



ICRC

**International Committee of the Red Cross
Ninth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions
Geneva, 2-4 September 2019**

Statement on Universalization

Thank you Mr. President.

On behalf of the ICRC, let me begin by thanking you Mr. President for your efforts over the last year to promote adherence to the Convention by non-States Parties. And the ICRC warmly congratulates Namibia, Gambia and the Philippines for ratifying the Convention on Cluster Munitions in the past year.

The ICRC calls on the 14 remaining signatories to ratify the Convention without delay, and we urge all States Parties to step up their efforts to further promote universal adherence to the Convention. This is essential if the Dubrovnik Action Plan's promise to increase the number of States Parties to 130 by the second Review Conference in 2020 is to be met. Twenty-four more States would need to join the Convention in the next year if this ambitious goal is to be met. It is achievable – but only if State Parties and all Convention partners – all of us -- redouble our efforts.

The ICRC stands ready to provide technical assistance to States in their ratification or accession processes and national implementation of the Convention, and we have a range of tools to help States in this respect, such as a factsheet explaining the Convention's requirements, a ratification kit, and a booklet containing the text of the Convention.

The ICRC has continued over the last year to promote the Convention in a variety of ways. In April this year, the ICRC co-hosted with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lao People's Democratic Republic a Regional Seminar on Landmines, Cluster Munitions and Explosive Remnants of War in Vientiane, with the support of the Kingdom of Norway. Some 90 participants and speakers participated in the seminar. These included officials from seven South-east Asian countries as well as diplomatic and expert participants from outside the region and the Director of the CCM Implementation Support Unit (ISU). In June 2019, the ICRC attended and presented at the Asia Regional Workshop on the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Manila organized by New Zealand and co-hosted by the Philippines, which gathered 13 States from Asia and the Pacific. And the ICRC was a panellist at the side-event on the universalization of the CCM organized by the universalization coordinators Chile and Panama on the margins of the International Meeting of Mine Action National Directors and United Nations Advisers in February 2019.

The ICRC will continue to contribute to this endeavor in the year leading up to the second Review Conference, in particular through bilateral dialogue with States not yet party and in the context of the ICRC's regional and national events to promote universalization and implementation of IHL treaties, such as for example regional IHL seminars in South Asia and in West Africa.

Mr. President, a better understanding of the Convention by military authorities is also an important way to promote adherence, and in this respect, a welcome initiative in the recent past has been dialogue between military experts of States Parties and those of non-States Parties. We encourage States Parties to consider organising further such dialogues, either here in Geneva, or at regional or national levels, with the support of the Coordination Committee and the ISU as may be appropriate.

Mr. President, in the year leading up to the second Review Conference as well as the 10th anniversary of the Convention's entry into force in 2020, we must all increase our efforts to persuade States that have not yet done so to join the Convention at the earliest opportunity, with a view to achieving the goal of bringing about a world free of cluster munitions.

Thank you.