



European Union

Statement by

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**Fourth meeting of States Parties to the Convention
on Cluster Munitions**

(9-13 September 2013, Lusaka, Zambia)

Lusaka, 10 September 2013

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

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EU statement

Mr. President,

I am speaking on behalf of the European Union.

The following countries align themselves with this declaration: Turkey^{*}, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia[†], Montenegro[†], Iceland[‡], Albania[†], Bosnia and Herzegovina[†] and the Republic of Moldova.

Mr. President,

Let me first congratulate you on your appointment as President of the Fourth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We are confident that you will steer our meeting to a successful outcome. We also take this opportunity to thank the governments of Laos, Lebanon and Norway for having hosted the previous Meetings of States Parties and leading our work up till the Fourth Meeting of States Parties.

In the Vientiane Action Plan adopted in 2010, States Parties undertook significant commitments to ensure that the Convention can have immediate impact on the ground, address current implementation challenges, react to future developments, and to reflect changes in implementation challenges. The Action Plan must now be implemented by States Parties. We took good note of the Lusaka Progress Report, monitoring progress and identifying key questions to be addressed by States Parties in Lusaka with regard to implementing those commitments.

The number of States parties to the Cluster Munitions Convention has grown rapidly. 83 States have by now ratified the Convention and 29 signed it. We are pleased to recall that since the last Meeting of States Parties, 8 States – Australia, Bolivia, Chad, Iraq, Liechtenstein, Nauru, Peru and Andorra – have acceded or ratified the Convention.

Mr. President,

The European Union has consistently supported international efforts addressing the security, humanitarian and socio-economic impact of conventional weapons and their indiscriminate use on civilian populations. In this regard, we are deeply concerned about the reported use of cluster munitions against civilian populations. In its report of 18 July 2013, the independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic underlined that Government forces conducted their military operations in flagrant disregard of the distinction between civilians and persons directly participating in hostilities, by using, among other weapons, cluster munitions. We call upon the Syrian regime to refrain from the indiscriminate use of cluster munitions.

^{*} Candidate country

[†] The Candidate countries former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia as well as potential candidate countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

[‡] Candidate Country Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

In supporting the overall goal of the Convention, the EU puts specific emphasis on the objectives of reducing the cluster munitions threat, alleviating victims' suffering, providing socio-economic reintegration and enhancing local and regional capacities. While recognizing the sovereign right of Member States to be bound only by the treaties to which they have acceded to, we support the development of synergies in the implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and other humanitarian disarmament treaties, as applicable.

Mr. President,

EU Mine Action initially focused on the implementation of the Anti Personnel Landmine Ban Convention commitments but has since extended its scope to all explosive remnants of war, including cluster munitions remnants. In providing assistance for clearance operations and victim assistance, like many donors, we do not differentiate between the types of explosive remnants.

In addition to the significant contributions made by its Member States, the EU, in total, has committed more than 47 million Euros to mine action in heavily affected countries and areas in 2012 – demonstrating our continuing commitment to a safer world.

Complementing the EU's humanitarian mine action, we EU believe that it is only by integrating mine action into our development agenda that we can ensure sustainable results. Thus, the EU promotes the integration and streamlining of mine action into broader cooperation and development policies.

This approach requires, in particular, an enhanced partnership with recipient countries. Therefore, we wish to use the opportunity to reach out to those in need and to point out that the EU stands ready to provide assistance to States parties in their efforts to enhance and implement effectively their national plans with a view to comply with the Convention as well as to ensure synergies under other international instruments pertinent in different countries. In the provision and allocation of financial assistance, the EU will continue to work in cooperation with the countries concerned. We are aware that full compliance with the obligations of the Convention on Cluster Munitions can be a significant challenge for affected States Parties.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions emphasizes the role of victim assistance measures. The EU reaffirms its commitment to strengthening care, rehabilitation and social and economic reintegration of victims. We believe that assistance should be integrated in broader national policies, plans and legal frameworks related to disability, health, education, employment, development and poverty reduction. Particular emphasis should be placed on ensuring that victims have access to specialised services when needed and can access, on an equal basis, services available to the wider population. We also wish to highlight the strong linkage with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Mr. President,

In the Final Document of the Second MSP held in September 2011 in Beirut, States Parties decided that an Implementation Unit should be established as soon as possible. In this respect, in the interest of keeping the integrity and advancing the goals of the Convention, the European Union deems it essential to keep building on the cooperative spirit of the Convention and continue to strive for the preservation of consensus.

In conclusion, let me stress that implementation of the Convention and delivering on the Vientiane Action Plan require financial resources and political commitment on the part of

States Parties. We need to join our efforts to develop constructive ideas and carry out concrete action to achieve our common goals with a particular focus on the support of the affected populations. For its part, the EU is ready to do so.

Thank you.