



Summary of the Informal Regional Consultation with the Africa Group

Friday, 20 February 2026, 11:45 – 13:00

Venue: Room IX, Palais des Nations, Geneva

On 20 February 2026, from 11:45 to 13:00, the Presidency of Lao PDR convened an informal regional consultation with the Africa 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: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Gambia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, and Togo.

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 African region comprises 36 States Parties and 8 signatories, representing 39 per cent of the Convention’s total membership, the largest share among all regional groups. The region also has the highest number of signatories awaiting ratification, highlighting continued universalization potential. Many African States have been directly affected by cluster munitions or have experienced their humanitarian consequences, and numerous countries maintain active mine action programmes addressing clearance, risk education, and victim assistance. The region’s sustained engagement in these areas continues to contribute meaningfully to the Convention’s objectives and to broader humanitarian 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.

Nigeria indicated that its capital is currently reviewing the Zero Draft and that comments are being prepared for submission.

The Gambia expressed appreciation for the consultative process and confirmed that inputs are being developed. The delegation noted that contributions would be submitted, even if after the circulation of

the first draft, and reiterated its continued engagement in the process.

The Presidency thanked delegations for their engagement and encouraged further written contributions during the drafting phase.

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.

The Gambia highlighted the importance of strengthening coordination among national stakeholders and relevant sectors to support effective implementation. The delegation stressed that effective implementation requires engagement beyond a single ministry and coordinated national efforts across relevant institutions.

South Africa expressed support for the proposed objectives and emphasized universalization, national ownership, legislation, clearance, victim assistance, and capacity-building. The delegation also suggested that the review process could consider strengthening mechanisms to discourage withdrawal and reflect on lessons learned from relevant experiences in other international instruments.

Tanzania welcomed the consultation and expressed appreciation for the updates provided by the Presidency. The delegation noted that Tanzania is currently in the process of establishing a new government and that Convention-related matters will be presented to relevant national stakeholders. Tanzania emphasized the importance of awareness-raising and capacity-building not only among experts in Geneva but also at the national level, particularly in States that have not yet ratified. The delegation underlined the value of continued support to assist States in progressing toward ratification or accession in the current geopolitical context and welcomed the role of the Sponsorship Programme in facilitating participation and knowledge-sharing.

In response, the Presidency thanked Tanzania for its engagement and welcomed its remarks. The Presidency indicated that the meeting with the Tanzanian Permanent Representative in the coming week has already been scheduled to further discuss possible support and avenues for engagement, including potential steps toward accession before the Review Conference in September.

The Presidency took note of all interventions for consideration in the development of the Action Plan.

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.

Cameroon emphasized the importance of adopting a Political Declaration as a key outcome of the Review Conference and supported the early circulation of a draft to allow sufficient time for consultations and consensus-building.

South Africa reiterated that African States prioritize universalization, national ownership, legislation, clearance, victim assistance, and capacity-building. The delegate further emphasized that as Africa region they already had guiding principles enshrined within the African Union's prioritization of a cluster munition free Africa. In this regard the desirability of promoting complementarity and coherence was mentioned.

The Presidency took note of the interventions and indicated that further consultations would follow.

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.

During the exchange, delegations sought clarification on specific logistical matters.

South Africa inquired about possible assistance for participation in the Review Conference.

The Gambia requested clarification regarding visa arrangements for participants travelling to the Lao PDR.

In response to South Africa, the Implementation Support Unit confirmed that a sponsorship programme would be established and that further information, including application procedures and timelines, would be communicated in due course.

In response to The Gambia, the Presidency explained that delegates based in Geneva may obtain visas through the Permanent Mission of the Lao PDR in Geneva, while delegations travelling from capitals would be granted visas on arrival, subject to the required documentation. Additional details will be provided in the forthcoming logistical note.

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.