



## **Twelfth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions**

**10 – 13 September 2024**

**Statement by Sri Lanka**

### **Agenda Item 8: General Exchange of Views**

Madam President

Distinguished Delegates

Sri Lanka extends its warm congratulations to Her Excellency Francisca E. Méndez Escobar, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Mexico for assuming the Presidency of the Twelfth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. I assure you the fullest support of the delegation of Sri Lanka in achieving a productive and meaningful outcome of this meeting.

Madam President,

Sri Lanka remains convinced that the Convention on Cluster Munitions which entered into force in this millennium is a significant component of global disarmament landscape due to its comprehensive approach in mitigating the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions. Since its entry into force, this Convention has protected countless civilian lives from the indiscriminate and widespread harm caused by cluster munitions.

Cluster munitions are significantly dangerous as they cause civilian casualties both during and after conflicts. They disperse multiple submunitions over a wide area, many of which fail to explode, remaining on the soil as dangerous unexploded ordnance that can harm civilians specially children, women and farmers in the fields as well as civilian infrastructure even decades after hostilities have ceased.

Sri Lanka also notes that the Convention on Cluster Munitions strengthens fundamental principles of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), which require parties to the conflict to distinguish between civilians and combatants and to protect civilian populations and objects. Use of cluster munitions is an explicit violation of IHL due to its inability in distinguishing civilian population, civilian objects and military.

Aiming to eliminate the humanitarian impact and suffering caused by cluster munitions, the Convention not only prohibits the use, production, and transfer of cluster munitions but also mandates the destruction of stockpiles and clearance of contaminated areas, thereby safeguarding civilian lives and prevent further suffering after the conflicts.

As a country that has never used, produced, or stockpiled cluster munitions, Sri Lanka reaffirms its unwavering commitment to realizing these objectives of the Convention.

Sri Lanka's commitment to humanitarian disarmament is reflected in our accession to the Convention in 2018. Since then, we have been actively engaging and advocating for universalization of the Convention. During Sri Lanka's presidency of the Ninth Meeting of States Parties in 2019, soon after its accession to the Treaty, we focused on key areas such as risk reduction education, transparency reporting, and victim assistance. Our efforts contributed to the addition of new States Parties thereby strengthening the Convention.

We urge all States which are not party to the Convention to accede to it and join the global disarmament community in condemning the use of cluster munitions which have devastating impact. We urge all State Parties to adhere to the obligations under the Convention in destroying stockpiles, clearing remnants, providing risk education, and victim assistance.

While noting that a large number of victims of cluster munition attacks are civilians, Sri Lanka also emphasizes the importance of continued efforts to support affected communities and survivors and international cooperation and assistance in achieving the Convention's goals.

Madam President,

With regard to national implementation measures, Sri Lanka wishes to underline our ongoing commitment in exploring the adequacy of existing legal provisions to ensure effective national implementation of the Convention.

We appreciate the tremendous work and commitment being carried out by the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) of the Convention in the implementation and monitoring of the humanitarian obligations under the Convention.

In conclusion, Sri Lanka reiterates its dedication to advocating for universalization and full implementation of the Convention. We look forward to working constructively with all States Parties and stakeholders to advance our shared vision of a world free of cluster munitions.

I Thank you.