



**Convention on Cluster Munitions
12th Meeting of States Parties**

New Zealand General Statement

10 September 2024

Thank you, President.

Please allow me to express my sincere thanks to you, and your team, for your commitment to guiding the Convention over the past year. I assure you of New Zealand's full support.

Moreover, I take the opportunity to convey my delegation's deep appreciation to the Implementation Support Unit. I also extend this appreciation to civil society for their tireless work, including monitoring, advocacy, clearance, risk education, and victim assistance. New Zealand is grateful for your partnership in international assistance and advocacy.

President, the international norm against cluster munitions is under strain. It is imperative this week that we condemn these weapons unequivocally and recommit to the full and effective implementation of the CCM.

Like many other countries, New Zealand was involved in the Oslo process, which led to the CCM's adoption in May 2008. A defining feature of this process was the considered manner in which participating states, international organisations and civil society – including survivors of cluster munitions – collectively came to the conclusion that these weapons cause

unacceptable harm, on the basis of empirical evidence about the pattern of their humanitarian effects. Fifteen years later this remains New Zealand's view.

I thank the Cluster Munition Coalition for producing this year's Cluster Munition Monitor, which remains invaluable in tracking cluster munitions globally. We draw attention to the Monitor's latest findings. In 2023, 93% of recorded casualties from cluster munitions were civilians. Almost half of all casualties were children. These figures are staggering, and unacceptable, something all states should acknowledge.

We wish to call to attention two challenges facing our regime.

First, the use and transfer of these weapons continues. Decades of research show the pattern of harm caused by cluster munitions far outweighs any military benefit. Despite this, from January 2023 until July 2024, use of cluster munitions was recorded in Ukraine, Myanmar, and Syria. The United States has transferred cluster weapons of various kinds from its own stockpile to Ukraine. These actions will have economic, social, and environmental consequences for years to come, including in hampering recovery efforts in places where they have been used.

Let me be clear. New Zealand unequivocally condemns any use of cluster munitions, by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances.

Second, and most alarming, a CCM State Party, Lithuania, has now deposited its instrument of withdrawal from the Convention. I share a quote from the ICBL-CMC here: "This unprecedented decision tears at the protective fabric of international humanitarian law developed over generations to protect civilians. This body of law is meant to govern

states' behaviour in times of conflict, so it is highly problematic and destabilizing for a state to embrace its norms during peacetime and then withdraw when a risk of conflict arises."

Like others, New Zealand calls on Lithuania to reconsider its decision immediately. At a time when international humanitarian law, and the rules-based system more broadly are under threat, we must all act to reinforce these rules, and redouble our efforts to protect them.

We are conscious of New Zealand's obligation as a CCM State Party, and remind others of their obligation, under article 21 of the Convention to pursue universal adherence to the Convention, and to promote its norms.

In the face of these and other challenges facing the Convention, we look forward to engaging with all States Parties this week and discussing how to best protect and enhance the regime we have built and the comprehensive norm against cluster munitions it embodies. New Zealand remains committed to our shared goal of ridding the world of cluster munitions and putting an end, once and for all, to the suffering they cause.

I thank you.