norway, the Philippines, Spain and the United Kingdom.

53. In September 2023, the ISU was alerted of ongoing discussions in Lithuania regarding its potential withdrawal from the Convention. Given Lithuania's history of reporting no production, use, transfer, or stockpiling of cluster munitions, this alleged shift in position raised serious concerns regarding the potential acquisition and use of these weapons. Moreover, according to the ISU's records, Lithuania has consistently fulfilled its obligations under the Convention. It has diligently submitted transparency reports each year, engaged in international cooperation and assistance efforts, and ensured that its national legislation is sufficient to implement the provisions of the CCM.

54. Taking into account the need to assist State parties in their continued and intensified efforts to promote the observance of the Convention's norms and action 11c of the LAP, "working as appropriate with other stakeholders with a view to further stigmatise cluster munitions" the ISU informed the 11 MSP Presidency as well as the 12 MSP President designate and met with the Lithuanian delegation attending the 11CCM MSP, with the intention to maintain a friendly and cooperative relationship with while addressing any concerns or questions in order to ensure continued adherence to international humanitarian commitments. Since then, the ISU has duly updated the Coordination Committee as needed and has remained in contact with the Lithuanian Permanent Mission in Geneva. Unfortunately, at the time of the drafting of this report, the Lithuanian Government is considering withdrawing from the Convention.

E. 2014 Agreement between the CCM States Parties and the GICHD on the hosting of the ISU for the Convention

1. GICHD in-kind support

55. In accordance with the 2014 ISU Hosting Agreement between the CCM States Parties and the GICHD, the ISU received logistical and administrative support from the GICHD estimated at CHF 102'183. This in-kind support encompassed various operational aspects, such as human resource management, financial management including auditing, contract and document management, provision of office space and supplies, information and communications technology (up-to-date hardware and software, maintenance and telecommunication costs), travel services, and the administration of the sponsorship programme. In 2023, the GICHD provided administrative support to facilitate participation

of 16 delegates from 15 States to participate in the 11MSP held on 11-14 September in Geneva.

2. Areas for review following the ISU hosting experience

56. Paragraph 7 of the “Agreement between the State Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining on the Hosting of the Implementation Support Unit for the Convention” establishes its review every three years.

57. Over time, in the course of ISU operations since its establishment and subject to a recent review by the GICHD of its internal organisational procedures and policies to align them with Swiss legal requirements, the ISU has identified certain proposed administrative alterations that will warrant attention to ensure alignment with the directive adopted by States parties with regards to the principles that shall govern the ISU, e.g., of independence, inclusiveness, transparency, accountability to the States parties, and of its efficiency and effectiveness.⁷ Addressing these challenges will be critical to aligning administrative processes with the original intent of the hosting agreement in line with the directive of States parties to the CCM and optimizing operational effectiveness to support the ISU’s mandate in facilitating the Convention’s implementation. In this regard, due attention should be given to the effective implementation of paragraph 2.5 of said agreement, according to which “The Director of the Centre and the President may agree on which of the staff related internal rules and regulations shall not apply to the personnel of the Unit. In case of disagreement, the President in consultation with the coordinators of the Coordination Committee, will make the final decision”.

58. Key areas for review (non-exhaustive list) and overall consideration include:

GICHD In-kind support

59. Since the commencement of the hosting agreement, the GICHD has undergone significant changes, including high staff turnover and departmental restructuring. These transitions have created challenges for the ISU, particularly in transferring essential knowledge of the hosting agreement to new GICHD staff and departments. One area of concern has been the discontinuation of website management support, a fundamental component of the in-kind support outlined in the hosting agreement.

60. Moreover, the ISU has encountered unexpected expenses, such as audit fees for contributions from a specific State Party, despite auditing being included in the GICHD’s committed in-kind support. These examples highlight ambiguities in the implementation of the hosting agreement, underscoring the necessity for a comprehensive review to clarify and resolve such grey areas.

The type “R” Swiss legitimization card

61. Since the signing of the hosting agreement, there has been a shift in policy regarding work authorization documents for GICHD staff, effective January 2016. The introduction of the Type “R” Legitimation Card is notable, which applies to foreign employees who do not have a valid residence permit; all ISU staff currently hold this card. This card differs significantly from those issued to staff members of UN agencies and other intergovernmental organizations, including other Geneva-based ISUs such as the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The “R” Legitimation Card confers limited privileges and no immunities under international law, reflecting a lower status and function. This contradicts the ISU’s functional autonomy from the GICHD. Furthermore, holders of this type of legitimization card have encountered issues when travelling.

⁷ See CCM/MSP/2011/WP.9 and the terms and conditions of the agreement between States parties and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining on the hosting of the Implementation Support Unit for the Convention contained in CCM/MSP/2013/6.

Travel restrictions

62. ISU staff face several challenges related to travel and authorization. GICHD travel policies, when applicable to ISU staff, may not be the most appropriate for their role. In addition, ISU staff lack UN laissez-passer or work passports, which poses issues when travelling to sanctioned countries. ISU personnel who hold the Type “R” Legitimation Card do not have international immunity. They are also not supported by the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), falling instead under Swiss government jurisdiction. Additionally, compliance with GICHD travel requirements can be cumbersome, particularly for travel to certain destinations, conflicting with the ISU's operational autonomy.

Access to the United Nations

63. The evolution of security policies of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) during the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the discontinuation of UN ground passes for GICHD staff. This impacted the operations of the ISUs hosted by the GICHD, as ISU staff were without UN ground passes for an extended period and had to obtain day passes in order to organize Convention meetings at the UN. Consequently, this has led to challenges, including difficulties in entering UN premises with essential CCM meeting materials. With the ISU serving an international humanitarian disarmament treaty entrusted to the UN Secretary-General as the depositary of the CCM, this arrangement is suboptimal to an effective support. At the time of reporting, ISU staff acquire their UN ground passes on an ad-hoc basis and do not possess valid UN passes.

Requirement to fill out timesheets

64. In December 2023, the GICHD implemented “Timmi timesheets” tracking work hours, locations and breaks. While it is understood this change was made to align GICHD administrative staff procedures with relevant Swiss legislation, this policy presents significant challenges for ISU staff, particularly given the demands on the small team. Such detailed tracking of work hours is an additional task for ISU staff undertaking a diverse range of duties daily, particularly during external engagements. The ISU is tasked by State parties to prioritize results and outcomes according to its implementation mandate, which is not necessarily improved through intensive time tracking. Moreover, this does not reflect the flexibility required in a small team to respond promptly to evolving situations.

65. Ensuring States Parties of the proper staff management required in accordance with international standards and practice, and in line with the directive established by the States parties to the CCM, should be the responsibility of the ISU Director. With this in mind and noting the absence of a results-based framework and performance review cycle for staff at the ISU, it is suggested that the Director, in accordance with the key expectations outlined in the directors ToRs addresses this management gap with immediate effect and implements the necessary staff management and administrative procedures required.⁸ This will facilitate supervision of the Team and support continuous quality improvement in workflow outputs. ISU staff will also have the necessary framework associated with good staff management while maintaining the full independence, inclusiveness, transparency and accountability to the States parties of an efficient and effective ISU.

Public holidays

66. GICHD staff adhere to Geneva's public holiday schedule, which differs from that observed by the United Nations. While both UNOG and Geneva generally observe major holidays such as New Year's Day and Christmas, there are notable distinctions. Geneva's public holidays align more closely with local school holidays, which is advantageous for ISU staff with school-aged children. However, these holidays may not accommodate international staff from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, there is a risk of incompatibility between the local Swiss and UN holiday schedule, potentially impacting official UN meetings.

⁸ For more details on staff management expectations, see ISU Director ToR at CCM/MSP/2022/WP1_E.

67. At the time of the drafting of this report, ongoing consultations between the Director of the Centre, the Director of the ISU, the 12MSP Presidency and the Coordination Committee are taking place in the spirit of cooperation as established in the agreement. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that this is an issue of interest to all State parties.

II. Financial Report

A. Summary

68. The financing of the ISU as articulated in its Financial Procedures is based on the principles of sustainability, predictability and ownership. In applying these procedures, after the approval of the ISU 2023 work plan and budget at the 10MSP in 2022, the ISU sent individualized invoices to all States Parties indicating contributions due for the annual budgets in September 2022.

69. The activities undertaken and detailed in the operational report above were all conducted within the context of the approved 2023 ISU work plan and accompanying budget as detailed below.

B. Overview of revenues and expenditures

70. The approved ISU budget for 2023 was CHF 518'057. The ISU Trust Fund had an opening balance of CHF 246'482 at the beginning of 2023. Financial contributions received from States Parties amounted to CHF 598'253, resulting in total of CHF 844'735 in available funds. Total expenditure for the year was CHF 561'650.

71. The balance in the CCM ISU Working Capital Reserve (WCR) on 1 January 2023 was CHF 570'184. In 2023, only one State Party contributed CHF 4'056 to the Reserve, bringing the balance available to CHF 574'239 on 31 December 2023. The total amount in the Reserve continues to be well above the recommended target level of CHF 400'000, as reconfirmed by States Parties at the 2RC.

72. In 2023, three States Parties contributed to the CCM Sponsorship Programme totalling CHF 48'870. Combined with the CHF 43'847 carried over from 2022, the 2023 funds amounted to CHF 92'317. The total expenditure for the Programme in 2023 amounted to CHF 40'998.

73. On 31 December 2023, the available funds in the CCM ISU Trust Fund amounted to CHF 283'085 while the CCM ISU Sponsorship Programme account had a balance of approximately CHF 51'319. Both balances were carried forward into 2024 to ensure the ISU can continue its activities without interruption.

74. The Audit Reports dated 31 May 2024, covering the CCM ISU Trust Fund and the CCM Sponsorship Programme financial reports for the 2023 reporting year, were reviewed by independent external auditors, Mazars SA, and deemed compliant with Swiss Law. Due to necessary corrections to the ISU Trust Fund report and the GICHD's report on the implementation of the Hosting Agreement, the reports were only finalized on 21 June 2024, while the report on the implementation of the Hosting Agreement was complete on 16 July 2024.

75. In line with the Hosting Agreement, the report on the implementation of the agreement was submitted, together with the audit reports, by both the GICHD and ISU Directors to the Presidency of the 12MSP. As required, and on behalf of the Presidency of the 12MSP, the ISU transmitted all three reports electronically on 16 July 2024 to all CCM States Parties for their information and records.

C. Detailed 2023 Financial Report

1. ISU Trust fund

76. At the beginning of 2023, the ISU Trust Fund account opened with a balance of CHF 246'482, most of which was carried over since 2019. During the year under review, 59 out of 110 States Parties invoiced by the ISU met their obligations contributing a total of CHF 598'253. This represented a slight decrease in the number of States Parties contributing than in the previous year. However, the total amount contributed was higher than the previous year. After two consecutive years of slight deficits, contributions in 2023 successfully met and surpassed the approved 2023 ISU budget of CHF 518'057.

77. Total expenditure for the year amounted to CHF 561'650 which was CHF 43'593 more than budgeted. In 2023, in conjunction with the departure of the first ISU Director, compensation costs for unclaimed annual leave led to unforeseen staff expenditures that exceeded the budgetary projections adopted by States Parties at the 2RC. Additional overspending also resulted from underestimated relocation expenses and specific projects funded by earmarked contributions. Fortunately, contributions in 2023 exceeded both the budget and expenditure figures.

ITEM	2023 Approved Budget (CHF)	Actual Expenditure (CHF)	Notes on variance
Salaries	365'881	394'880	Exceeded projections due to unforeseen unclaimed annual leave compensation and underestimated relocation expenses.
Social charges	69'176	69'039	Estimated at 20% of staff annual salary, rates of social charges based on various factors that fluctuate over time.
Consultancy fees	23'000	22'408	Budgeted amount based on quotation.
Communications	12'000	7'040	CCM-related promotional material increasingly shifted towards electronic formats. Hiring of vendors at lower cost.
Staff travel	22'000	24'219	Supported by earmarked funds.
Other implementation support costs	26'000	44'063	Costs for workshops and meetings, mostly supported by earmarked funds.
Total	518'057	561'650	

Table 1. 2023 expenditure versus budget with explanatory notes.

Salaries and Social Charges

78. In 2023, in connection with unforeseen staff costs claimed by outgoing ISU Director the ISU overspent salary costs, totalling CHF 394'880 compared to the budgeted CHF 365'881 and thereby exceeded budgetary projections proposed by the ISU and adopted by States Parties at the 2RC. Underestimated relocation costs as agreed between the GICHD and the ISU, and unclaimed leave compensation of CHF 21'745 contributed to this discrepancy,

which in consultation with the President of the 11th MSP, were added to the actual salary expenditure of CHF 337'387.

Communication

79. The main communication expense in 2023 was the reprinting of LAP booklets in Arabic, English, French, and Spanish. These booklets, along with most CCM-related materials, are accessible for download on the Convention's website. By engaging more competitive service providers the ISU was able to decrease communication costs. As in previous years, the ISU continued to administer and maintain the official Convention website, effectively minimizing administration costs.

Staff Travel

80. The budget for this activity was CHF 22'000 whereas the actual expense for staff travel was CHF 24'219. Virtually all staff travel expenses in 2023 were supported by earmarked funding for the ISU's missions to Cameroon, the United Kingdom, Iraq and Southeast Asia.

Other Implementation Support Costs

81. All other implementation support activities undertaken by the ISU are reported under this budget line and amounted to CHF 44'063 against a budget of 26'000. The overspending primarily stems from sponsored travel costs amounting to CHF 32'569 for external participants attending workshops and meetings in Cameroon, the United Kingdom and Southeast Asia. These expenses were covered by earmarked funds. To mitigate costs, the ISU collaborated with other stakeholders to share expenses of events and utilized available meeting rooms without rental fees whenever possible.

Mandatory and Voluntary Contributions to the CCM ISU Trust Fund in 2023

82. During the year under review, 55 States Parties fulfilled their mandatory contributions under Articles 7a and 7b of the ISU financial procedures. One State Party provided only its 7a mandatory contribution. Thirteen States Parties made voluntary contributions under Article 7c. Of these 13, one State Party contributed only to 7a and 7c, and three States Parties solely to 7c, thereby neglecting to provide the necessary funds for the operation of the ISU under 7a and 7b. The remaining nine States Parties contributed to 7c in addition to their contributions under 7a and 7b. The number of contributing countries slightly decreased from 61 in 2022 to 59 in 2023.

83. As in previous years, a significant portion of the ISU's 2023 expenses were covered by the voluntary contributions. These 13 States provided CHF 297'010 in voluntary contributions, which covered approximately 57 percent of the total budget and 53 percent of the expenses.

84. One State Party (Austria) specifically requested that it be highlighted that its voluntary contribution in 2023 was, in fact, intended to fulfil its mandatory contribution to the ISU's 2022 budget. Due to a technical difficulty and associated delay in transferring the funds to the ISU's account this could not be accounted for in the manner requested as the payment was registered as finalised only after the 2022 accounts had been closed.

85. Notably, a portion of the voluntary contributions from two States Parties (Switzerland and United Kingdom) were earmarked for specific CCM activities in addition to those in the approved 2023 work plan and budget.

2023 VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS (7c of ISU financial procedures)

Contributions (CHF)	Albania	87
	Australia	9 820
	Austria	7 347
	Burundi	11
	France	7 556
	Ireland	18 864
	Italy	37 197
	Japan	5 128
	Nauru	5
	Spain	86 084
	Sweden	10 882
	Switzerland	59 250
	United Kingdom	54 781
Total		297 010

Table 2. 2023 voluntary contributions.

2. ISU Working capital reserve

86. At the 2RC, CCM States Parties reconfirmed their resolve that “within the ISU Trust Fund there shall be maintained a working capital reserve at a level to be determined on a regular basis by the Meeting of States Parties. The purpose of the working capital reserve shall be to ensure continuity of operations in the event of a temporary shortfall of cash.”

87. As has been the case over the last few years, in 2023, the ISU’s working capital reserve (WCR) received only one contribution, which is CHF 4’056 from Ireland. This brought the total amount of restricted funds held within the ISU Trust Fund to CHF 574’239 as of 31 December 2023. With a surplus of CHF 174’239 on top of the recommended reserve level of CHF 400’000, the ISU’s operations would be sufficiently covered for a full year.

3. CCM Sponsorship programme

88. The ISU is tasked with managing the Convention’s Sponsorship Programme to facilitate broad-based and inclusive participation in formal meetings of the Convention. The purpose of the Sponsorship Programme is to support the participation of both affected and non-affected predominantly low-income States Parties, and other interested States to effectively further the Convention’s objectives. In implementing this mandate, the ISU consults with the Coordination Committee and contributing States on the criteria for awarding sponsorships.

89. In 2023, three States Parties contributed new funds to the CCM Sponsorship Programme, totalling CHF 48’470. This significantly enhanced the Programme’s capacity to facilitate the participation of primarily low-income and affected States at the 11MSP held in Geneva from 11 to 14 September 2023. Combined with the CHF 43’847 carried over from 2022, the 2023 funds amounted to CHF 92’317.

90. The total expenditure for the Programme in 2023 amounted to CHF 40’998. This enabled the participation of 16 government representatives from 15 States, covering travel, accommodation, and related expenses for 13 State Party and three Signatory State representatives. In addition, six delegates had to cancel their participation, due to difficulties

in obtaining government travel permissions and visas in time to travel to Geneva and led to varying degrees of penalty costs. This number of cancellations was relatively high for the CCM Sponsorship Programme.

91. At the time of reporting, the balance of the Programme is CHF 51'319 to be carried over into 2024.

<i>Expenditures</i>		<i>2023 Account (CHF)</i>
Detailed Expenses	Travel costs	40 810
	General & admin. expenses	188
Total Expenditures		40 998
Revenues		
Contributions		
Australia		9 048
Canada		29 422
Switzerland		10 000
Total Contributions		48 470
Contributions deferred from 2022		43 847
Total Revenues		92 317
Contributions deferred to 2024		51 319

Table 3. 2023 CCM Sponsorship Programme expenditure.