

**Report of Joint Coordinators on Clearance and Risk Reduction –  
contribution by Ireland**

I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Lao PDR and would like to say how much of a pleasure it has been working with Lao PDR for the last year as joint coordinators on clearance and risk reduction and we look forward to doing so until the end of the Fourth MSP.

In undertaking our joint work as Coordinators, Lao PDR and Ireland took as our theme *Clearance of cluster munition remnants (CMR) can be accomplished and can be accomplished quickly.*

We wish to reiterate our appreciation to Australia for their work as Friend of President on clearance for their paper on “the application of all available methods for the effective implementation of Article 4” the recommendations of which were endorsed by States Parties in Beirut last year.

During the inter sessional meetings in April we had several detailed presentations from operators on their experiences of clearance in the field. As Coordinators, we consider that these experiences show that the challenging task of clearance of cluster munitions remnants is being achieved.

As a colleague from Norwegian People’s Aid observed, the Convention and its entry into force have served as a catalyst for new thinking with regard to how to tackle the challenge of clearance of cluster munition remnants.

During the general debate earlier this week we have heard of progress made with regard to the universalisation of this Convention. Many of the states affected by cluster munition remnants have yet to join the convention. Enhancing progress on clearance is a demonstrable and practical benefit of CCM membership and of the practical relevance of our Convention. As States Parties we should consider carefully how the Convention can help to achieve such a demonstrable impact.

The presentations delivered in April are available to view on the ISM site so I shall attempt to give a brief summary of them here.

Mr Bounpone from UXO Lao gave us a timely update from the state party that is most affected by cluster munition contamination and provided a very useful summary of the innovations successfully introduced by UXO Lao to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of clearance operations and to improve the delivery of risk reduction education. It was especially interesting to learn of UXO Lao’s continued commitment to explore new approaches including the use of dogs, the introduction of new detection technologies and the possible use of military deminers. It was also interesting to note the crucial role which UXO Lao have identified for Quality Management in the accomplishment of their clearance

objectives and indeed an emphasis on Quality Management was a common theme across our presentations. Of interest also was the initiative to undertake trials of the District Focus Survey concept with three different operators in order to identify the best way forward.

Erik Tollefsen of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining provided us with a crisp concise overview of the role of technology in clearance operations. In particular he emphasised the importance of using the appropriate technology for the problem in hand and a reminder that technology proven in the area of mine clearance may not be best suited to cluster munition clearance. He also highlighted the value of the precise calibration of detection equipments against the metallic signature of the target munitions and reminded us of the necessity for effective collaboration among donors, operators and manufacturers in order to ensure the best technological fit for the affected area.

Asa Gilbert also of the GICHD explained with great clarity how the concepts of land release based on non-technical survey and technical survey and the choice of appropriate detection methodologies can significantly enhance the speed of clearance. She also explained a simple and effective methodology for technical survey and its value in identifying and confirming hazardous areas.

Alexander Riebl of UNMAS speaking on behalf of his MINURSO colleague Diek Engelbrecht provided an interesting perspective on the clearance challenges in the unique terrain of Western Sahara. His presentation demonstrated the rapid progress made in that area once cluster munition clearance had been prioritised and once the appropriate technology such as Large Loop Detectors was acquired and deployed.

Atle Karlsen and Eva Weble of Norwegian Peoples Aid provided further evidence of the key role that effective survey plays in addressing the challenge of cluster munition clearance. We were shown excellent examples from the field of the effectiveness of technical survey methods.

In the case of the Lebanon we were shown clear evidence of the value of accurate survey in a comparison of the clearance statistics for 2010 and 2011. In 2011 a substantial increase in the number of munitions cleared was achieved over a smaller area, due to the application of effective survey techniques.

Roman Tursic of the International Trust Fund provided a detailed overview of the different challenges experienced by affected states in South Eastern Europe and provided an optimistic outlook for the speedy completion of clearance in Serbia, Bosnia Herzegovina and Croatia in particular, while reminding us of the much greater threat presented by landmine contamination in the case of Bosnia Herzegovina.

Finally Tim Lardner of UNDP at present working in Lao PDR briefed us on the capacity building role which UNDP is playing in the clearance sector across 21 affected countries. He also provided a clear illustration of the concept of footprint of a cluster munition strike and how identification of that footprint followed by surface and then subsurface clearance was a key factor in land release methodologies.

The evidence presented by our expert contributors and reinforced by the national presentations from Croatia and Lebanon demonstrated that clearance can be accomplished quickly. This was evident from the experiences in Western Sahara, Serbia, Bosnia, Croatia, Lebanon and Lao despite the very different challenges specific to each case.

We also received clear guidance from the expert presenters on the importance of effective land release methodologies, of the choice of technology appropriate to the munitions and the terrain and the importance of acquiring comprehensive data on the problem.

We have heard from operators in the field of the energising impact that the entry into force of the CCM has had already on the clearance community. The CCM States Parties need to maintain this momentum and ensure that the CCM continues to be a catalyst for new thinking in the area of clearance.

The CCM States Parties must look for ways in which we work smarter with the right technology to achieve better results.

The draft Oslo Progress Report suggested some questions that delegations might wish to address during this meeting:

- (a) What steps should States Parties take to develop cost-efficient and tailored plans which meet the specific problems in each affected state or territory?
- (b) How can States Parties increase efficiency in surveying and clearing cluster munition remnants?
- (c) What additional issues, including mixed contamination with cluster munition remnants and landmines, insufficient survey data and varying environmental conditions do States and operators face in clearance operations and how might these best be addressed?
- (d) How can States Parties effectively mobilize resources for clearance operations and risk reduction programmes?

As mentioned earlier, the sharing of knowledge and experience is one of the key benefits of the collaborative spirit of this Convention. We look forward to updates from States, operators and agencies during this session on progress that is being made and on challenges that are being overcome.