

---

Thank you, Mr. President,

The Cluster Muniton Coalition warmly congratulates Bulgaria, Slovakia, and South Africa for completing the destruction of their respective stockpiled cluster munitions in recent weeks. We appreciate the detailed presentations that Bulgaria and Slovakia provided today as well as all the reports and regular updates that they have shared with the Convention. We look forward to the official confirmation from South Africa's defence department and technical details that will be provided in the coming period.

We commend Bulgaria, Slovakia, and South Africa for meeting their obligation under Article 3 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Between them, these three States Parties have collectively destroyed approximately 9,500 cluster munitions and more than half a million [585,000] submunitions.

The Cluster Muniton Coalition is thrilled to celebrate this milestone achievement today. These are the first States Parties to complete the stockpile destruction obligation since Switzerland did so in 2019. It is a great cause for celebration and comes at exactly the time when the Convention on Cluster Munitions needs to deliver good news and demonstrate progress.

Stockpile destruction is indeed a great success story of this Convention. Collectively States Parties have now destroyed 1.487 million cluster munitions and 178.9 million submunitions. This means that 99.9 percent of all the cluster munitions once stockpiled by States Parties to the Convention have now been destroyed.

Only one State Party still has cluster munition stocks left to destroy under the convention. We welcome Peru's update and its pledge to meet its deadline of 1 April 2024 .

Mr. President, the Cluster Muniton Coalition welcomes Nigeria's ratification of the convention and notes that shortly after ratifying it provided an Article 7 report in April 2023, which stated that Nigeria has no stockpiled cluster munitions, including for research and training purposes.

We urge Cyprus and Indonesia—the two signatories known to stockpile cluster munitions—to ratify the Convention without delay and to provide information on their stocks of cluster munitions and steps taken to destroy them.

Before closing, I would like to make a few remarks on the retention of cluster munitions for research and training purposes, as permitted under Article 3 of the Convention.

Over the past 15 years, most States Parties that initially retained cluster munitions for training have either eliminated them entirely since making their first declarations in transparency reports or reduced their stocks significantly and not replenished them. This shows that the initial amounts retained were clearly not the “minimum number absolutely necessary” for the permitted purposes under the convention.

The Cluster Munition Coalition was pleased to see Belgium report the destruction of 95% of its retained cluster munitions during 2022 and its pledge to destroy the remaining research and training stocks in 2023. It’s good that Switzerland consumed one-third of its retained cluster munitions in 2022.

We hope that the 11 States Parties that still retain cluster munitions for research and training will reconsider—and critically reflect on whether this is really necessary. The Cluster Munition Coalition encourages them to join the vast majority of States Parties that see no need to retain live cluster munitions for such purposes.

In closing, the CMC thank the Stockpile Destruction Coordinators (Bulgaria and Netherlands) and the Analysis Group for their ongoing efforts to ensure timely implementation of Article 3.

Thank you.