

Statement on Survey and Clearance
Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions
San José, 2-5 September 2014



Thank you Mr. President.

The implementation of Article 4 has seen most States Parties respond with the dynamism that is required, and is in general a success story. However, there are still affected states that are not implementing their survey and clearance programs in accordance with the best practices suggested by States Parties in the last few years. Both Norway, for the 3MSP, and Ireland and Laos, for the 4MSP, suggested quite pragmatic steps to efficiently and effectively implement Article 4. The CMC suggests that affected States Parties return to these documents and assess whether their current national standards are in line with these suggestions.

The last year has seen at least two States Parties complete clearance of cluster munition remnants, showing that in states with relatively small amounts of contamination, the work can be completed quickly. **[To be confirmed: We welcome both Mauritania and Norway's formal declaration of completion here in Costa Rica!]**

In addition, many States Parties and signatories have been conducting survey to obtain a better understanding of the extent of the problem. National surveys are finished in at least Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro; and ongoing or planned in Afghanistan and Germany. The most heavily affected State Party, Lao PDR, has yet to initiate a national cluster survey, and we urge them to start that process as soon as possible based on successful pilot surveys at the regional level. More directed surveys are under discussion in Lebanon, and possibly Chile. We encourage all affected states to conduct non-technical and technical survey at the outset of their operations in order to focus clearance assets on confirmed hazardous areas from the beginning. It is important to stress that survey should not be considered a one-off event and that states should strive to always have a current overview of their problem and not rely on old or outdated information. Only in this way will they be able to keep their plans up to date, ensure clearance operations are only geared to known contamination, and track their progress towards full compliance with Article 4.

Many states are also continuing to clear contaminated areas at a solid pace, but we should be looking at new indicators for success if we want to be even more effective in the implementation of Article 4. Instead of looking just at square meters or number of cluster munition remnants destroyed, we should consider submunitions found per square meter, an indication that clearance resources are used where they should be.

The Cluster Munition Monitor reports that in 2013 at least 31 square kilometers were cleared of cluster munition remnants, with more than 54,000 unexploded submunitions destroyed. This includes clearance in States Parties and signatories Croatia, Iraq, Lao PDR, Lebanon, and Mauritania. And this is only part of the overall picture, since we know reporting is incomplete. But by now *every* affected State Party should already have started survey AND clearance. There is no excuse for delaying implementation of Article 4.

In only a small minority of states should clearance take more than a few years — Cambodia, Iraq, Lao PDR, and Vietnam. The majority of the other contaminated countries can complete this task within less than five years. But to do so requires political will from the affected states and continued financial and technical support from others to transform that political will into high-quality survey and clearance programs.

After all, cluster munition survey and clearance should be faster and safer than mine clearance. Survey personnel can, under certain circumstances, walk into contaminated areas to conduct non-technical survey, a luxury that they cannot afford with mine clearance. The metal content of submunitions makes them easier to detect than most antipersonnel mines. Locating the center of each cluster strike enables clearance personnel to work outwards to “fade out” with a high level of conviction that they have cleared the last submunition and therefore that the land can be released safely back to the civilian population. Good practice is known, even if it is not always applied.

In summary, Mr. President, the CMC would like to underline the following principles. The efficient implementation of Article 4 relies *first* on good surveys, both non-technical and technical, to establish the real extent of the problem, and *second* on prioritized clearance efforts, using the most efficient funding regimes and updated technical and clearance methods. We congratulate those states that are already respecting such principles. We call on all other affected states to initiate survey and clearance without further delay and to adopt the techniques that will help them meet their Article 4 obligations well ahead of their deadlines. The CMC and its member operators stand ready to assist you.

Thank you.