



CMC Statement on Clearance of Cluster Munitions
Second Meeting of States Parties, Convention on Cluster Munition
Beirut, Lebanon
15 September 2011

Mr. President,

Article 4 is one of the key obligations of the CCM – and only its full implementation will prevent new cluster munition victims in already contaminated states. Lessons learned from the Mine Ban Treaty show that it is very important that States Parties make an effort to define accurately the extent of contamination and start clearance of these areas as soon as possible after joining the Convention.

We believe that it is very appropriate that the meeting of States Parties is taking place in Beirut, as Lebanon can be used as a good example of an affected state that is dealing effectively with its clearance obligations. It is proof that with national ownership and commitment, partnership of all stakeholders, and sustained support of the donors, affected states can fulfill their convention obligations before their deadline.

Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor found that 28 states and three disputed areas were believed to have cluster munition remnants on their territory as of 1 September 2011. Eight of these states have ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Germany, Guinea-Bissau, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Montenegro, and Norway), committing to clear contaminated areas within ten years of becoming a State Party. Of these, Montenegro has not formally declared any cluster munition contaminated areas although officials from the mine action program believe that some contamination remains. Another eight states have signed, but not yet ratified (Afghanistan, Angola, Chad, DR Congo, the Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Iraq, and Mauritania).

It is not yet known whether States Parties Chile and Grenada and signatory Mozambique are contaminated with cluster munition remnants. The United Kingdom, a State Party, has not declared any cluster munition contaminated areas though cluster munitions were used in the Falkland Islands/Malvinas in the early 1980s.

On 8 September 2011, Afghanistan, one of the signatories, ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and will become a State Party on 1 March 2012. As of June 2011, 24 cluster munition contaminated areas remained to be cleared in Afghanistan.

Despite the fact that obligations set out in the Convention on Cluster Munitions are clear, reporting by states and operators on clearance of cluster munition remnants is incomplete and of varying quality. Based on available reporting and information gathered directly from programs, Cluster Munition Monitor has calculated that in 2010, across six States Parties and five signatories, at least 46,915 unexploded

submunitions were destroyed during clearance operations of almost 16km² of cluster munition contaminated areas.

We would like to remind States Parties that they have an obligation under Article 7 to report on the size and location of contaminated areas, as well as the status and progress of their clearance programs. States also committed in the Vientiane Action Plan to “provide annually precise and comprehensive information on the size and location of cluster munition contaminated areas released ... disaggregated by release methods.” Affected states should see these duties as a way to clearly demonstrate their progress and to show where any international support might be needed.

The CMC believes that since States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions have an obligation to “make every effort” to identify cluster munition affected areas under their jurisdiction or control and to destroy all remnants within them, sufficient resources must be put into properly identifying those areas before clearance begins.

Resources need to be spent on survey, both non-technical and technical, and full clearance should only be conducted once the actual footprints of cluster strikes have been established. States Parties should as soon as possible develop or update national standards and operating procedures to facilitate more and better survey as part of the land release process.

In addition, the features of cluster munition contamination are different from landmine contamination and so the technical response should be different. This has to be reflected in national standards and operational procedures. We refer to the paper presented by Australia on the effective implementation of Article 4 and the CMC paper on land release for more information on these issues.

An important point relates to the quality and user friendliness of information management systems. The CMC strongly believes that a well-functioning information management system is vital for proper analysis, planning, and reporting of cluster munition contamination. States Parties should invest in the development, improvement, and capacity to use an effective information management system as soon as possible.

In conclusion, the CMC firmly believes that if proper identification of cluster munition-contaminated areas is done, clearance is targeted to these areas, and states are generous with contributions of financial and technical resources, almost all States Parties can finish clearance within 10 years or less.

Thank you.