



"Together for a safer life
and
an enabling environment for the development of the affected population"

Convention on Cluster Munitions
Second Meeting of States Parties
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Under agenda item 12.iii.
"Consideration of matters pertaining to International Cooperation and Assistance
in accordance with Article 6"

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, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is grateful for the opportunity to contribute our humanitarian and developmental thinking to this debate on international cooperation and assistance, under Article 6 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war affect countries and their people in many ways. For the IFRC and its National Societies providing support at the community level, we know that "together for a safer life" requires efforts across sectors and generations. A safer life stands not only for individuals. It also means an enabling environment for the development of the affected local communities. Based on this holistic approach, we would like to share three key methods which we believe are useful for today's deliberations:

1. Pursuing an integrated approach to programming to ensure a safer life,
2. Engaging in partnerships to increase local ownership for better service delivery, and
3. Building international cooperation through using and building capacities of the country systems/institutions to enhanced local ownership.

(Pursuing an integrated approach to programming to ensure a safer life)

Firstly: We are pleased to see that the ratification of the Convention is making progress. With 109 States signing the Convention and 61 States become State Parties through ratification and accession, momentum is building and we are moving closer to universal accession. The step for effective implementation at national level will depend on our ability to integrate the priorities and adjust them with the humanitarian reality on the ground.

More effort is needed to create long lasting programmes. Nevertheless, our commitments do not necessarily imply the creation of new programs. The ability to address challenges with an integrated approach meeting local needs is key. Allow me to take a well-known Red Cross Red Crescent activity – disaster preparedness – as an example. In weapon contaminated areas, the risk brought by landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war should be taken into account during local assessments of risk and community vulnerability and capacity. Plans can then be developed accordingly with the participation of local communities bringing all stakeholders on board, with resulting activities potentially ranging from risk mapping and awareness raising to mitigation.

(Engaging in partnerships to increase local ownership for better service delivery)

Secondly: Partnership as highlighted in the Action #1 of the Vientiane Action Plan is another activity which is vital for the successful implementation of the Convention. At national and community levels, the Red Cross Red Crescent's auxiliary role to the public authorities enables us to work with governments to reduce the harm caused by these weapons.

In Colombia, for instance, with the strategic alliance which brings on board the ICRC, the Spanish Red Cross and the Spanish Cooperation Agency for Development, the Colombian Red Cross in supporting the government has played an important role in coordinating an effective implementation of programmes in relevant areas.

In Georgia, the Georgia Red Cross Society works in partnership with other national and international organisation and State authorities to mitigate the effects of weapon contamination on the territory of Georgia. By working in partnership, they ensure that coherent and inclusive programmes are run which reach all affected communities. They have been recognised, in particular, for their efficiency in collecting data on the number and location of victims of mines and other explosive remnants of war and on their needs.

In Iraq, the Iraqi Red Crescent Society continues to act as liaison between the local communities and central government. Close team work has been established between the Red Crescent's Explosive Remnants of War Awareness Unit and Civil Defence. Several weapon contaminated areas were discovered by the Red Crescent while they were carrying out activities under the Awareness Program in local communities, these were reported to Civil Defence for clearance operation to be run on the ground.

Mr President,

(Building international cooperation through using and building capacities of the country systems/institutions to enhanced local ownership)

Last but not least: I would like to take this opportunity to call for the commitment from States to make the use of country systems and institutions for capacity building a priority for international cooperation and assistance. With adequate capacity, humanitarian and development organisations active at community level can strengthen links between local authorities and the affected population and contribute toward the development of the affected communities. This is of particular importance in post-conflict contexts.

In the Red Cross Red Crescent experience, we see that through building capacity we can encourage ownership and further enhance program delivery. This is also true for the implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Aid providing countries need to work with cluster munitions affected countries to, on the one hand, ensure a more coherent response to community safety and livelihood promotion, and on the other, to build the national systems including the capacity of local institutions.

Mr President,

We all remember MDG 9 as adopted by the Government of Lao PDR last year. The IFRC commends this spirit in integrating the Convention implementation in the national development plan in order to end for all time the suffering and casualties caused by cluster munitions. The Red Cross Red Crescent, as part of the country systems, have been supporting States responding to the humanitarian and development consequences of explosive remnants of war for decades. This partnership, empowered by capacity building of the institutions and local communities, is essential for the development of the affected population. Let us continue working together to ensure "a safer life" for all and an enabling environment for the development of the affected population for now and generations to come.

Thank you.