

CMC Statement on International Cooperation and Assistance

*Convention on Cluster Munitions Intersessional meetings
Geneva, 7-8 April 2025*

Thank you, Chair,

The implementation of Article 6 of the Convention on International Cooperation and Assistance is critical for the full implementation of the convention as well as for attracting additional states parties. States' generous support under this provision has enabled substantial progress towards our ultimate goal of putting an end to the suffering caused by cluster munitions. However, as with all aspects of the Convention, these are challenging times, and the strong momentum of past years is now hanging in the balance.

It is an **obligation** of States Parties that are in a position to do so to provide assistance to affected States Parties that need support to clear the cluster munitions from their territories, destroy stocks, to adequately provide age- and gender-sensitive assistance to victims and to contribute to their economic and social recovery. It is an **obligation** that States Parties agreed to, in recognition of the human suffering caused by cluster munitions, and as a **promise** to the many people who continue to live their daily lives surrounded by the remnants of these insidious weapons, and to the victims who need long-term access to affordable and inclusive services.

We salute those States parties that have honoured this obligation and have ensured consistent funding to the States that need it. This has resulted in substantial progress: a total of eleven States Parties have met their clearance obligations and all cluster munition stockpiles held by States Parties have been destroyed. We recognize also the significant contribution of State not Party, the United States, which has been the largest single funder of mine action, providing around 40% of total international support. This includes funding to States Parties with significant cluster munition contamination, such as Lao PDR, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Lebanon.

However, the CMC remains concerned by the worrying trends of recent years. We have seen a gradual reduction in support for several States Parties. Afghanistan saw a 60% decrease in funding in 2023 compared to 2022, and Iraq saw a 24% decrease. Both these States Parties have reported a reduction in the amount of cluster munition contamination cleared, predominantly due to decreased funding. In other States Parties, including Chad, Mauritania and

Somalia, there has been little or no progress in the clearance of cluster munitions, also due in the main part to a lack of funding from donors.

Risk education and victim assistance continue to be underfunded and remain low as a proportion of overall mine action funding. As we noted in our statement on victim assistance, sustainable funding remains one of the largest barriers to long-term support for victims.

We have raised these concerns before, many times. But we now find ourselves at a tipping point in the history of the Convention. The freeze in US government funding for mine action earlier this year has frozen some cluster munition clearance programs overnight, and its future funding policy for mine action remains uncertain. Risk education and victim assistance have also been negatively impacted. Other major donors, including States Parties to this Convention, have reduced, or are considering reducing their mine action funding to pay for increased defense spending. These developments put at risk critical programs in ten States Parties to the Convention and in other cluster munition affected countries. They have the potential to reverse the good progress that has been made under the Convention and to further delay the day when communities can safely reclaim their land, and survivors will receive much needed support.

So, the ball is in your hands, States Parties to the Convention – ALL States Parties in a position to do so should step-up your financial contributions and other support as a demonstration of your commitment to reduce the harm caused by cluster munitions. Now is the time to stand together as one international community resolved to rid the world of cluster munitions.

Thank you.