



ICRC

Second Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions Geneva, 25-27 November 2020

International Committee of the Red Cross Statement on Universalization

Thank you Mr. President,

Since this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor, let me on behalf of the ICRC commend the in-depth manner in which your Presidency has prepared this Review Conference, with wide-ranging consultations, and wish you every success in guiding our work.

The ICRC warmly congratulates the Maldives, Sao Tome and Principe, Niue and Saint Lucia for becoming party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions in the past year, which brought the total number of States Parties to 110. The ICRC wishes to commend you Mr. President and the Universalization coordinators Chile and the Philippines for your tireless efforts over the last year to promote adherence to the Convention by non-party States, despite challenges posed by the global COVID-19 pandemic.

To achieve the Convention's fundamental humanitarian aim of a world free of cluster munitions, it is crucial to promote adherence to the Convention by all States and achieve universal ban of cluster munitions.

While progress has been made in universalization since the last Review Conference in 2015 with a total of 14 States joining the Convention, the ambitious goal set by the Dubrovnik Action Plan to increase the number of States Parties to 130 by this Review Conference has not been met.

In the meantime, cluster munitions are continuing to endanger the lives and limbs of people in many contexts today. The Cluster Munition Monitor recorded 286 new cluster munition casualties in 2019, a 92% increase compared to the annual total of 2018. As was the case in previous years, civilians accounted for 99% of all recorded casualties. Taking a longer-term view, we regret that the total number of new casualties from cluster munition use and remnants over the 5 years since the last Review Conference is higher than during the 5 previous years. The majority of them were due to instances of new use of cluster munitions in ongoing conflicts on the territories of several States not party.

We wish to reiterate that any use of cluster munitions by any actor under any circumstances is unacceptable and must be clearly condemned. We urge all States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention without delay, and we call on them already now to renounce using, producing, transferring or stockpiling cluster munitions. In the coming years, we urge States Parties to step up their efforts in a coordinated manner to further promote universal adherence to the Convention, and to promote the universal observance of the Convention's norms and objectives by all actors, including armed non-State actors.

The ICRC stands ready to provide technical assistance to States in their ratification or accession processes and in the national implementation of the Convention. We have a range of tools to support States in this respect, such as an updated [factsheet](#) explaining the Convention's requirements, a [ratification kit](#), and a [checklist](#) for national implementation.

The ICRC has continued over the last year to promote the Convention in a variety of ways, working together with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies towards this goal. A joint op-ed co-signed by presidents of the Swiss Confederation and of the ICRC was published in several languages on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Convention's entry into force on 1st August 2020. The ICRC also engaged in bilateral dialogue with States not yet party. We included the Convention in ICRC's regional and national events to promote universalization and implementation of IHL treaties. The ICRC also supported the work of the informal working group on universalization and participated as expert speaker in universalization events organized by the Universalization Coordinators and the ISU. We will continue doing so next year and place this Convention on the agenda of a number of regional events for 2021 in Africa and Europe among others.

Mr. President, a better understanding of the Convention by military authorities is also an important way to promote adherence. In this respect, we welcome the dialogue initiated recently between military experts of States Parties and those of non-party States. We encourage States Parties to consider organising further such dialogues, either here in Geneva, or at regional or national levels, with the support of the Coordination Committee and the ISU as may be appropriate.

Mr. President, we must all seize the momentum of this Review Conference to increase our efforts in promoting the universal adherence to the Convention and the universal observance of the Convention's norms, with a view to achieving the goal of bringing about a world free of cluster munitions.

Thank you.