



European Union

EU Statement
Convention on Cluster Munitions
Eighth Meeting of States Parties
International assistance and cooperation
Geneva, 3-5 September 2018

Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

I would like to congratulate you on your election as President of this annual meeting and assure you of our full cooperation and support.

At the outset, let me recall that the EU supports the humanitarian goal of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We are deeply concerned by the reported indiscriminate use of cluster munitions affecting civilian populations in different parts of the world and the resulting victims. The EU calls upon all actors to refrain from such use and to fully adhere to the principles of International Humanitarian Law.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and during this period a significant number of States from every region of the world, with different perspectives, have become Parties to the Convention. The EU welcomes the latest accession by Benin, Namibia and Sri Lanka, but notes that we are still far from meeting the 2020 target of 130 States Parties.

The Dubrovnik Action Plan adopted by the First Review Conference in 2015 sets out clear objectives to be achieved by 2020. We recall that States Parties at the 2016 Meeting agreed by consensus to implement their outstanding obligations as soon as possible, with an aim to implement all before 2030.

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

We congratulate Croatia and Spain, who most recently declared the completion of their stockpile destruction before their respective deadlines. We note the announcement by Cuba that it has complied with its Article 3 stockpile destruction obligations and that Botswana and Switzerland are close to completion.

We welcome the positive developments on Article 4 implementation, as outlined in the Progress Report, most notably the information that Afghanistan will complete clearance of contaminated areas ahead of the stipulated deadline. We note that there has been a 6 % increase in cleared areas and a 9% increase of destroyed submunitions. However, we also note that despite the current progress on clearance, a number of affected States Parties may not meet their Article 4 deadlines due to diverse challenges, including security issues, the discovery of new contaminated areas or insufficient resources. We also note the work of the Coordinators in developing the draft guidelines on Article 3 and Article 4 extension requests. The EU believes that it will be important for affected States Parties which are not able to fulfil their clearance obligations under Article 4 to indicate and submit in a timely manner a request for extension of their clearance deadlines, in accordance with the process to be established.

The EU contributes towards the goals of this Convention through its commitment to mine action, which also addresses explosive remnants of war (ERW) including cluster munitions. We recognise the efforts to seek synergies in the implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and other disarmament instruments, where possible. In particular, coordination on issues of victim assistance and international cooperation with other disarmament conventions could contribute to the development of common and more efficient approaches, and guiding principles.

As the world's leading humanitarian donor, the EU and its Member States continue to provide significant funding to mine action especially in the fields of risk education, clearance, stockpile destruction, and victim assistance. A number of EU funded projects contribute to socio-economic reintegration of mine and ERW, including cluster munitions, victims and to enhancing local and regional capacities. For example, the EU has funded projects aimed at creating employment opportunities for and providing vocational training to survivors.

Last year, the Council of the EU decided to step up EU support for the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. These efforts will also contribute to the objectives under this Convention. One of the projects will assist States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention to embed the victim assistance aspects of the Maputo Action Plan in an integrated framework linked with national policies on human rights and the rights of persons with disabilities. The project aims to empower mine victims to become active

agents in their own development. In concrete terms, the EU Council Decision will support the holding of five National Stakeholder dialogues on Victim assistance organised by the Implementation Support Unit of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

The EU believes that in order for victim assistance efforts to be sustainable in the long term they need to be integrated into broader policies aimed at the rights and needs of people with disabilities. We would like to underscore the linkage between the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the CCM, and ensure the involvement of victims in our efforts. The CRPD sets out a wider framework to comprehensively address the needs of survivors and their full and equal participation in society and as such, if implemented, can also provide systems through which relevant actions of the Dubrovnik Action Plan can be realised. For its part, the EU, which is a full party to the CRPD, continues to pay attention to persons with disabilities in its development cooperation policies and programmes, while ensuring that the rights and needs of anti-personnel mine and cluster munition survivors are taken into account.

Enhanced ownership by affected States and improved coordination between donors and other stakeholders is essential to make our work as effective and sustainable as possible. In this context, we welcome the setting up of cooperation concepts such as the “country coalitions”, the individualised approach and platforms for partnership to facilitate dialogue and cooperation and tailor assistance to the specific needs and challenges faced by affected States. In general, we can observe that these initiatives have facilitated a closer partnership between States, UN agencies, the ICRC, mine action operators and civil society to strengthen and promote the objectives of the Convention. We express our appreciation for our partners from across the sector, who risk their lives on a daily basis in an effort to clear unexploded remnants.

Finally, as at 30 June, 38 States Parties were overdue on the submission of their respective initial or annual Article 7 transparency reports. We urge these States Parties to step up their efforts and fulfil their mandatory reporting requirements as soon as possible and to permit information gathering ahead of the 2020 Review Conference.

Thank you, Mr. President