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Report on the Regional Workshop on Universalisation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) for Asia-Pacific States

Participation Report

Vientiane and Kasi District, Lao People's Democratic Republic, 27–29 May 2026

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I. Context

The Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, in coordination with the Convention on Cluster Munitions Implementation Support Unit (CCM-ISU) and with the financial support of Australia, Canada, Ireland, the Philippines, and Switzerland, organised the Regional Workshop on Universalisation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) for Asia and Pacific States.

The workshop was held in the context of Lao PDR's Presidency of the Third Review Conference of the States Parties to the CCM and aimed to strengthen regional cooperation, promote the universalisation of the Convention, and enhance technical knowledge regarding its implementation.

Costa Rica participated in its capacity as Coordinator on Universalisation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

II. Costa Rica's Participation

Costa Rica participated actively throughout the workshop, contributing to several substantive sessions.

In Session 1, "Where We Are: Global Status of the CCM and Universalization Trends", Costa Rica provided an update on the global status of the Convention and recent universalisation trends. The intervention highlighted the progress achieved by the Convention as an established humanitarian disarmament norm, the importance of maintaining political momentum toward new accessions, and the need to link universalisation efforts with civilian protection, sustainable development, and human security.

Costa Rica also intervened during the session on regional and South-South cooperation, stressing that cooperation should also be understood as an investment in prevention. In this regard, it was emphasised that clearance activities, risk education, and victim assistance contribute directly to community recovery, economic development, and the strengthening of social resilience.

During the panel on implementation realities in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), discussions focused on the importance of identifying concrete mechanisms to translate existing political will into effective accession and implementation processes, including simplified legislative assistance, peer-to-peer exchanges, and sustained technical accompaniment.

Finally, Costa Rica facilitated the discussions of the States Parties Group during the session on regional cooperation and next steps, supporting the identification of practical measures to strengthen assistance to non-States Parties interested in moving toward accession to the Convention.

III. Main Outcomes of the Workshop

- Consolidation of regional momentum toward universalisation

Discussions demonstrated growing interest among Pacific States in joining humanitarian disarmament instruments. Particular attention was given to Vanuatu's recent accession to the CCM and to the experiences of other island States in the field of humanitarian disarmament.

- Identification of practical barriers to accession

The exchanges confirmed that, for many Pacific Island States, the main obstacles to joining the Convention are not political or normative disagreements, but rather institutional limitations, limited technical capacities, constrained human resources, and complexities related to national legislative processes.

- Need for simplified technical assistance

Several participants highlighted the usefulness of developing practical and simplified tools to facilitate accession processes, including model legislation, roadmaps, step-by-step guides, and information packages tailored to the capacities of Small Island Developing States.

- Importance of South-South cooperation and peer exchange

It was reiterated that regional cooperation constitutes one of the most effective mechanisms for promoting universalisation. Participants underscored the value of experience-sharing, technical assistance among countries with similar contexts, and the creation of regional support networks.

- Link between humanitarian disarmament and sustainable development

The sessions reaffirmed that implementation of the Convention contributes directly to development objectives, including the recovery of productive land, food security, education, poverty reduction, and the strengthening of human security.

- Awareness-raising on the humanitarian impact of UXO (Unexploded Ordnance) contamination

The field visit to Kasi District allowed participants to observe directly the detection, clearance, and destruction of explosive ordnance, as well as risk education and community engagement efforts carried out by the authorities of Lao PDR.

IV. Overall Assessment

The workshop constituted a useful platform for strengthening regional dialogue on the universalisation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and for identifying concrete cooperation opportunities aimed at non-States Parties in Asia and the Pacific.

Costa Rica's participation helped highlight the country's role as Coordinator on Universalisation of the Convention, promote approaches focused on prevention, cooperation, and human security, and strengthen contacts with States potentially interested in advancing toward accession to the CCM. In particular, exchanges were held with representatives of the Kingdom of Tonga, the Solomon Islands, and the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste during different sessions of the workshop.