

# Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions

30 March 2026

English only

## Reflections and options regarding the Convention's machinery: Future Programme of Meetings

### I. Introduction

1. The implementation of the Convention is supported by a machinery composed of several distinct elements. The draft review of the Lausanne Action Plan submitted by the Presidency outlines these different components, including the associated challenges identified in this area (draft Review Document, Part XI).

2. The Review Conference provides the opportunity to not only review but also, where necessary, to adjust the various aspects of the Convention's machinery. In doing so, considerations should focus on how the machinery could best support the efforts of States Parties to implement the Convention and the action plan to be adopted at the Third Review Conference.

3. In this context, States Parties may wish to take into consideration views on the challenges and opportunities related to the Convention's implementation architecture, in order to ensure that the decisions taken at the Review Conference regarding the future machinery respond effectively to current and emerging implementation challenges.

4. This document focuses on one specific aspect of the machinery that has yet to be addressed in detail, namely the programme of meetings. As with previous Review Conferences, it also outlines possible considerations for States Parties going forward.

### II. Programme of meetings

5. The Second Review Conference (2RC) adopted a number of decisions regarding the Convention's programme of meetings. Paragraph 84 (ii) of its Final Document stipulates that:

(a) to convene annually, until the Third Review Conference, a Meeting of States Parties for up to four days;

(b) to hold the Third Review Conference in 2026;

(c) to hold informal intersessional meetings in Geneva for up to two days in 2022, where possible consecutively with informal meetings held under other relevant treaties to minimize travel costs, and:

- that the President of the Tenth Meeting of States Parties will identify dates and elaborate a programme for the 2022 intersessional meetings, in cooperation with the Coordination Committee,
- that each annual Meeting of States Parties will decide whether intersessional meetings will be held during the ensuing annual cycle,
- that intersessional meetings will be financed by voluntary contributions and interpretation services provided in the languages of the Convention that are official language of a State Party.



### **The Meetings of States Parties (MSP)**

6. The Convention has convened a Meeting of States Parties (MSP) annually since the Second Review Conference. At the Sixth Meeting of States Parties (6MSP), in light of the challenge related to the timely payment of assessed contributions required to service meetings under the Convention, the President decided that MSPs would be held over three days. This approach was maintained up to the Tenth Meeting of States Parties (10MSP), at which a fourth day was added, before being reduced again to three days at the Twelfth Meeting of States Parties (12MSP) due to arrears in contributions. At the Thirteenth Meeting of States Parties (13MSP), improved levels of payment once again enabled a four-day meeting.

7. Financial constraints affecting the organisations of meetings under the Convention have continued to highlight the importance of timely payment of Article 14 contributions. Delays in the receipt of funds have at times affected advance planning and the delivery of meetings, including through adjustments in duration. This underscores the need for predictable resourcing in order to preserve continuity, efficiency, and institutional stability across the Convention's implementation machinery.

8. Since 2RC, the annual MSPs have been able to address the items they are mandated to consider under Article 11 of the Convention, notwithstanding the occasional shortened duration. More recently, following the concerns raised by stakeholders regarding challenges to the norms prohibiting cluster munitions and the implications for wider humanitarian disarmament, peace, and development goals, the annual cycles of the 12MSP and 13MSP highlighted the need for stakeholders to reflect on and consider concrete actions for the way forward. In this context, the continued availability of regular formal MSPs, combined with the possibility of additional informal space for States Parties and other stakeholders to meet and discuss emerging issues, has been seen as important to ensuring that matters can be addressed in a more timely and constructive fashion.

9. The Five Meetings of States Parties (MSPs) held prior to the First Review Conference (IRC) were all convened outside of Geneva. They took place in diverse regions of the world, notably in affected and/or developing countries, with a positive impact in terms of ownership and visibility. In contrast, all MSPs since IRC have been organised in Geneva. The decision taken at IRC that any costs exceeding those for an MSP held in Geneva would need to be covered by the host country may have contributed to this development. While there is a practical rationale for a convention to hold most of its formal meetings where its institutional structures are anchored, there may be added value in occasionally convening meetings in alternative locations, notably with a view to promoting universalization.

10. The process of organising the Third Review Conference (3RC) outside of Geneva highlighted the need to harmonize States Parties' interpretation of existing financial and cost-estimate procedures and requirements<sup>1</sup>. Faced with short turnaround times and with a view to optimizing resources, 13MSP requested a timelier circulation of cost estimates for MSPs to allow States Parties adequate time for analysis and consideration at the MSPs at which such cost estimates are expected to be adopted. Clarifications were also sought regarding the rationale for increases in the cost estimate, as well as further efforts to reduce costs, including for interpretation, translation, and travel. In this context, the review of cost estimates required additional clarification through formal exchanges, ensuring due diligence and transparency. Following a constructive process involving relevant stakeholders, States Parties reaffirmed their willingness to hold 3RC in an affected State Party.

### **Intersessional meetings**

11. Until IRC, the Convention held an annual informal intersessional meeting, usually taking place at the end of spring. These meetings were mandated to facilitate informal discussions on substantive issues related to various aspects of the Convention and to develop recommendations to the MSPs. The duration of the intersessional meeting varied from four

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 99, CCM/MSP/2025/CRP.1, 13MSP Final Report, advanced copy. The omission of a reference to 'Review Conferences' in paragraph 30 (d) of the Final Report of the First Review Conference (CCM/CONF/2015/7) suggests the original provisions under Article 14 of the CCM with regards to costs and administrative tasks of Review Conferences applies.

days (2011 to 2013) to three days (2014). When reintroduced on an occasional basis in 2022 and 2025, they were shortened to two days. Funding was provided through voluntary contributions, including interpretation services in the four working languages of the Convention: Arabic, English, French, and Spanish, reflecting the current CCM membership. Switzerland was the primary contributor, and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) organized the meetings.

12. Following the decision by 2RC to hold intersessional meetings, as decided by annual MSPs, exchanges within the Convention have largely been limited to one annual formal event (the MSP), complemented occasionally by shorter informal intersessional meetings.

13. The submission of extension requests under Article 3 and Article 4 (which started in 2019 and may continue in the near future, with nine<sup>2</sup> States Parties' clearance extension requests expected to reach maturity within the next five-year cycle) has benefitted from an informal, interactive dialogue between the submitting States Parties and other CCM stakeholders. In 2022, the intersessional meeting provided an opportunity for updates from relevant authorities in Bulgaria (in reference to Article 3) and from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Chad (in reference to Article 4). In 2025, the intersessional meeting provided updates from the relevant clearance authorities of five States Parties — Afghanistan, Chile, Lebanon, Mauretania and Somalia — who presented the status of their respective requests, followed by a question-and-answer session with CCM stakeholders. These exchanges also informed the work of the ad hoc Analysis Group on Article 4 extension requests.

14. The 2025 intersessional meeting also provided a platform for informal discussion on emerging challenges affecting the norm established by the Convention. Mandated by 12MSP and supported by the co-Coordinator on General Status and Operations and the Implementation Support Unit (ISU), the President convened stakeholder dialogues to address concerns arising within the Convention and in the broader context of humanitarian disarmament.

15. Informal exchanges of views on practical implementation, including under Articles 4 and 5, have been identified as valuable for the CCM community. Delegations have welcomed the opportunity to share experiences, lessons learned, and technical expertise, contributing to increased transparency, cooperation, and meaningful engagement with the work of the Convention. In this regard, the practice of the CCM is consistent with that of other similar instruments, including the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC). At the same time, during the period under review, the need to streamline the disarmament calendar and make it more efficient and effective has also been raised.

16. Challenges in organising intersessional meetings have largely been logistical. In an increasingly crowded disarmament calendar, identifying suitable dates and available venues remains difficult. Scheduling intersessional meetings consecutively with other relevant meetings is not always possible, including due to competing events or the unavailability of key stakeholders. In addition, because the convening of an intersessional meeting depends on a decision taken each year within the MSP cycle, limited predictability regarding whether an intersessional meeting will be held can also complicate early planning, coordination, and resource mobilization, including for sponsorship where needed.

17. In view of the above, the following options could be considered for the programme of meetings following the Third Review Conference:

### **Option 1: Annual Meeting of States Parties only**

18. Meetings of States Parties (MSPs) would take place annually for a duration of four to five working days, in Geneva or abroad. No intersessional meetings would be foreseen. A fourth Review Conference would be envisaged following a five-year review cycle, e.g., in 2031.

<sup>2</sup> Afghanistan (Mar 2029), Chad (Oct 2026), Chile (Dec 2028), Germany (Aug 2030), Iraq (Nov 2028), Lao PDR (Aug 2030), Lebanon (May 2030), Mauretania (Aug 2028), and Somalia (Mar 2030)

*Implications:*

- The calendar of meetings would remain largely unchanged. The duration of the MSP would, however, be slightly extended to provide an opportunity to explore substantive issues in greater depth.
- It is not clear whether a formal setting provides the best format to explore such issues, or whether the MSP could include informal segments.
- States Parties in a position to do so could be encouraged to support any State Party interested in holding an MSP outside Geneva but facing capacity constraints in doing so.

**Option 2: Annual Meeting of States Parties and Intersessional meetings**

19. Meeting of States Parties would take place annually for a duration of three to four days, in Geneva or abroad. An informal intersessional meeting of up to two days would take place each year in Geneva. A fourth Review Conference would be envisaged following a five-year review cycle, e.g., in 2031.

*Implications:*

- The resumption of a short annual intersessional meeting would provide an opportunity to explore informally issues related to the CCM universalization and implementation, as well as to prepare for the MSP.
- The duration of the MSP could remain relatively short.
- The convening of an intersessional meeting would depend on securing voluntary contributions for its financing, including interpretation services in the languages of the Convention that are official languages of States Parties.
- Where feasible, intersessional meetings could be held consecutively with informal meetings in Geneva under other relevant treaties, notably to minimize travel costs.
- Consideration could also be given to exploring potential synergies for co-hosting, co-chairing, and co-financing intersessional meeting components with the APMB, insofar as these are weapon-related conflict-recovery activities framed under the five pillars of Mine Action, including Articles 4, 5, 6, and related reporting under Article 7 of the CCM.
- States Parties in a position to do so could be encouraged to support any State Party interested in hosting an MSP outside Geneva but facing capacity constraints in doing so.

**Option 3: Status Quo – Annual Meeting of States Parties, combined with an Intersessional meeting when requested by States Parties**

20. Meeting of States Parties would take place annually for a duration of three to four days, in Geneva or abroad. Each annual MSP would decide whether intersessional meetings should be convened during the ensuing annual cycle. A fourth Review Conference would be envisaged following a five-year review cycle, e.g., in 2031.

*Implications:*

- The calendar of meetings would remain largely unchanged.
- An intersessional informal meeting of up to two days could be convened when deemed valuable for States Parties to explore informally issues related to the CCM universalization and implementation, including in preparation for the MSP.
- When combined with an intersessional meeting, the duration of the MSP could remain relatively short.

- The convening of an intersessional meeting would depend on securing voluntary contributions for its financing, including interpretation services in the languages of the Convention that are official languages of States Parties.
  - Where feasible, intersessional meetings could be held consecutively with informal meetings in Geneva under other relevant treaties, notably to minimize travel costs.
  - Consideration could also be given to exploring potential synergies for co-hosting, co-chairing, and co-financing certain intersessional meeting components with the APMBC, insofar as these relate to weapon-related conflict-recovery activities framed under the five pillars of Mine Action, e.g., Articles 4, 5, 6, and related reporting under Article 7 of the CCM.
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