

## **CMC Statement on Universalization**

*13th Meeting of States Parties of the Convention on Cluster Munitions  
Geneva, 16-19 September 2025*

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Thank you, Mr. President,

The Cluster Munition Coalition would like to begin by warmly welcoming Vanuatu as State Party #112! Vanuatu's accession is a testament to the critical importance and ongoing relevance of the convention. It also demonstrates how all states – of all sizes and from all corners of the world – have the power to reinforce this convention and contribute to the protection of civilians worldwide.

We commend Vanuatu and call on ALL states still outside the convention to join without delay and take their seats among States Parties at the milestone Review Conference next year. We particularly call on the remaining 12 signatory states to finalize the commitment they made to the convention many long years ago by ratifying without further delay.

Universalization must remain a top priority for us all. Solidifying the norm against cluster munitions through wider adherence and respect for the ban WILL SAVE LIVES and reduce suffering, and we must all give it the energy it deserves until universal adherence is achieved.

We are, however, witnessing unprecedented challenges to this norm. As reported by the Cluster Munition Monitor, cluster munitions continued to be used in Ukraine by both Russian and Ukrainian forces throughout 2024 and through the first half of 2025. New use was also recorded in Myanmar and Syria. In addition, Thailand appeared to admit to using cluster munitions in its border conflict with Cambodia in July 2025, with operators needing to quickly clear the remnants to protect people living in that area.

ALL cluster munition casualties recorded in 2024 were CIVILIANS. This shows us again that ALL use of cluster munitions, by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances must be condemned and stopped.

We also remain deeply disturbed by the transfers of U.S. cluster munitions to Ukraine in 2023 and 2024 (with some of those weapons transiting through at least one State Party). Ongoing production of cluster munitions is equally alarming. During the reporting period, the Cluster Munition Monitor found evidence of new production in Iran, Myanmar, North Korea, and South Korea.

The withdrawal of Lithuania from the convention—effective 6 March this year—remains a deeply troubling development. It should never have happened and must never be repeated by any country, for the good of this convention and humanitarian norms more broadly. When a state makes a solemn commitment to rid the world of an indiscriminate and inhumane weapon, that vow must be upheld under any circumstances, most particularly in the face of possible armed conflict. What good is a principle if it can be tossed aside when it is time to apply it? The urgency of our task has no room for fair-weather friends. We continue to call on Lithuania to return to the convention as soon as possible, and to refrain from using, producing, or acquiring these abhorrent weapons.

So clearly challenges remain, but at the same time, we need to focus on what this powerful convention has accomplished and all it can continue to achieve as its numbers grow. We are grateful to the States Parties that take their obligation to promote universalization and discourage use seriously, and we look forward to continuing to work with you all in the lead up to the Review Conference on this noble work.

Over the past year, the Cluster Munition Coalition and its members, present in dozens of signatory and non-signatory countries, continued to raise awareness and engage with national, regional, and global authorities. This included bilateral meetings, public events, and roundtables—such as the one organized last week in Kinshasa by our Congolese campaign, aimed at advancing the national ratification process.

We thank the Philippine Presidency for its efforts on universalization, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, including the regional workshop held earlier this year. We also extend our appreciation to the Universalization Coordinators, as well as States Parties and partners who have contributed to these efforts. We valued hearing updates today from the few signatories and non-signatories (CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY).

Let us all redouble our efforts so that, by the time we gather next year at the Review Conference:

- All 12 remaining signatories have completed their ratifications;
- At least three non-signatories have completed their accessions;
- And the stigma surrounding this weapon remains strong, with no more ongoing use.

Again and again, we hear that the world is changing, that these are difficult times. But one thing has not changed: the indiscriminate nature of cluster munitions. Their victims are overwhelmingly civilians—and children make up a tragically large proportion of those numbers.

It is therefore critical that at this MSP, States Parties reaffirm their full commitment to the obligations and norms set by the convention, including through the meeting's final report, which should emphasize States Parties':

- Condemnation of all use of cluster munitions, by any actor, under any circumstances, and an urgent call to halt such use;
- Legal obligation to promote the norms, including through discouragement of use, development, production, stockpiling, and transfer of cluster munitions;
- Deep regret over Lithuania's withdrawal and its repercussions, and the call to reconsider and refrain from any actions prohibited by the convention.

It should also set out a set of concrete actions over the next year to facilitate achievement of our ambitious universalization goals.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions saves lives and limbs, enables economic growth, and makes the world safer. There is no time for complacency. We must remain strong in our convictions, in our support for the convention, and in our determination to uphold international law and protect civilians.

Thank you.