



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES



Twelfth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions 10-13 September 2024

Agenda Item 12: Preparations for the Thirteenth Meeting of States Parties

Delivered by H.E. Carlos D. Sorreta,
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Philippines to the
United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva



Thank you, Madame President, and thank you for your outstanding leadership of our meeting, marked by your deep experience, skill and dedication as a veteran diplomat.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the State Parties for entrusting the Philippines and me personally with the responsibility of continuing your good work, Madame President, when we next gather. This is an honor and responsibility we hold in the highest regard.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Lao PDR on assuming the presidency of our Third Review Conference in 2026. This is a significant responsibility, especially as the Convention is facing serious challenges. The Philippines is proud to see a fellow ASEAN member take on this crucial role. Southeast Asia is all too familiar with the devastating legacy of cluster munitions. We look forward to working constructively with Lao PDR during its presidency and to increasing regional engagements in this Convention.

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This early, Madame President, we are already in consultations with Lao PDR, and we have agreed that during our presidency next year, we should already start working on a forward-looking Work Plan with the help of the Implementation Unit going towards the Review Conference. So, we will be working hand-in-glove with Lao PDR and with the Support Unit.

The Philippines has never used, produced, or stockpiled cluster munitions and remains fully committed to the Convention and to advancing its objectives. As we prepare to assume the presidency, we stand ready to fulfill our obligations and seek the continued support of States Parties and civil society in ensuring the Convention's sustainable and successful implementation.

Over the past 40 years, the use of cluster munitions has inflicted untold suffering, extending far beyond immediate physical harm, to long-lasting psychological trauma, the destruction of livelihoods, and the crippling of economies. Moreover, we must acknowledge the dangers faced by clearance personnel who risk their lives every day to end the deadly legacy of these weapons.

In all of our humanitarian disarmament efforts, the Philippines has consistently been guided by two core principles: prioritizing the needs of victims and strengthening the independent capacities of affected states to respond effectively to the challenges posed by these deadly weapons. These principles will guide our presidency and inform the development of our priorities.

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Article 5 of the Convention is central to its identity and one of the key reasons the Convention is so highly regarded as both a humanitarian and disarmament treaty. The Philippine presidency will champion the rights and interests of cluster munition victims, ensuring that our efforts to implement the Convention are centered around their needs. We will promote a comprehensive, inclusive, and context-sensitive approach to victim assistance, with particular attention to gender and diversity considerations.

Much work remains in universalizing our Convention. This will be a priority of our presidency, especially for our region. Universalization efforts should go hand-in-hand with strengthening the national capacities of states, whether affected or non-affected, to implement its obligations. By building confidence in a state's ability to meet its commitments, we can encourage broader participation in the Convention.

There is a strong and essential link between international cooperation and assistance, victim assistance, and universalization. This is crucial to enhancing national capacities to address victims' needs and for fostering greater national ownership.

At a time when the integrity of the Convention is under threat and its norms are being eroded, the Philippine presidency is committed to working even harder to safeguard the Convention's core principles. In these challenging times, we need the full cooperation and support of State Parties, international organizations, civil society, and all stakeholders.

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We will work closely with the Implementation Support Unit and Coordinators to build on your work, Madame President, to make concrete and measurable progress in the implementation of the Convention to reinforce its norms and to move closer to a world free from cluster munitions.

Thank you.