



EU Statement
Convention on Cluster Munitions
Second Review Conference
Second Part
20-21 September 2021

Mr. President,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area align themselves with this statement.

The EU congratulates the Swiss Presidency on the successful continuation of its important role at the Second Review Conference of the Cluster Munitions Convention. We assure you, Mr. President, of our full support to achieve a successful and action-oriented outcome. We commend the Presidency's resourcefulness and continued efforts to move forward despite the exceptional circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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 impact on civilian populations of the indiscriminate use of cluster munitions, including the extensive use of cluster munitions in Syria, as well as uses in Yemen, Libya and most recently in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The EU strongly condemns such use and calls upon all actors to refrain from such use and to fully adhere to International Humanitarian Law.

We consider that the Review Conference provides an opportunity to assess achievements and progress since the Dubrovnik Action Plan in 2015 and to agree on a new plan for States Parties

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

to implement their outstanding obligations under the Convention. We call on States Parties to make further progress with the implementation of the Convention.

Mr. President,

The EU supports your efforts aimed at adopting several outcome documents and we agree that a robust action plan will serve as a key guide for States Parties in realising the objectives set out in the Convention. Similar to the methodology of the Oslo Action Plan of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, we advocate the idea of introducing a set of actions and indicators to make the objectives more measurable. Where possible, we support seeking synergies in the implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions with the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, especially on victim assistance, clearance, and survey. Where applicable, coordination on issues of victim assistance and international cooperation with other disarmament conventions contributes to the development of common efficient and effective policy approaches, and guiding principles. As cluster munitions affect men, women, boys and girls in different ways, we also wish to see dedicated action on mainstreaming gender perspectives within the Convention and a specific thematic section dedicated to risk education. The principles of inclusiveness and non-discrimination by involving all stakeholders in an inclusive and integrated approach to victim assistance remain key for the EU.

Since 2019, four new States have become States Parties to the Convention. The EU welcomes the latest accession by the Maldives, Niue, São Tomé and Príncipe, and St. Lucia, bringing the number of State Parties to 110. However, we are yet to meet the target of 130 States Parties that was set for 2020 by the First Review Conference in Dubrovnik in 2015. We must redouble our collective efforts on Treaty Universalisation if we are to achieve this goal.

We applaud the global efforts that, in the past decade, led to major cluster munition clearance and submunitions destruction. In total, ten States Parties and one State not party have been declared free of cluster munition-contaminated area in the last 10 years. In particular, 2020 saw a significant increase in the area cleared of cluster munition remnants and a minor decrease in the number of destroyed submunitions. This is an exceptional achievement given the backdrop of the global COVID-19 pandemic that has impacted negatively on operations in several countries.

Enhanced ownership by affected States which includes an 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. In this context, the EU recalls the establishment of Country Coalition Concept by Germany at 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. We strongly encourage the setting up of country coalitions to support States Parties fulfilling their time bound obligations under the Convention. We express our appreciation for partners from across the sector – including United Nations entities, the ICRC, mine action operators and civil society – who are in the front line in ensuring effective implementation of the Convention, through their efforts in clearance, stockpile destruction, risk education, victim assistance and advocacy.

Mr. President,

The EU values the humanitarian aspects of the Convention and reaffirms its commitment to mine action, which addresses explosive remnants of war (ERW) including cluster munition remnants. 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 the socio-economic reintegration of victims impacted by mines and ERW, including cluster munitions. The EU also highlights the importance of environmental consideration as becoming increasingly prominent in mine action as it is across all sectors.

Before concluding, we must say that we are concerned with the impact of the recurrent financial deficit of the Convention, which has at times resulted in the absence of interpretation services and delays in the translation of documents. The sole structural solution resides in the observance by all participating States of their financial obligations. The payment of annual contributions in full and on time is part of the commitment of each State Party to the objectives of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Without it, some objectives of the Convention may remain elusive.

Thank you, Mr. President