



Summary of the Informal Regional Consultation with the Asia Pacific Group

Friday, 20 February 2026, 14:45-15:30

Venue: Room IX, Palais des Nations, Geneva

On 20 February 2026, from 14:45 to 15:30, the Presidency of Lao PDR convened an informal regional consultation with the Asia Pacific Group in preparation for the Third Review Conference (3RC) of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). The organization of regional consultations follows the practice established by the Presidency of the Second Review Conference to provide States Parties and signatories with an opportunity for open and informal exchanges in advance of the Review Conference.

Participating Delegations: Australia, Japan, Nauru, New Zealand, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka.

The meeting addressed substantive preparations for the Review Conference, including the Zero Draft Review of the Status and Operation of the Convention (2021–2025), the forthcoming Action Plan 2027–2031 (Vientiane Capital Action Plan - VCAP), elements of a Political Declaration, and logistical preparations.

1. Opening remarks

The Presidency highlighted that this consultation was primarily designed as a listening exercise to gather regional perspectives, priorities, and suggestions ahead of substantive negotiations.

The Presidency recalled that the Asia-Pacific region comprises 18 States Parties and one signatory, representing approximately 17 per cent of the Convention's membership. While this reflects continued scope for universalization, it also highlights the region's potential to further strengthen adherence to the Convention. Several countries in the region, including the Lao PDR, have been directly and severely affected by cluster munitions, while others continue to address the consequences of explosive remnants of war. Many maintain long-standing mine action programmes, including activities related to clearance, risk education, and victim assistance. The Presidency also noted Vanuatu's recent accession, underscoring continued momentum toward universalization. States from the region have demonstrated sustained engagement within the Convention's implementation framework, including service on the Coordination Committee and leadership roles in Meetings of States Parties and Review Conferences.

The Presidency also recalled that the Third Review Conference will evaluate progress made between 2021 and 2025 and will make decisions regarding the Convention's work program and implementation mechanisms for the next cycle. It stressed the importance of ensuring that the new Action Plan and institutional framework reflect current realities, implementation needs, and emerging challenges, with discussions guided by the humanitarian imperatives of the Convention.

2. Agenda item 2 (a): Update on submissions received on the Zero draft of the Review of the Status and Operation of the Convention (2021-2025)

The Presidency informed delegations that, as of 18 February 2026, submissions had been received from 19 States Parties, two States not party, two UN agencies, and nine organizations. Feedback was largely positive, with appreciation for the inclusive and structured process. A revised draft is expected to be circulated in early March 2026.

The Philippines expressed appreciation for the structured approach of the Zero Draft and indicated that, in order to avoid duplication and ensure constructive engagement, it would submit detailed comments following circulation of the revised draft. The delegation suggested that universalization be framed not

only in numerical terms but also in relation to regional norm consolidation and public engagement. It proposed presenting temporal data through charts or matrices to enhance clarity and accessibility. On survey and clearance, the Philippines encouraged drawing lessons from relevant political declarations under other instruments and strengthening references to socio-economic development impacts. Regarding risk education, the delegation suggested incorporating additional contextual data, including target audiences and beneficiaries, to provide greater analytical depth.

Australia expressed appreciation for the Presidency's leadership and welcomed the draft's effort to capture both achievements under the Lausanne Action Plan and remaining challenges. It emphasized the importance of ensuring that each action of the Lausanne Action Plan is explicitly assessed and suggested clarifying structural distinctions within the document. Australia also encouraged streamlining certain sections to reduce duplication and enhance clarity. The delegation proposed including percentages alongside numerical data to improve accessibility and comparability with previous review documents. In its capacity as Transparency Measures Coordinator, Australia underscored the importance of the timely submission of Article 7 reports and supported efforts to streamline reporting processes across conventional weapons treaties.

Japan reaffirmed its support for the Presidency and provided comments on universalization, international cooperation and assistance, and implementation support. It emphasized the importance of continuity in universalization efforts and highlighted the value of strengthening national ownership and capacity-building. Japan noted the potential benefits of triangular and South-South cooperation to enhance sustainable international assistance. The delegation also welcomed efforts to improve efficiency and transparency in conference processes and cost estimates. Lastly, he recalled that some delegations expressed formal reservations regarding the ISU's financing methodology at the time it was adopted (First Review Conference).

In response, the Presidency welcomed detailed feedback from the Philippines and encouraged continued submissions ahead of the circulation of the first draft. The Presidency thanked Australia for its comprehensive submission and confirmed that all suggestions would be carefully considered in preparing the new draft. The Presidency also acknowledged Japan's emphasis on national ownership and international support and welcomed the reference to triangular and South-South cooperation as potential frameworks for strengthening assistance. He warmly welcomed Japan as new Victim Assistance Co-coordinator.

3. Agenda item 2 (b): Preliminary exchange of views on the CCM Action Plan 2027-2031

The Presidency informed delegations that the new Action Plan will be referred to as the Vientiane Capital Action Plan (VCAP). The Presidency reported on the January 2026 Coordination Committee retreat, which highlighted the need for a focused, practical, and implementation-oriented framework responsive to current realities.

4. Announcement of the establishment of the Technical Group and Informal Working Group on Sponsorship Programme

The Presidency announced the establishment of a Technical Group composed of experts from relevant UN entities, the ICRC, GICHD, operational partners, and civil society to support drafting of the VCAP by ensuring clarity, coherence, and measurable proposals.

The Presidency also informed delegations of an informal working group reviewing the CCM Sponsorship Programme, with a focus on transparency and accountability while preserving inclusive participation.

5. Agenda item 2 (c): Preliminary exchange of views on a Political Declaration

The Presidency announced that the drafting of the Political Declaration will begin once the details of the Action Plan are more clearly defined. This Declaration will outline the vision of the States Parties and reaffirm their commitments under the Convention. The Presidency noted that although it is still early in the process, the Presidency is eager to hear preliminary thoughts from the group.

New Zealand sought clarification regarding the anticipated timeline for development of the Political Declaration, in order to facilitate timely feedback from the capital. The Presidency indicated that discussions would likely advance following the First and Second Preparatory Meetings and subsequent regional consultations, with a clearer timeline to be communicated in due course. He also referred to the Concept Note issued by the Presidency last year with the indicative time frames regarding all three documents. The Concept Note is already available on the CCM ISU webpage.

The Philippines suggested that the Political Declaration could build upon previously agreed outcomes and highlight linkages between humanitarian objectives and broader socio-economic development goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The delegation noted the potential to emphasize how CCM implementation contributes to livelihood recovery and community resilience.

In response, the Presidency welcomed these perspectives and highlighted the relevance of development linkages in the Lao PDR's national context, including the integration of CCM implementation within broader development frameworks.

6. Update on logistical preparations for the Third Review Conference and the First Preparatory Meeting

The Presidency provided the following information regarding participation and arrangements for the Third Review Conference:

- There will be no limitation on the size of delegations, including participation in the field visit and at the Review Conference.
- In the Conference room, two seats will be allocated in the front row and two seats in the back row for each delegation.
- Additional delegation members will be accommodated in a different area of the meeting room.
- Further detailed logistical information will be shared in due course.
- As of now, four formal documents have been submitted. These documents are available on the ISU website and will soon be accessible on the UNODA document website before the First Preparatory Meeting.

7. Next steps and closing

The Presidency informed the delegations of the following timeline:

- First Preparatory Meeting: 30 March 2026 at Palais des Nations
- Side Event during 29th International Meeting of Mine Action National Directors and United Nations Advisers: 22–24 April 2026
- Second Regional Consultations: 22 and 24 June 2026 at GICHD
- Second Preparatory Meeting: 1 July 2026

The Presidency concluded by thanking delegations for their engagement and reaffirmed its commitment to continued consultations in preparation for the Third Review Conference in Vientiane Capital.