

**MAG Statement**

**Agenda Item 10(c)**

**Clearance and destruction of cluster munitions remnants and risk reduction education**

*Check against delivery.*

Thank you, Madam President.

As this is our first statement, I would like to congratulate you for your presidency, including for the innovative youth contest, which underscores the importance of inspiring young people to advance humanitarian disarmament and promote a future free from the threat of cluster munitions.

This Convention, a cornerstone of humanitarian disarmament, safeguards human security by addressing and preventing grave threats to people's rights to live free from fear and in dignity.

MAG works as a partner to many states parties affected by cluster munitions – including Chad, Iraq, Laos, Lebanon, and South Sudan, as well as affected states not yet party to the Convention such as Cambodia, Ukraine, and Vietnam. MAG's dedicated staff witness firsthand the devastating and enduring impact of cluster munitions every day on the communities we serve, often including their own families and homes.

In this challenging period for international norms and principles the Convention's role is more vital than ever; the Convention serves, in its own capacity and as a part of a larger normative regime, to safeguard human rights and international humanitarian law.

The challenges posed by cluster munitions still pose multifaceted issues that require sustained focus and concrete action. This type of weapon is indiscriminate both at the time of use and in its long-term impact on civilians, who suffer the long-term effects of cluster munition remnants long after the end of active hostilities.

Cluster munition contamination presents unique and long-lasting challenges, which often prolong affected countries' efforts to eliminate explosive ordnance. MAG is proud to be at the forefront of clearance operations, continuously developing and refining techniques to expedite the safe removal of cluster munitions. We are working with partners to share our learning and best practice, including at an event this week to be held with APOPO focusing on our work in Cambodia.

Madam President,

The CCM is a sophisticated instrument, which contains specific reference to risk reduction education. At a time where many countries and regions are shaken by conflict and crisis, including displacement induced by climate change, food insecurity and drought, it is critical to remember the vital function of delivering risk education, especially when clearance is not possible. Risk reduction education helps people recognise and respond to the dangers posed by cluster munitions and other explosive ordnance during conflicts or emergencies. Such education is crucial for displaced populations, including refugees and migrants, who may cross into contaminated areas, which are unfamiliar and contain unseen dangers.

**12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties to the Convention**

**on Cluster Munitions, 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> September, Palais des Nations**

**UN Office of Geneva, Geneva.**



Finally, MAG adds our voice to the calls of States and other organisations for Lithuania to reconsider its decision to withdraw from this Convention. There is still time and opportunity for Lithuania to reverse its current direction and remain a State Party within the CCM community.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions stands with other rules and instruments that developed the law on means and methods of warfare, gradually expanding the protection of civilians during conflict and preventing threats to human life. The human cost of abandoning this treaty is immeasurable, as decades of hard-fought progress risk being undone, and future generations could face prolonged suffering.

I thank you, Madam President.