

**Statement of Norway to the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, delivered by his H.E. Tormod Endresen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN and other International Organizations in Geneva**

**Mr. President,**

Let me start by congratulating you on your election and thanking you for your efforts in organising this meeting. Our thanks also go out to the ISU and the coordinators. We also want to congratulate Ms. Pamela Moraga on her appointment as director of the ISU. We look forward to working closely with you in the Coordination Committee.

This year marks an important milestone, a proof that our work is worthwhile: Bosnia-Herzegovina celebrates that their country is free of cluster munitions. 30 years after the war was ended. We warmly congratulate Bosnia-Herzegovina. Norway has supported this achievement, and we thank Bosnia Herzegovina for the close cooperation with Norwegian Peoples Aid in your efforts to reach this goal and fulfil your obligations under the convention.

We welcome South-Sudan and Nigeria as new States parties to the convention. I would also like to take this opportunity to extend Norway's sincere appreciation to partners and friends in the mine action community who work tirelessly, and often at great personal risk, to keep civilians out of harm's way, enable people safe return to their homes, farmland and civilian infrastructure.

--- --- ---

Mr President

By design, cluster munitions kill and mangle indiscriminately. Unexploded submunitions menace societies and hinder development for decades. In 2023, according to The monitor there are more than a thousand casualties from cluster munition – 90% are civilians, and 70% are children. We don't know how many unexploded munitions are still scattered, still threatening lives. We – the 112 states parties to this Convention send a clear message: we must put an end to the use of this inhumane weapon.

We condemn the use of cluster munitions by any actor under any circumstance. The language in the Lausanne Plan is very clear on this point. The norms established by the convention must be maintained, and we must continue to work hard to make them universal. Because in times of war,

civilians must be protected. International Humanitarian Law and the Humanitarian Disarmament Conventions are more important than ever.

**Mr. President,**

We are appalled by the extensive use of cluster munitions on Ukrainian territory in Russia's brutal, unprovoked and illegal war of aggression on Ukraine. Reportedly, over 30% of Ukrainian territory is now contaminated by mines and cluster munitions, making it one of the world's most contaminated countries. This will have consequences for Ukrainian civilians for decades to come. The responsibility for this tragedy rests firmly with the Russian Federation. We call upon all actors to refrain from using cluster munitions and to fully comply with International Humanitarian Law.

Let me emphatically state Norway's support for Ukraine in its fight for survival and reaffirm its right to self-defense under the UN Charter. Norway also remains steadfast in our commitment to support the Ukrainian people in their fight against Russian aggression. And to address the problem of new contamination, through clearance of unexploded ordnance, risk education and assistance to victims and survivors.

**Mr. President,**

The main challenges in implementing the convention are to complete clearance in affected countries, to maintain the level of international funding, and to achieve universalization of the convention.

Several of the affected states parties are behind the deadline for clearing their own land. Several have had the deadline extended. This is why it is of utmost importance to make sure resources are used efficiently.

In 2022, according to the Mine Action Review, we celebrated a record year for land cleared of cluster munitions. We have seen that the keys to success are clear planning for completion; strong coordination; application of evidence-based survey and clearance methodology; and not least political will.

We believe that most States Parties with art. 4 obligations should be able to reach completion by the Review Conference in 2026. The exceptions are the two most heavily contaminated States Parties, Lao PDR and Iraq.

Meeting these obligations by 2026 will take political commitment, effective planning, efficient land release methodology, and sufficient and sustained funding.

We believe that the Country Coalitions can play an important role in supporting progress. The open and regular dialogue that takes place in Country Coalitions – between the affected country, the donors and the operators – helps to elucidate and address challenges and improves effectiveness. We encourage donors and affected states to make use of such platforms for cooperation.

**Mr. President**

Norway remains committed to fulfilling its article 6 obligations to assist in the implementation of the Convention. We are currently funding mine action in about 20 countries, in strategic partnerships with humanitarian NGOs for demining, victim assistance and advocacy for the convention.

We will continue to be a vocal and strong advocate for the full implementation of this convention.

Thank you.