

**Statement delivered by Sierra Leone on behalf of the African Group
Second Preparatory Meeting for the Third Review Conference of the Convention on
Cluster Munitions**

**Agenda Item 5: Exchange of views on the preparation of documents for the Third
Review Conference
Geneva, 1 July 2026**

Mr. President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group.

Allow me to congratulate you on your appointment to preside over the Second Preparatory Meeting, and to thank the Lao PDR Presidency for its leadership in steering this preparatory process. We also thank the Implementation Support Unit and the Secretariat for their dedicated work. The African Group looks forward to a successful Third Review Conference in Vientiane this September under the warm hospitality of Lao PDR.

The African Group reaffirms its full and unwavering commitment to the object and purpose of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Africa is proud to comprise the largest combined number of States Parties and Signatories to the Convention, reflecting our enduring commitment to humanitarian disarmament and the protection of civilians. The Group welcomes the successful fulfilment of Article 3 stockpile destruction obligations by all States Parties that had declared stockpiles, to which African States Parties have made an important contribution. African States Parties continue to demonstrate leadership in the Convention's implementation architecture, including through the coordination of work on stockpile destruction and retention, and on the general status and operation of the Convention.

On the review of the operation and status of the Convention for the period 2021–2026, the Group welcomes the Presidency's draft review document as a balanced basis for our discussions. It confirms what our delegations have long observed: political commitment across affected States remains strong, but its translation into sustained operational delivery continues to be constrained by limited national capacities and, above all, by funding that is neither predictable nor sufficient. We note, in particular, the document's finding that disparities in access to assistance risk widening between States Parties with adequate resources and those without. This goes to the heart of whether the next implementation cycle will deliver more equitable and sustainable results.

Turning to the draft Vientiane Action Plan, the Group is still considering the document and calls for the preservation of continuity with the Lausanne Action Plan, with a focus on strengthening attention to sustainable national capacity, residual-risk preparedness, and complementary financing. We support the enhanced emphasis on national information management systems, as well as the integration of environmental and climate considerations into survey, clearance and risk education activities. At the same time, the review document highlights that victim participation in delegations remains limited, Article 7 reporting continues to be uneven, and predictable multi-year funding remains the exception rather than the norm. The African Group therefore encourages that these findings be translated into practical actions, measurable indicators and realistic implementation benchmarks, so that progress over the next review cycle can be effectively monitored.

Mr. President,

For the African Group, international cooperation and assistance remains one of the most consequential pillars of the next Action Plan. We take note of the draft's references to multi-year partnerships, Country Coalitions and complementary and innovative financing mechanisms, and encourage these to be reflected as concrete and trackable commitments. We see the recognition of South-South and triangular cooperation as valuable complements to traditional forms of assistance. We trust that States in a position to do so will continue to strengthen the predictability and sustainability of their support, recognising the disproportionate impact that funding volatility has on affected developing States and on communities still awaiting clearance, risk education and victim assistance.

Ultimately, our collective success will not be measured solely by the adoption of new plans and declarations, but by tangible improvements in the lives of affected communities, survivors and persons with disabilities. Their participation, dignity and rights must remain at the centre of implementation throughout the next review cycle.

With regard to the draft Political Declaration, the African Group calls for a text that gives genuine prominence to the rights and needs of victims and survivors, reaffirms the importance of inclusive and partnership-based implementation, and speaks candidly to the humanitarian challenges that remain. We also believe the Declaration should reaffirm the integrity of the Convention, the importance of its full implementation, and the value of continued adherence by all States Parties. The Group encourages all States to uphold these principles and to address any concerns through dialogue and cooperation.

On universalisation, the African Group remains committed to promoting accession by all States not yet party and ratification by signatories. We welcome continued, respectful engagement with States that, while not yet party to the Convention, demonstrate support for its humanitarian objectives in practice. We encourage the Coordinators on Universalisation and the informal Working Group to continue outreach tailored to regional and national circumstances.

Finally, as discussions continue on the practical arrangements for the Third Review Conference, the African Group welcomes the draft Sponsorship Programme Guidelines and underlines the importance of preserving the principles of inclusivity, geographic balance and predictable support for affected and low-income States, so that meaningful participation in the work of this Convention remains within reach of all.

The African Group remains committed to engaging constructively with all delegations in the weeks ahead with a view to reaching consensus on an ambitious, balanced and implementable outcome package. We look forward to a substantive and forward-looking Third Review Conference in Vientiane that strengthens the Convention and advances our shared humanitarian objectives.

I thank you.