



EU Statement
Convention on Cluster Munitions
Ninth Meeting of States Parties
Geneva, 2-4 September 2019

Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro* and Albania*, as well as the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

I would like to congratulate you on your election 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.

One year is left before the next Review Conference where we will assess achievements and progress in meeting the goals laid out in the Dubrovnik Action Plan in 2015. 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.

Since last year, three new States with different perspectives have become Parties to the Convention. The EU welcomes the latest accession by Namibia, Gambia and the Philippines, but at the same time notes that we are still far from meeting the 2020 target of 130 States Parties.

We congratulate Botswana and Switzerland, who most recently declared the completion of their stockpile destruction before their respective deadlines.

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 by the end of this year, ahead of the stipulated deadline and that seven States Parties out of ten have allocated national resources to clearance.

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

However, we also note that diverse challenges remain, including security issues, the discovery of new contaminated areas or insufficient resources. Despite the current progress on clearance, these challenges have caused a number of affected States Parties to submit a request for extension of their Article 4 deadlines. In this regard, we would like to thank the Coordinators for developing draft guidelines *Methodology for requests of deadline extensions under Articles 3 and 4 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions* on Article 3 and Article 4 extension requests. The EU believes that the first extension requests submitted by Germany and Lao People's Democratic Republic and certainly the analysis of the Coordinators will serve as important reference points to other affected States Parties which are not yet able to meet their respective deadlines for clearance under Article 4.

We encourage all States Parties with upcoming deadlines under Article 3 and 4 of the Convention to do the utmost to meet their respective deadlines under the Convention and seek cooperation and assistance, if necessary. In this context, the EU calls on delegations with upcoming deadlines to consider the Country Coalition Concept introduced by the President of the 7th Meeting of States Parties, which provides a useful vehicle to enhance cooperation and coordination among all stakeholders in a particular country and to tailor assistance to the specific needs and challenges faced by an affected State.

Enhanced ownership by affected States and improved coordination between donors and other stakeholders are essential to make our work as effective and sustainable as possible and promote the objectives of the Convention. We express our appreciation for partners from across the sector – including UN entities, the ICRC, mine action operators and civil society – who risk their lives on a daily basis in an effort to clear unexploded remnants.

Mr. President,

The EU contributes towards the goals of the Convention through its commitment to mine action, which also addresses explosive remnants of war (ERW) including cluster munitions. 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.

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.

To this end, the 2017 EU Council Decision steps up support for the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. These efforts will also contribute to the objectives under the Convention on Cluster Munitions. One of the EU funded projects will assist States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention to embed the victim assistance commitments of the Maputo Action Plan in an integrated policy linked with national policies on human rights and the rights of persons with disabilities. National stakeholder dialogues on victim assistance have already taken place in Iraq and Uganda to facilitate this aim. An upcoming Global Conference on Victim Assistance and Disabilities in Jordan from 10 to 12 September 2019 should also help to enhance dialogue among a wide range of actors in this area.

The EU believes that in order for our efforts to be effective and sustainable in the long term, victim assistance has to be integrated into broader policies at the national level 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 the importance of involving cluster munition victims when in a position to fulfil assistance obligations. 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. The EU is a full party to the CRPD and will continue 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.

Finally, the EU notes that 33 States Parties have not yet submitted their respective initial or annual Article 7 transparency reports as of 30 June 2019. We encourage all concerned States Parties to step up their efforts and fulfil their mandatory reporting requirements as soon as possible so that the necessary information is available well ahead of the 2020 Review Conference.

Thank you, Mr. President