

Mr. President,

Congratulations to you on the assumption of your duties, and thank you for all the hard work you and your team have done to set the table for us this week. A big thanks also to the coordinators and to the ISU. And, a special note of appreciation is in order to you, Sheila, for your outstanding contribution and dedication to our convention.

Mr. President, Colleagues,

2021 was according to the report Cluster Munitions Monitor the first year in a decade with no reported casualties from *attacks* with cluster munitions. The casualty count was the lowest in years. For almost a year, there were no reports of new use. The report “Clearing Cluster Munitions Remnants” by Mine Action Review recorded a new **annual global record** of land cleared of cluster munitions remnants in 2021 – 151,7 km², which is 12% more than the previous record in 2020. This deeply welcome development would under other circumstances have been a very encouraging starting point for this Meeting of States Parties.

Tragically, the MSP takes place in the context of deep human suffering unleashed by Russia’s illegal, unprovoked and unjustifiable war of aggression on Ukraine. Credible reports show extensive use of cluster munitions by the Russian Federation; and three instances of use by Ukraine. Casualties have skyrocketed, with a reported 689 casualties in the first six months of the year – in Ukraine alone.

We emphatically condemn Russia’s invasion. And we condemn the use of cluster munitions, as we have condemned the use in Syria, Yemen and Nagorno Karabakh. The use of cluster munitions by any actor, under any circumstance, is unacceptable.

Continuing use underscores that we cannot take the norms of our convention for granted. We must continue to promote the universalisation of the Convention and its implementation.

Colleagues,

The Lausanne Action Plan has staked out the course for us. It is an excellent roadmap, with clear, measurable indicators.

We welcome the Progress Monitoring Report issued by the presidency; as well as the Civil Society Lausanne Action Plan monitoring report produced by the Mine Action Review. They will allow us to measure progress on the Action Plan. Together they give us quite a detailed picture of the state of affairs.

Mr. President,

For three years in a row, we have celebrated clearance records. Mine Action Review's findings show that **the average ratio of destroyed submunitions per m2 of land cleared is significantly higher for clearance that takes place in affected States Parties to the Convention**. Almost four times higher. It is tempting to believe that this is due – in part – to the Convention's promotion of best practices and evidence-based methodologies.

We believe that completion of clearance by 2026 should be attainable for all but the two most heavily contaminated States Parties. The keys to success are clear planning for completion; strong coordination; national political will and ownership, as well as the application of evidence-based survey and clearance methodology – not the least to avoid misdirecting funds to clearance where less expensive methods would be suitable.

We are encouraged to see that that three out of three extension requests get full marks on the indicator for detailed, costed work plans; and that both progress monitors give a high score on Action 1 relating to national financial contributions to cluster munitions clearance.

But, on-time completion of the clearance obligation is also down to us as donors and partners. In the face of mounting economic pressure, and a worrying trend of declining funding for mine action, we welcome the initiatives to develop innovative financing solutions, and call on our fellow donors to maintain the funding for mine action.

Mr. President,

While we await a world free of cluster munitions, risk education is a cheap, life saving complement to clearance. We welcome the fact that many of the affected states report on their risk education activities, and encourage those that do not to follow suit. For our part, we are pleased to announce that we will soon enter into a new agreement with the GICHD on risk education.

Thank you.