



## **United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action**

### **Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions**

#### **Statement on Universalization**

##### **Agenda item 10(a)**

**San José, 3 September 2014**

*Delivered by Ms. Abigail Hartley, Chief of Policy, Advocacy and Public Information, United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)*

This statement is delivered on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action<sup>1</sup> (IACG-MA), comprising 14 United Nations entities involved in mine action.

Universalization of the Convention strengthens the effectiveness of international humanitarian law. Progress in universalization advances global peace and security, the preservation of human life, and the protection of civilians from these indiscriminate weapons. Today, 113 States have joined the Convention.

The United Nations congratulates Saint-Kitts-and-Nevis, Belize and the Republic of Congo for acceding to the Convention. The United Nations also welcomes the efforts of signatory States Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Jamaica, South Africa, and Tanzania towards ratification.

However the United Nations remains concerned by the apparent slow pace of universalization. Efforts must be accelerated and reinforced by all, especially by states nearing ratification and by others who can advocate and support non-States Parties to accede. Our hope is that, by the First Review Conference of the Convention, which will take place next year, more States will have acceded to the Treaty.

The United Nations is very concerned at the confirmed use as well as the allegations of use of cluster munitions in South Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic and Ukraine. The United Nations condemns these actions which perpetuate human suffering and undermine the norm established by the CCM, as well as the credibility and strength of International Humanitarian Law. The UN reiterates the importance of timely investigations in such circumstances.

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<sup>1</sup> The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) / United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), UN Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Development Programme (UNDP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) (Observer status), and the World Bank (Observer status).

The clearest sign that the norm is being entrenched is by achieving greater universalisation, whilst compliance must continue to be upheld. Efforts to accelerate universalization must be intensified. Echoing the call by the United Nations Secretary-General in his letter of 8 April 2014, States not party to the Convention should consider becoming parties to the CCM without delay. The United Nations joins others in stigmatizing cluster munition use.

The United Nations continues to promote accession to the Convention by States not yet party at all levels – from the Secretary-General to individual UN programmes in the field.

Through the Implementation Support Unit for the Convention and relevant country offices, UNDP has supported Coordinators on Universalization and the Working Group Chair on National Implementation Measures through the organization of three workshops. Each was linguistically tailored, with a regional focus, gathering representatives of African French-speaking countries, African English-speaking countries and Arabic-speaking countries to review measures for national implementation. A regional universalization workshop for Latin America and Caribbean states took place in Santiago, Chile in December 2013.

UNICEF's Country Office in Nepal is advocating for the Government to accede to the Convention.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the Parliament recently approved the 'CCM Ratification Law', UNMAS included cluster munitions in the National Landmine Contamination Survey. This will assist the Government in becoming a State Party by establishing a baseline of cluster munitions contamination.

The Office of Disarmament Affairs (ODA) engages in advocacy through its Regional Centres as part of ongoing outreach with States to sensitize them to the importance of becoming party to the Convention and implementing it.

The United Nations system wide recognizes the significance of the Convention to International Humanitarian Law. Providing assistance and support in its implementation and advocating for its universalization are part of the strategic objectives of the United Nations Strategy on Mine Action 2013-2018.

Universalization of the Convention is the guarantee States give to present and future generations that cluster munitions will never be used again.

Finally, the United Nations pays tribute to Ghana and Norway for their efforts as Coordinators to advocate for universalisation of the Convention.

I thank you, Mr. President.