

CMC Statement on Clearance and Risk Education

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Mr. President,

The Cluster Munition Coalition thanks you for this opportunity to deliver a statement on clearance and risk education.

We want to start by congratulating Bosnia and Herzegovina on the completion of clearance of all cluster munition contamination! This is a great achievement and we look forward to more announcements of countries becoming cluster-munition free in the near future!

We also thank all states who have shared updates on their clearance progress and risk education efforts today. We would like to take the opportunity to thank the Coordinators and the Analysis Group for their ongoing efforts to ensure timely implementation of Article 4.

Indeed, 2022 saw some positive progress on implementation of Article 4 of the Convention. The Cluster Munition Monitor reported that States Parties cleared approximately 93km² of cluster munition contaminated land, which represents a significant increase from previous year.

A total of 29 countries and other areas remain contaminated or suspected to be contaminated by cluster munition remnants, including 11 States Parties to the convention, with the most recent member, South Sudan. Four of these are known or believed to have less than 10km of contamination and should be well placed to complete clearance soon.

However, the number of States Parties on track to achieve their obligations, and to clear all contaminated areas within their current deadlines appears to be decreasing. Four States Parties did not report any clearance for 2022. Since 2019, requests to extend clearance deadlines have been submitted each year. Three requests were submitted in 2022, and two more in 2023. Only Somalia (apart from South Sudan) remains within its original clearance deadline, although it is unclear whether it is on target to meet this deadline. While it is recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic impacted progress in some States Parties, it is imperative that efforts are now made to recommit to targets and deadlines.

Although the vast majority of recent casualties were caused by cluster munitions attacks, cluster munitions remnants casualties continue to occur, including in States Parties, in spite of the Convention's promise to put an end to the suffering and casualties.

Risk education remains crucially important. People continue to live with cluster munition contamination in a total of 29 States and *other areas*. In some countries, the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic increased risk-taking activities in contaminated areas. People are forced to rely on harmful coping mechanisms to survive.

Risk education was conducted in most States Parties to the Convention during 2022. The Cluster Munition Monitor found increasing evidence of risk education being tailored to high-risk behaviors and activities. There was also progress in the development of approaches and messages sensitive to context and gender, age, disability, and diversity, based on data and reporting, in line with the Lausanne Action Plan's Action # 29.

In 2022, risk education was also delivered in many non-signatories, including in Libya, Syria, and Yemen, often in the context of ongoing conflict and insecurity.

We urge State Parties to address the needs of people living in contaminated areas. Ensure that risk education is context-specific, and tailored to the threat posed by cluster munitions. Ensure that it is provided to all those that may be at risk, in line with the Lausanne Action Plan. Risk education is just as essential in states where the last bombs were dropped over thirty years ago, as it is in countries with recent contamination or hazardous contexts of ongoing conflict and insecurity.

States Parties absolutely need to re-commit to their clearance targets and to re-double their efforts and resources to finish clearance as soon as possible so that people can live free from the threat of cluster munitions. These next few years of the Lausanne Action Plan will be crucial for State Parties to demonstrate their commitment and momentum to achieve the ambitious goals of the Convention, and to work together for safer world.

Thank you.