

UNODA/OCHA/OHCHR/DPO/UNICEF joint statement

***(pre-recorded video message delivered by Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu
High Representative for Disarmament Affairs)***

Twelfth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions

10 September 2024, Geneva

I now have the honour to deliver the following statement on behalf of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UN Department of Peace Operations, and the United Nations Children's Fund.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Cluster munitions are a weapon of the past.

Since their first use in the 1940s, cluster munitions have caused extensive civilian death, injury and suffering, as well as long-term negative impacts on a host of economic and social rights, with children representing a large proportion of victims. This harm continues for decades after wars have ended, contaminating land and disrupting livelihoods.

Under the Convention on Cluster Munitions, States agreed that the civilian harm inflicted by these weapons is unacceptable and that humanity must impose limits on their use.

This idea lies at the heart of international humanitarian law, which seeks to limit human suffering in the midst of armed conflict.

For 16 years, a growing majority of States have translated their rejection of cluster munitions into a legal commitment never again to use, produce, transfer or stockpile them and to clear existing contamination and provide assistance to survivors. Under the Convention, States Parties expressed their determination “to put an end for all time to the suffering and casualties caused by cluster munitions.”

We deeply regret the decision of Lithuania to withdraw from this Convention. This marks the first time a State withdraws from a global humanitarian disarmament treaty. Such a precedent will have long-term repercussions for the integrity of the Convention and for the sanctity of international humanitarian law more generally.

We strongly urge Lithuania to reconsider its decision to withdraw from the Convention. It is vital to continue to foster the stigma around the use of cluster munitions and promote adherence to the Convention by all States.

Thank you.