

**CMC Opening Statement
Second Meeting of States Parties, Convention on Cluster Munitions
Beirut, Lebanon**



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Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear fellow Campaigners,

First of all, allow me to express how satisfied I am to see so many States represented here in Beirut at the Second Meeting of States Parties. I have followed every meeting of this process and am very pleased that 109 countries have committed to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and 61 are already States Parties. I hope that all those states that have signed, but not yet ratified, will do this as soon as possible.

These numbers prove that our common fight against this horrific weapon, whose victims are overwhelmingly civilians and very often children, has gained great significance and that we have won the first round against this weapon that is now banned by international law.

But we also need to win the next round. It is very regrettable that in this year we have seen the use of cluster munitions by Libya and Thailand. But we have also seen that the international community has strongly reacted to that use. This means that we have managed to stigmatize the weapon and that states will need to think twice before using them. Indeed, both of these states did not want to acknowledge their use of cluster munitions because of this stigma.

As both a survivor and a deminer I believe that no one should ever again use cluster munitions for any reason.

We all should promote the convention to States that have not yet joined and ensure that they do so the soonest possible.

We should all also ensure that there is no other international instrument lowering the standard that Convention on Cluster Munition has established. All of us committed to this Convention as we wanted to relieve humanitarian suffering caused by cluster munitions. Anything less than this convention will not achieve this aim.

If states really are sincere about their wish to prevent civilian casualties they should join the CCM and promote CCM as the only vehicle that will make a difference.

All of us here also have an obligation to promote the letter and the spirit of this treaty. This means not just stopping use, but recognizing that the treaty also bans any assistance with use, transfer, transit, or stockpiling, as well as investment in production. I am happy to see that more and more states and financial institutions make clear that investments in these weapons should be banned.

As a deminer I have seen communities in Serbia affected by hundreds or thousands of unexploded cluster submunitions and their livelihoods destroyed. Implementation of clearance obligations under the treaty is key to ensure that there will be no new victims due to this horrific weapon. I think it is very appropriate that the Second Meeting of States Parties is held in Lebanon. Lebanon is an example of a country that is proving that even significant cluster munition contamination can be cleared in the treaty prescribed deadline, as long as there is a realistic national plan, strong national commitment and ownership and sufficient donor support and support of other stakeholders. I call upon all other affected states to start implementation of their clearance obligations as soon as possible so also they ensure fulfilment of their obligations within the set deadlines.

I am also very happy with good news on implementation of other obligations under this convention, especially in the field of stockpile destruction. Several countries proved already that stockpile destruction does not need to be a long or expensive endeavour and I am calling on other states that have stockpiles of cluster munitions to both start and finish destroying them as soon as possible.

Moreover, I would like to stress that while the Convention establishes unprecedented language in the field of victim assistance, we want the States Parties to ensure that they do not stay just words on the paper, but are actually implemented in practise. And that the victims have a better status and a better life due to this convention.

To conclude, CMC is here in Beirut to ensure that the action plan that was adopted in Vientiane last year is being implemented. We want to hear this week about what you are doing to fulfil your obligations in terms of stockpile destruction, clearance, victim assistance, as well as international cooperation and assistance.

I sincerely believe that this convention and its implementation will prevent future suffering from this horrific weapon and allow us all to live in a world free of cluster munitions. The CMC is glad that we can work on this together with all of you. We call on you to join the team – the team that has successfully created the convention and is now moving steadily to broaden its membership and implement its strong provisions. It is a winning team, and with your continued support, it will be a team that saves countless lives.

Thank you.