

## **Statement on Cooperation and Assistance**

### **First Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions**

**Dubrovnik, 8 September 2015**



Thank you President,

This First Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions is an opportunity to assess our collective progress and based on the knowledge of the lessons learned since the treaty entered into force to plan for the next five years.

The successes we have had to date have been significant for such a young treaty and are due in no small part to the cooperation and assistance that the international community has shown on this issue. Continued progress is dependent upon more cooperation and assistance while at the same time increased and improved efforts can lead to greater impact.

States with stockpiles, victims, or contaminated areas have the right under the treaty to request assistance. States Parties and signatories, in a position to do so, should provide assistance.

Those who have attended previous meetings of the CCM have heard the Cluster Munition Coalition state our belief that virtually all states are in a position to provide assistance and cooperation. The CMC has stated this because we believe that cooperation and assistance is not just limited to funding from donor countries. It can take many forms such as providing expertise, materiel, or personnel, as well as sharing experiences, knowledge, and best practices.

This Review Conference is demonstrating that the CCM has had a major impact and its goals are realistic. Much work remains, of course, but if we view cooperation and assistance as not just obligations, but also opportunities in reaching those goals, then it seems much more achievable.

Cooperating with states that request it and providing assistance to states that need it is a great opportunity to invest in the world we want. One without the threat and harm of cluster munitions and one where the rights of victims are respected, the support they need is provided, and the barriers they face are removed.

Such investments will have both immediate and long-term impacts. With adequate follow through there is little or no risk in such investments. Once a cluster munition is destroyed from a stockpile, it and its deadly submunitions can no longer endanger the lives or livelihoods of innocent civilians. Many States Parties have destroyed tens of millions of submunitions from their stockpiles and have acquired the experience and expertise that can be shared with others to ensure all States Parties destroy their stockpiles on time and budget. Once a munition is destroyed from a stockpile the state no longer incurs any expense for secure and safe storage or any other costs related to the stockpile.

Similarly, with clearing contaminated land there is more than two decades of mine action experience to tap into and numerous NGO operators who work efficiently and effectively to meet the highest humanitarian standards. The Convention has galvanized cooperation among operators – they have challenged their approaches and themselves, finding better ways to address survey and clearance, and improving dialogue with each other, with donors and with national authorities. These NGO operators are

capable of scaling up their important work as more resources become available. The more capacity is increased the sooner more land can be returned to productive and safe use. States Parties with contamination must make the necessary investments to clear their land, to allow their citizens to go about their daily activities without the threat to their lives or livelihoods. Multi-year partnerships can result in decades of benefits and once the land is cleared there is no more need to continue that particular investment. Equally important is the discussion about how states allocate resources, avoid unnecessary layers of coordination, use efficient methods to deliver funding, and how affected states prioritise activities based on the human impact of contamination.

On victim assistance, we also have decades of collective experience that can be relied upon. Survivors of cluster munitions are not greatly different from others with disabilities. They have needs that must be addressed and rights that must be respected. National and international organizations in affected countries have learned valuable lessons and are making important progress worthy of continued and expanded investments in their work.

There is a strong case to be made for investments in mine action and victim assistance. Most such investments will be limited but will produce long-term impacts. To enhance our collective efforts it is critical that the amount and quality of information that we use is increased. Affected states should make their needs better known and have viable plans to meet those needs. States in a position to provide assistance through funding, expertise, material resources, or experience need to do a better job of making that capability known to states that can use such assistance. Fully completed, detailed, on-time annual Article 7 reports are an essential tool for all of us.

Incomplete data remains a problem, to the extent that the Cluster Munition Monitor has no section on financial support. While we recognize the hurdles some states encounter in providing cluster munition-specific information we would encourage more efforts to provide such data in order that we can all have a more complete picture.

Together we can all stop cluster bombs so let's make the investments necessary to make that a reality sooner rather than later.

Thank you.