

Cluster Munition Coalition Statement on Transparency  
Convention on Cluster Munitions Intersessional Meetings  
9 April 2014



As one of the biggest users of states' reports the Cluster Munition Coalition and its research arm the Cluster Munition Monitor would like to say a few words on the importance of submitting on-time and accurate reports. Our researchers and campaigners read all your reports very carefully. We depend on it to properly monitor and advocate for full implementation of the Convention. So we have an interest in making sure reports are timely and well done, and we'd like to share some observations in that regard.

As Belgium has noted, reporting rates for the Convention on Cluster Munitions are not what they should be. Twenty countries-- almost one quarter of all States Parties-- are late in turning in their initial Article 7 report. These reports, due within six months of becoming a State Party, give an essential picture of where a state stands relative to its convention obligations. Fourteen other states have not yet turned in their annual update for last year, and only a handful are in this year with 20 days until the deadline. In terms of quality, we often see data that is incomplete, inconsistent from year to year, or altogether missing on relevant convention obligations.

But instead of focusing on the problems, we would like to look at one way to improve reporting, and that is by highlighting the many benefits of good reporting for the reporting state itself. In other words, why is reporting, as Belgium said earlier, "in your own interest?" To answer that question, we need to look at who is using the reports and why.

First, as I started off saying, we use your reports intensively to produce the Cluster Munition Monitor, which describes the status of all states vis-à-vis the Convention. The President of the Convention and the interim ISU similarly depend on your reports to produce the annual progress reports for the Convention. Both the Monitor and Convention Progress Reports then help inform a larger community of interested states and other actors on the individual and collective status of the Convention. So the more clarity you give on your status and activities, the better the outside world will understand the situation in your country and for the Convention as a whole.

And who is this broader community looking at your progress and challenges? First there are many states, including those outside the convention, that want to see the impact of the Convention and how well it's being respected by States Parties. Progress is seen as a good confidence-building measure for states in the same region, and can be seen as beneficial for universalization. Also the various Convention Committee Coordinators use the reports to help support states facing implementation challenges or to share good practices among states. The media and activists also look to the reports to raise awareness about the Convention among an even larger group.

And of course donors make use of the individual and compiled reports to help them assess requests for assistance. For those states receiving aid already, the reports showcase what has been accomplished with such support. For those seeking additional support, the reports show donors what work remains to

be done, and what specific problems might benefit from international support. Again, the more details you report on progress and challenges, the better others will be able to support you in the future.

Last, but not least, you, the reporting state, should be an active user of your own reports. As part of good management practices, the data on various convention obligations should be regularly collected, easily accessible, and simple to extract. If, in preparing a report, you find this is not the case, then already you've achieved something useful by identifying needs to improve data management. In addition, we encourage you to use your own reports to keep track of your progress over time, especially relative to benchmarks in your plans.

So overall, we encourage all states to look at reporting not as a burden but an exercise with many benefits for the reporting states themselves. It may take a bit of time, but the investment is certainly worth it. And of course for states with no remaining convention obligations, reporting still must be done, but is very quick and simple to do. If reporting is a challenge for any state, we would like to suggest making use of the various sources of support, including the interim ISU, the guidelines put together by Belgium, in-country experts from mine action operators, VA organizations, the UN; and the Monitor and CMC.