



EU Statement
Tenth Meeting of States Parties
to the Convention on Cluster Munitions
Geneva, 30 August – 2 September 2022

Mr. President,

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

The Candidate Countries North Macedonia*, Montenegro* and the potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina* align themselves with this declaration.

Let me start by congratulating you once again on assuming your role as the President of the Tenth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). We look forward to your stewardship and assure you of our full support and cooperation in advancing this Convention.

The EU is grateful to Switzerland for its presidency of the Second Review Conference of the CCM, where States Parties set a robust action plan, which provides the course towards the realisation of the objectives set out in the Convention over the next five years.

The EU also appreciates the coordinators' assistance in overseeing the effective implementation of the CCM.

Mr. President,

The EU supports the humanitarian goal of the CCM. 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 Ukraine, Syria, Yemen, Libya and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The EU calls upon all actors to refrain from such use and to fully comply with International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

We gather here during Russia's ongoing and unlawful war of aggression against Ukraine. The EU resolutely condemns this unjustifiable and unprovoked aggression and illegal war, which threw the world into even more uncertain times. The EU fully acknowledges Ukraine's right

* North Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

to self-defence and the Ukrainian armed forces' efforts to defend Ukraine's territorial integrity and population in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter. We urge Russia to immediately cease its illegal use of force against Ukraine, and to immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. Furthermore, the atrocities being committed by Russian forces and the suffering and destruction being inflicted are unspeakable. Russia bears full responsibility for the loss of life, the human suffering and all the destruction it causes in Ukraine. There can be no impunity for war crimes. Perpetrators must be held to account. We call on Russia to stop its attacks affecting civilians and civilian infrastructure, to allow immediate humanitarian access and the safe passage of all civilians concerned. The EU demands that IHL, including the Geneva Convention relative to the treatment of prisoners of war, to be fully respected. The EU also calls on Russia to immediately allow the safe returns of Ukrainian individuals forcibly transferred to Russia.

Credible reports show that cluster munitions have been used in Ukraine, particularly by Russian forces. Recent reports of terrifying suffering of civilians in Ukraine after repeated indiscriminate attacks by Russian forces using cluster munitions as well as other types of explosive weapons, such as rockets and artillery shells, are shocking. Their explosive remnants pose a long-lasting threat to civilians and hinder humanitarian access. We call on all actors to refrain from using cluster munitions in violation of IHL.

Mr. President,

The Convention has brought about many significant achievements since its entry into force more than a decade ago, in particular the enhanced protection of women, girls, boys and men from the threats and effects of cluster munitions and their remnants. However, the increasing number of new victims of cluster munitions each year is worrying. Where needed, we must support States Parties in the integration of victim assistance into their national policies and legal frameworks in a non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive manner. Where possible, we support seeking synergies in the implementation of the CCM with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and other relevant disarmament instruments, such as the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, especially on victim assistance, clearance, and survey. We also welcome the commitment to gender mainstreaming across the Convention as decided by States Parties at the Second Review Conference and would join a consensus on terms of reference on gender.

The full and timely implementation of the Convention by States Parties, including tackling the remaining contamination and stockpiles of these weapons by States Parties, substantially contributes to end the suffering of civilians affected by cluster munitions. We fully support Country Coalition Concept, which has proven to be a useful vehicle to enhance cooperation and coordination among all stakeholders and to tailor assistance to the specific needs and challenges faced by an affected State. We also welcome the commitment to mainstreaming gender and diversity considerations across the Convention, as stated in the Lausanne Action Plan.

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

At the same time, we are concerned by the dire financial situation of the Convention. The observance by all participating States of their financial obligations is a key pillar for the stability of the Convention. The payment of annual contributions in full and on time is part of the commitment of each State Party to the CCM and we urge all States Parties to pay their contributions in full and on time. Without it, some objectives of the Convention may remain elusive. In the same vein, this aspect also needs to be taken into account in considerations and deliberations on future intersessional endeavours. While recognizing a value of exchanging views on a progress in fulfilling Convention's obligations by States Parties in intersessional period, we are of the view that such endeavour should not increase arrears further. A possibility of convening the intersessional meetings, if needed, back-to-back with meetings of the Ottawa Convention, could be further explored.

In conclusion, 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.

I thank you Mr. President.