

BELGIUM

Universalisation

CCM – 12MSP - September 2024

Madam Chair,

Since this is the first time my delegation takes the floor, we would like to congratulate you on the accession to the presidency of the 12th Meeting of the States Party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

We would also like to convey our condolences to Peru and the family for the untimely passing of ambassador Diaz.

Belgium aligns itself with the EU declaration and wishes to make the following comments in its national capacity.

Madam Chair,

Excellencies,

Dear members of the mine-action community,

The Convention on Cluster Munitions was born out of a collective determination to address the humanitarian consequences and unacceptable harm to civilians caused by cluster munitions.

Belgium is a strong advocate of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and wants to continue to encourage the states that have not done so to sign and ratify it.

Unless we put a halt to this, cluster munitions will continue to have an indiscriminate and long-lasting effect on the civilian populations and impede socio-economic development and the return of displaced populations.

We regret the news of the withdrawal by Lithuania from the Convention. This constitutes a setback for this influential Convention and for the efforts to universalize the Convention. We understand the concerns created by the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and the need to have an adequate defense in Europe. However, we believe that the humanitarian harm of cluster munitions outweighs any military benefit these weapons could give. Both Ukraine and Russia have and use cluster munitions. This has not prevented the war from happening, nor has it given either party a decisive military advantage. We believe that the use of cluster munitions cannot be reconciled with the current state of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). We remain hopeful that Lithuania will reconsider its withdrawal from the Convention and that other States Parties remain strongly committed to the Convention.

Belgium continues its strong commitment to the full implementation and respect of the Convention and is happy to announce that the remainder of its stock retained for training and research purposes, has been neutralized.

Belgium firmly condemns the use of cluster munitions by any actor under any circumstances.

Thank you.