



EU Statement
Twelve Meeting of States Parties
to the Convention on Cluster Munitions
Geneva, 10 – 13 September 2024

Madam President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania¹, Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

First of all, I would like to join others in expressing our deepest condolences to the Permanent Mission of Peru on the untimely passing of Ambassador Gervasi Diaz. Our thoughts are with her family, loved ones and colleagues at this difficult time.

Madam President,

We congratulate you, Ambassador Francisca Elizabeth Méndez Escobar, Permanent Representative of Mexico, on assuming the role of President of the Twelve Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). We look forward to your stewardship and assure you of our full support and cooperation in advancing this Convention.

The EU recognizes the humanitarian goals of this Convention and remains steadfast in its commitment to promoting the protection of civilians from the devastating impacts of explosive remnants of war, including cluster munitions. Our collective efforts, deeply rooted in our shared commitment to international humanitarian law, underscore the importance of effective measures to mitigate and ultimately prevent the harm caused by unexploded ordnance. The Convention substantially contributes to end the suffering of civilians affected by cluster munitions and to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals as well as the core objectives of human security, promoting peace and international security.

In the current geopolitical context, it is crucial that humanitarian instruments remain strong with full compliance with all obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law.

¹ North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

In light of recent developments regarding the CCM, we are convinced that continued adherence to the CCM and its principles is vital for this important humanitarian instrument.

We congratulate South Africa and Peru for having completed their Article 3 obligations. It is a significant achievement that marks the completion of cluster munitions stockpile destruction by all State Parties under this obligation. This achievement constitutes another step in advancing the humanitarian objectives of the Convention and further enhancing global peace and security.

The extent and impact of remaining cluster munition contamination varies widely across affected States. In this regard, we welcome progress in clearance of reported contaminated areas in countries such as Afghanistan, Chad, Chile, Germany, Iraq, Lao PDR, and Lebanon. The EU fully supports the Country Coalition Concept, which has proven to be a useful vehicle to enhance cooperation and coordination among all stakeholders and to tailor assistance to the specific needs and challenges faced by an affected State.

The EU also emphasises that putting the human rights of victims at the forefront of victim assistance is not just a commitment, but a shared responsibility. Where needed, we must support States Parties in the integration of victim assistance into their national policies and legal frameworks in a non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive manner. Where possible, we support seeking synergies in the implementation of the CCM with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and other relevant disarmament instruments, such as the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and CCW Protocol V, especially on victim assistance, clearance, and survey.

The EU emphasizes the importance of engaging youth in humanitarian disarmament. We are proud to support, in collaboration with the Mexican Presidency of the 12MSP, a youth contest, empowering young people to share their thoughts, fears and perspectives on the impact of cluster munitions. We are pleased to welcome Ms. Juliany Alcocer Angeles, the winner of the contest, and invite you to visit all the impressive contributions on the website. This initiative underscores our commitment to involving the next generation in future humanitarian disarmament policy making.

We also welcome the commitment to gender mainstreaming across the Convention as decided by States Parties at the Second Review Conference. An inclusive and gender-balanced approach in implementation activities at the national level and in the Convention's machinery, including its meetings, remains crucial and should be further advanced.

Madam President,

We are deeply concerned by the impact on civilian populations by the indiscriminate use of cluster munitions, including the extensive use of cluster munitions in many conflict theatres all over the world and by the increasing number of victims. They continue to pose a grave threat to civilian lives and leave communities contaminated with remnants of war, having devastating effects that persist long after conflicts have ended, creating enduring challenges for the affected regions. The Cluster Munitions Monitor recorded a global total of 24,502 cluster munitions casualties – people killed and injured – by the end of 2023. This figure encompasses casualties from both direct cluster munitions attacks (5,767) and unexploded cluster munition remnants (18,734). Particularly alarming is the overwhelming impact of cluster munitions on children, who accounted for nearly half of casualties recorded in 2023. The EU calls upon all actors to refrain from such use and to fully comply with International Humanitarian Law.

In this regard, we reiterate our strong condemnation of Russia's ongoing unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine in blatant violation of international law, including the UN Charter. Credible reports show that cluster munitions have been used in Ukraine. The EU strongly condemns Russia's continued air and missile attacks against Ukraine's civilians and civilian infrastructure, including the recent intensified targeting of the energy sector. Schools, medical facilities, and other civilian infrastructure have increasingly come under attack by Russian forces in Ukraine. We call on Russia to immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces, military equipment and proxies from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. The EU and its Member States will intensify the provision of humanitarian and civil protection assistance. The EU remains committed to providing continued political, financial, economic, humanitarian, military and diplomatic support to Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes and as intensely as needed.

In conclusion, we express our appreciation for partners from across the sector including United Nations entities, the ICRC, mine action operators and civil society who are in the front line in ensuring effective implementation of the Convention, through their efforts in clearance, stockpile destruction, risk education, victim assistance and advocacy. The EU and its Member States have a long history of support for mine action, including the Oslo Action Plan that benefits heavily mine-affected countries and regions of the world. We will continue to support States Parties as they revise or develop inclusive national action plans.

We are also concerned about the dire financial situation of the Convention. The payment of annual contributions in full and on time is part of the commitment of each State Party to the objectives of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

I thank you, Madam President