

Cluster Munition Coalition Statement on Stockpile Destruction and Retention
Convention on Cluster Munitions Intersessional Work Program
17 April 2013

Thank you Chairperson,

The requirement to destroy stockpiles, and the deadline to do so, are among the most important provisions of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Destruction of stocks leaves no doubt about the norm the convention is creating, the new international standard, which is NO MORE cluster munitions—a truly comprehensive ban. And of course stockpile destruction is prevention at its best. No stocks means no new use. No victims from new use. No additional contaminated land from new use.

We believe that all states that have joined the convention thus far should be able to complete stockpile destruction well in advance of their deadline, and that no state should need to request an extension. We are pleased to see most States Parties undertaking destruction at an early stage. A key lesson from the Mine Ban Treaty is to start early, and not plan to use the entire eight-year period, as unexpected delays could cause you to miss your deadline, and possibly put you in violation of the convention.

In the *Vientiane Action Plan*, States Parties committed to have a plan in place for stockpile destruction within one year of entry into force, including a timeline and budget, and to begin physical destruction as soon as possible.

More than 85 million submunitions have already been destroyed by States Parties, or about two-thirds of declared stocks. This demonstrates how committed governments are to rapidly implementing this convention, and also dispels doubts raised about the destruction of stockpiles being too costly or technically challenging. This is an important message for non-signatory states to hear: stockpile destruction should not be a serious obstacle.

By our count, at least 13 States Parties have completed destruction (Afghanistan, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, and Slovenia). We would like to congratulate Cote d'Ivoire for its announcement today that it finished its destruction this year. Two others that previously declared completion have subsequently discovered additional stocks that must be destroyed as soon as possible—Bosnia and Herzegovina and Spain. We look forward to hearing what their plans are to destroy them quickly.

At least five States Parties have begun physical destruction of stocks (France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, and the United Kingdom), several of which are far advanced in the process. Another eight States Parties have declared stocks, but not yet reported physical destruction (Botswana, Bulgaria, Chile, Croatia, Denmark, Japan, Macedonia FYR, and Mozambique), although some have engaged in planning and budgeting for destruction.

Another four States Parties have acknowledged having stocks or are believed to have stocks, but

have not yet formally declared so in an Article 7 report (Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Peru, and Switzerland). We urge these states in their initial transparency reports, some of which are late (Guinea-Bissau, and Honduras), to state clearly whether or not they hold stocks, and if so, to provide details on the types and quantities of the stocks, any destruction that has taken place, and destruction plans.

All stockpiling states should make clear their timeline for stockpile destruction, including expected completion date.

We also encourage signatory states to begin the stockpile destruction process even before becoming full States Parties, as this would be in keeping with their commitment to the object and purpose of the convention. Current signatories Canada and Colombia are examples in this regard. We have also heard of stockpile destruction in signatories Angola and Republic of Congo, and would welcome confirmation.

We appreciate the updates received today. Such reports help us see the momentum on stockpile destruction is going strong. We encourage you to invite the media and other observers to stockpile destruction events. They are to be celebrated! And they show how the convention is making a real difference in saving lives.

Some states are understandably concerned about the cost of destroying their stockpiles. But for many, in particular those with small stockpiles, it is possible to put in place low-cost and low-tech solutions. CMC member Norwegian People's Aid has conclusively demonstrated that already. Moreover, the Convention does not create new costs since cluster munitions have a shelf-life expiry date after which they must be destroyed in any case, and in some instances destruction can be cheaper than long-term storage. There is already a solid body of knowledge and practical experience to draw from, with technical assistance available from States Parties, UN agencies, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations.

We would also like to emphasize that proper implementation of Article 3 requires that all stocks under a state's jurisdiction and control be identified and destroyed before completion is declared, including stocks remaining at former production facilities or elsewhere than the armed forces' arsenal.

We would like to turn briefly to the topic of retention of cluster munitions and submunitions. At least 34 States Parties have expressed their view that there is no need to retain any live cluster munitions or explosive submunitions under Article 3. We strongly support this view.

We believe that most if not all states should determine that the minimum number of cluster munitions necessary is zero. But many have not expressed an opinion on this issue yet or confirmed if they plan to retain cluster munitions. We encourage all those states that have not yet made their views known on retention to do so.

About a dozen States Parties have indicated that they will retain cluster munitions. We urge them to provide *detailed* information on how they have made use of them in the past and what the precise

future requirements are. Our demining experts believe that there are *no* compelling arguments for retaining live cluster munitions and submunitions for training purposes, as high quality models or inert shapes certified “free from explosive” meet all the requirements. So we are particularly interested to learn what recurring role live submunitions play in training activities for deminers and EOD personnel for some states. In addition, some states assert the need to retain live cluster munitions and submunitions for the development of counter-measures, while others believe it is not necessary. States Parties retaining for counter-measures purposes should be more explicit and detailed about their perceived requirement.

The CMC continues to urge States Parties to reach a general understanding on the appropriate range for the minimum number of cluster munitions and submunitions that is absolutely necessary, for those that decide to retain. We also note the number retained should be decreasing each year as they are used for permitted purposes, and that retained cluster munitions and submunitions not being used over time should be destroyed.

In closing, let us say that the impressive record on stockpile destruction is perhaps the best indicator of the commitment of States Parties to the eradication of cluster munitions, and the best indicator of the strength and impact of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Keep up the good work!

Thank you.