

CMC Statement on Clearance and Risk Education

CCM Intersessional Meeting, Geneva, 16-17 May 2022



The Cluster Muniton Coalition thanks the Coordinators for their ongoing work to advance implementation of clearance and risk education, and we thank all affected States Parties for taking the opportunity of this informal intersessional meeting today to share updates on their efforts to clear contamination and provide risk education and engage in exchanges with all states parties and all other relevant stakeholders. We also welcome and fully support the statement made by the Netherlands in regard to timely submission and implementation of extension requests and the importance of intersessional meetings. We hope the intersessional meeting will be held on annual basis and continue providing space for these exchanges.

We continue to see positive progress with regards to Article 4 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

The latest Cluster Muniton Monitor reported that in 2020 State Parties cleared over 63km² of cluster munition contaminated land. Two State Parties, Croatia and Montenegro, also completed clearance of cluster munitions on their territories in 2020, bringing the total number of State Parties to have completed clearance since the Convention entered into force in August 2010, to six.

Risk education provided life-saving messages to men, women, girls, and boys living in cluster munition contaminated areas. Some States Parties demonstrated efforts to target specific risk groups vulnerable to the threat of cluster munition remnants contamination, such as to children and hard-to-reach nomadic groups. Emergency risk education alerted communities to the risks of contamination from recent or ongoing conflicts in Libya, Syria, Yemen, and Nagorno-Karabakh.

The adoption of the Lausanne Action Plan by States Parties at the Second Review Conference in 2021 provided a set of clear and concrete actions for survey and clearance and risk education, with the aim to achieve significant and sustainable progress in the period 2021-2026.

However, there are still challenges. Ten States Parties remain contaminated with cluster munition remnants. Since 2019, several extension requests have been submitted each year, prolonging the time required to clear these insidious weapons. While it is recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic impacted progress in some State Parties, it is imperative that efforts are now made to recommit to targets and deadlines, so that clearance can be completed sooner rather than later. Actions #18 to 26 in the Lausanne Action Plan should serve as a key reference point for State Parties, to continually improve the effectiveness and efficiency of survey and clearance. It is imperative that setbacks to clearance are highlighted to State Parties as soon as possible so that remedies can be put in place to mitigate further delays.

The number of cluster munition casualties has continued to rise, with 360 cluster munition casualties recorded in 2020 by the Cluster Muniton Monitor, of which over 260 were known to be civilians. Children accounted for 44% of all casualties where age was recorded. We were shocked and saddened to see new cluster munition contamination resulting from the conflict in October 2020, in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh, and again in 2022 we have been horrified by the widespread use of cluster munitions in Ukraine, that has and likely will continue to cause further casualties.

Unexploded submunitions and bomblets pose an ongoing threat to civilians, regardless of the time since they were used. Risk education is as essential in countries with recent contamination or ongoing conflict, as it is in State Parties such as Lao PDR, where the last bombs were dropped over

thirty years ago. We urge State Parties to continue to provide comprehensive and targeted risk education tailored to the specific threats posed by cluster munition remnants, and in line with the LAP actions #27 to 30.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions is currently heralded as a success story, but these next few years will be crucial to maintain the momentum and commitment shown by State Parties in 2010. Let's take this opportunity in 2022 to recommit to the targets and goals, and finish clearance as soon as possible, so that people can live free from the threat of cluster munitions.