

Your Excellency XXXX

Excellences,

Dear friends and colleagues,

I would like to begin by thanking Costa Rica for preparing and hosting this meeting and its unfaltering support for the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The Cluster Munition Coalition is looking forward to working closely together during your presidency.

I would also like to thank Zambia for its commitment and dedication in fulfilling the role of President over the past year.

As we begin this week together I would like to reflect on the value of partnerships in working towards the eradication of cluster munitions. The Convention on Cluster Munitions is one of rare group of conventions that places so much value on partnerships and on civil society's active participation. The Convention's promotion of a close working relationship between states, NGOs, the UN, and the ICRC is at the heart of the Convention's ongoing success in saving lives and limbs. The CMC and our member organizations are grateful for this collaboration and can see on a daily basis the difference it makes.

Last week we released our annual *Cluster Munition Monitor* report, and we will be sharing Monitor findings throughout the coming days in order to help the meeting take stock of progress and the remaining work to be done. The report shows that since we last came together in Lusaka, States Parties have continued their rapid pace of stockpile destruction, with 80% of all cluster munitions reported by States Parties now destroyed. Over the past year, over 30 square kilometres of land has been cleared, with the greatest number of submunitions having been destroyed in Lao PDR and Lebanon, two of the world's most contaminated states. And the Monitor recorded measurable improvements in the accessibility of services for victims in many States Parties.

These Monitor findings show how our partnership is working, with states and implementing organizations making tangible progress in ridding the world of this horrific weapon.

But we must do more to increase membership of the Convention. Since we last met, the Cluster Munition Coalition has been working hard with our partners to push for progress on universalization, and we would like to thank all States for their efforts in reaching out to states across the world. As the first Review Conference for the treaty approaches, we must step up our work together to bring more states on board and to solidify the norm against cluster munition use. This is our golden opportunity, and we must take full advantage of it.

The imperative for urgent action is underlined by the deeply disturbing Monitor statistics on the use of cluster bombs; in Syria, where cluster munitions use has been ongoing since mid-2012, in South Sudan where there was reported use in early 2014, and in Ukraine where evidence has recently emerged of new use of cluster munitions.

The Monitor reports that last year in Syria there were more casualties and civilian suffering from cluster munitions than at any other time or place since Monitor reporting began. In the two years since the first recorded incident of use in Syria, CMC members have documented testimonies showing human cost of the attack. Shocked civilians described 'bomblets exploding everywhere, like a volcano erupting, on and on' following strikes that have hit homes, shops, factories and playgrounds.

Any user of cluster munitions is knowingly putting civilians' lives at risk, and we condemn such unacceptable acts. Please speak out this week and add your voice to the firestorm of public condemnation of use of cluster munitions in Syria, as well as in Ukraine and South Sudan.

In closing, Your Excellency I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize that the CMC and our members in 100 countries worldwide remain as committed as ever to supporting and working in partnership with you all to protect all civilians from the harm caused by this devastating weapon, especially as we move towards the Convention's First Review Conference. Together we can stop cluster bombs. Together we will stop cluster bombs.

Thank you.