



## **Summary of the Informal Regional Consultation with the Europe Group**

**Friday, 20 February 2026, 15:45-17:00**

**Venue: Room IX, Palais des Nations, Geneva**

On 20 February 2026, from 15:45 to 17:00, the Presidency of Lao PDR convened an informal regional consultation with the European 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:** Austria, France, Norway, Germany, Belgium, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, United Kingdom, Holy See, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, and Czechia.

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 European region comprises 33 States Parties and one signatory, representing approximately 30 per cent of the Convention's 112 States Parties. The region has played a central role in advancing the Convention's objectives, including sustained representation within the Coordination Committee and leadership of several Meetings of States Parties and Review Conferences. At the same time, the Presidency noted that a number of States in the region remain outside the Convention. In the current context of heightened security concerns, instances of active use of cluster munitions, and the withdrawal of one State Party during the review period, it is particularly important for the region to defend the norms established by the Convention and to strengthen universalization efforts.

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.

**Austria** welcomed the Zero Draft as comprehensive and balanced in its assessment of achievements and challenges under the Lausanne Action Plan. The delegation emphasized the importance of anchoring the Convention within the broader humanitarian, peace, and development framework, as well as maintaining strong language reinforcing the prohibition norm. Austria underscored the centrality of victim assistance and expressed satisfaction that a number of operators, civil society organizations, and victim

representatives had also provided their inputs on this topic as well. It also mentioned that they also provided some reflections on the the Convention’s implementation machinery and are keen on hearing later on how suggestions would be taken forward in the lead-up to the Review Conference.

**France** expressed support for strengthening environmental considerations within the Review Document and recalled its previous working paper on the environmental dimensions of mine action. The delegation suggested that the Review Conference presents an opportunity to further advance discussion on environmental impacts, including in coordination with other humanitarian disarmament instruments.

In response, the Presidency thanked Austria for its written and oral inputs and confirmed that all suggestions would be carefully considered in the preparation of the revised draft. The Presidency welcomed France’s comments and acknowledged the growing recognition of environmental considerations in humanitarian disarmament.

### **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.

**Norway** emphasized the importance of facilitating increased survey and clearance under the new Action Plan, with a view to minimizing requests for deadline extensions. The delegation underlined that strengthening survey and clearance would reinforce the Convention as a whole. Norway also expressed strong support for the continued use and strengthening of the “country coalition” approach, drawing on positive experiences under the Lausanne Action Plan.

**Switzerland** expressed appreciation for the inclusive preparatory process and supported an evolutionary rather than revolutionary approach to the new Action Plan. The delegation emphasized the value of building on the existing framework, maintaining a focused and manageable number of actions, and avoiding inflation of commitments. Switzerland highlighted the importance of measurable indicators and retaining a compact structure, including cross-cutting issues. It also supported Norway’s comments on the value of country coalitions. It encouraged drawing lessons from other disarmament conventions, including developments under the APMBC, to identify best practices and ensure coherence across instruments.

**Austria** supported the view that the VCAP should represent an evolution of previous action plans. It highlighted the usefulness of cross-cutting principles as an overarching framework and stressed the importance of keeping the plan focused and manageable. Austria underlined the importance of national ownership by affected States, enhanced international cooperation and assistance and the best practices of country coalitions, survivor-centered approaches, in this regard the action plan should be based on the needs of survivors and affected communities, while also acknowledging their agency in the implementation of the action plan itself. The delegate also noted that it is important to recognize the different needs, vulnerabilities and perspectives through gender-, age-, and disability-responsive approaches. The delegation also encouraged strengthening synergies with other disarmament, humanitarian, human rights, and health frameworks.

In response, the Presidency welcomed Norway’s emphasis on practical and measurable progress in survey and clearance, as well as its support for country coalitions as a tool for implementation. The Presidency also acknowledged Switzerland’s experience in previous action plan processes and underscored the importance of ensuring that the new Action Plan remains practical, implementable, and aligned with available resources and funding mechanisms. Regarding the points made by Austria, the Presidency welcomed its constructive suggestions and reiterated the importance of balancing national ownership with sustained international support, particularly for affected and least developed States.

#### **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.

**Austria** emphasized that the Political Declaration should firmly anchor the Convention within broader humanitarian, peace, and development frameworks, highlighting how CCM implementation contributes to recovery and resilience in affected countries. The delegation also suggested reflecting cross-cutting issues in political language, ensuring coherence between the Declaration and the Action Plan without duplicating text.

**The United Kingdom** suggested, from a structural perspective, that the Political Declaration be concise and ideally limited to one page.

In response, the Presidency welcomed Austria's reflections and noted that further discussions would take place during the second round of regional consultations and upcoming preparatory meetings.

#### **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.