



Second Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Statement under agenda item 8 (a) - Universalization

On the occasion of the first part of the Second Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions hosted by Switzerland from 25 to 27 November 2020, I would like to deliver a statement on behalf of the Global Protection Cluster, a network of non-governmental organizations, international organizations and United Nations entities engaged in protection work in humanitarian crises.

At the country level, the Protection Cluster is the conscience and heart of every humanitarian operation reminding parties to conflict that they are obliged to make sure that civilians are not a target and that they receive the assistance they need. At the global level, the Protection Cluster influences protection standards and policy development that upholds international human rights law and international humanitarian law in complex emergencies.

In this context, we applaud all States Parties of the Convention on Cluster Munitions for the life-saving commitments they have made. By adhering to this convention, you are showing the kind of compassion, courage and determination that is most needed in today's complex international environment.

Yet more is needed: cluster munitions continue to kill and injure boys and girls, men and women. They continue to undermine livelihood and cause population displacement. We

fervently believe this convention will only fulfill its potential after all states have ratified it, and after these indiscriminate weapons are permanently consigned to the dustbin of history.

Today, we are responding to humanitarian crises in more than 30 countries. Of those, 13 still have to ratify this convention. Yet cluster munitions continue to take lives in many of those nations - and most appallingly, have been reportedly used in recent years in Libya¹, Syria², Yemen³, and Nagorno Karabakh⁴ .

We encourage you to support the engagement of the Mine Action Area of Responsibility of the Global Protection Cluster whose members provide vital humanitarian mine action support in 16 crisis zones in close coordination with other humanitarian organizations. We urge each of you to promote the rights and address the needs of people affected by cluster munitions, to universalize the convention, and to call out actions that contravene its norms whenever and wherever they occur.

Mr. President, we are ready to do our part. We look forward to working with you, the president-elect, the universalization coordinators, and all States Parties to advocate for ratification in the countries where we are present. We will do so in solidarity with the communities we serve, and in the hope that this pillar of international humanitarian law will remain solid for generations to come.

Together, and with the Lausanne Action Plan as a compass, let's eradicate cluster munitions.

I thank you for listening.

¹ Human Rights Watch, "Libya: Banned Cluster Munitions Used in Tripoli," 13 February 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/02/13/libya-banned-cluster-munitions-used-tripoli>.

² <http://www.the-monitor.org/en-gb/reports/2019/syria/cluster-munition-ban-policy.aspx>.

³ <http://www.the-monitor.org/en-gb/reports/2019/yemen/cluster-munition-ban-policy.aspx>.

⁴ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/10/23/azerbaijan-cluster-munitions-used-nagorno-karabakh>.