

Norwegian People's Aid Statement on
Item 10 (b): Storage and Stockpile Destruction
Tenth Meeting of States Parties to the CCM, 30 August - 2 September
2022

Delivered by Thea Katrin Mjelstad, Advisor

Thank you, Mr. President,

NPA is fully committed to supporting States Parties to achieve the goals of the Convention as a means of protecting civilians from the use of cluster munitions, as every cluster munition destroyed is a cluster munition never used. Stockpile destruction also avoids unplanned explosions of stockpiles or the weapons falling into hands of nefarious actors, thereby preventing protracted civilian harm and more costly and time-consuming clearance operations.

Since 2010, NPA has been assisting relevant States Parties with the destruction of cluster munitions by providing technical assistance and capacity development support to national authorities, including Moldova, North Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Mozambique and Botswana. In total, our projects have assisted five State Parties to declare compliance with their Article 3 obligations and in so doing have destroyed more than 60,700 submunitions of various types that will never be used and never cause harm to civilians.

Currently, NPA is continuing to support the Republic of Peru in their efforts on this crucial issue. Since 2014, NPA has been working together with the Peruvian Air Force and the Peruvian Ministry of Defense in support of Peru's CCM compliance effort to dispose of all cluster munitions stockpiles in country. The objective is the safe and environmentally sound disposal of all remaining cluster munitions and explosive sub-munitions that will lead to Peru's compliance with its obligations under Article 3 of the Convention.

As an operator with extensive involvement in clearance and stockpile destruction programmes, we would like to briefly reply to the three questions posed in the 10MSP Progress Report for discussion on this topic. We have observed that technical knowledge and logistical and bureaucratic challenges are the main barriers to overcome. Our advice as a lesson learned is not to underestimate the logistical challenges of planning and preparing for a safe stockpile destruction process. Logistics is not just about equipment and resources, but also about having efficient legal processes to facilitate the destruction of Cluster Munitions. Technical knowledge can sometimes also serve as an area of improvement to ensure correct identification and safe destruction of munitions in their stockpiles.

Capacity development and training of staff are key to a successful stockpile destruction project, which should ensure that lessons learned are maintained in the armed forces beyond the cluster munitions stockpiles and can be applied to other weapons systems. This strengthens the provisions set under Article 3 of this Convention, as well as enhancing stockpile management in general in accordance with the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines.

Finally, in response to the question of whether States with Article 3 obligations would benefit from international dialogue and assistance, our firm answer would be 'yes'. In particular, States Parties that have small stockpiles and do not have demilitarization facilities available locally would benefit from the sharing of technical knowledge and the development of safe and environmentally sound procedures for disposal of Cluster Munitions with local resources.

Thank you.