



**Convention on Cluster Munitions  
12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties  
September 2024**

**Statement by The HALO Trust  
International Cooperation and Assistance**

Thank you, President.

We congratulate you on your Presidency and express our appreciation for your leadership at this challenging time for the Convention and we also thank the ISU team for their continued support.

Despite the challenges this Convention faces, we must acknowledge the remarkable progress we have achieved. According to the latest Mine Action Review Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants report, global clearance of cluster munition-contaminated areas reached over 185 square kilometres in 2023, representing an eight per cent increase from the previous year—a new annual record. This success reflects the dedication of States Parties and civil society organisations. However, sustaining this momentum will require continued efforts, especially in areas that may not always attract significant international attention. Striking a balance between responding to emerging crises and addressing long-term commitments remains critical to achieving our collective objectives.

In Lao PD, over 1,400 of my colleagues have cleared more than 100,000 items of unexploded ordnance since operations began in 2012. On average, they clear 2,000 items per month. These clearance efforts not only protect lives but also allow communities to safely use their land. HALO's data-led approach, leveraging precise GIS systems, allows for the prioritisation of high-impact areas, supporting development and minimising the risk to civilians. The continued commitment to long-term funding of these activities is of utmost importance in order to advance with priority clearance, this is a clear message we also heard during the insightful side event held by Legacies of War on Wednesday.

With only five square kilometres of contaminated land remaining, Kosovo is closer than ever to achieving a cluster munition- and mine-impact free status. The new National Mine Action Strategy 2025–2030, launched in June of this year, solidifies Kosovo’s commitment to this goal. This strategy provides a clear roadmap for HALO, our partners at NPA, and the Kosovo Mine Action Centre to deliver lifesaving clearance of cluster munitions and landmines across every region and community in Kosovo. Since 1999, HALO has served over 250,000 beneficiaries and our operations have saved countless lives. Kosovo’s path to becoming cluster munition-free is within reach, but continued support will be essential to see it through.

Funding gaps remain a pressing issue, and without sufficient resources, there is a risk that clearance efforts could slow down, delaying progress and putting lives at risk. It is essential that we continue to support affected countries in meeting their clearance goals to protect communities and facilitate development.

While progress in Laos and Kosovo is encouraging, we must also acknowledge that the use of cluster munitions in ongoing conflicts continues to pose serious humanitarian concerns as outlined in this year’s Cluster Munition Monitor. These developments highlight the importance of reinforcing collective efforts to reduce the harm caused by these weapons. Diplomatic engagement and international cooperation are key to addressing this challenge.

President, the achievements we have made are a testament to our shared commitment to a world free from the threats posed by cluster munitions. However, much remains to be done. Continued political will, international cooperation, and resource mobilisation will be essential to realising the full potential of this important Convention.

I thank you.