

Statement delivered on behalf of the African Group
Third Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions

High-Level Segment – General Exchange of Views | Agenda Item 8

Vientiane, Lao PDR – 14–18 September 2026

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Mr. President,

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

The African Group congratulates you on assuming the Presidency of the Third Review Conference and expresses its appreciation to the Government and people of the Lao People's Democratic Republic for hosting us in Vientiane. We also thank the Presidency, the Implementation Support Unit, the Secretariat, the Coordinators and all partners for their work throughout the preparatory process.

Meeting here in the Lao PDR, a country that knows firsthand the long-term humanitarian and socio-economic consequences of cluster munition remnants, reminds us of the central purpose of this Convention: protecting civilians, preventing further casualties, restoring safe land and livelihoods, and supporting victims and affected communities.

The African Group reaffirms its full commitment to the object and purpose of the Convention and to the goal of a world free of cluster munitions. Africa remains the region with the largest combined number of States Parties and signatories, reflecting our longstanding commitment to humanitarian disarmament and international humanitarian law.

Mr. President,

The Group is gravely concerned by the continued use of cluster munitions and the resulting civilian casualties and humanitarian consequences. We reaffirm our condemnation of their use and stress the importance of preserving and strengthening the humanitarian norm established by the Convention.

The Convention has demonstrated that collective action delivers results. States Parties have completed the destruction of all reported stockpiles subject to Article 3 obligations, while progress has been made in survey and clearance, risk education, victim assistance and national capacity. Yet implementation challenges remain, particularly where insecurity, capacity constraints and insufficient or unpredictable resources impede progress.

Universalisation remains a central priority. We welcome the States that have joined the Convention since the Second Review Conference, including Nigeria and South Sudan from our region, and encourage sustained engagement with signatories and States not party through regional dialogue, parliamentary engagement, technical assistance and capacity building

tailored to national circumstances. Universalisation also requires continued adherence by all States Parties and sustained efforts to reinforce the Convention's humanitarian norms.

Mr. President,

For the African Group, national ownership is indispensable to sustainable implementation. It must be grounded in national priorities, institutions and capacities and informed by the realities of affected communities.

National ownership and international cooperation and assistance must reinforce one another. Many affected and resource constrained States Parties continue to require financial, technical and material support. The Group therefore reiterates the importance of adequate, predictable and sustainable cooperation and assistance, including multi-year support where possible.

Building sustainable national capacity should strengthen nationally led implementation, not diminish the need for international cooperation while obligations and humanitarian needs remain outstanding.

Arrangements for seeking and providing assistance should also remain practical, proportionate and responsive to differing national capacities. They should facilitate access to support and avoid administrative requirements that may place disproportionate burdens on affected and resource constrained States Parties or contribute to widening implementation gaps.

South-South and triangular cooperation and innovative financing can make valuable contributions and should complement sustained international cooperation and assistance.

Victim assistance remains a defining humanitarian pillar of the Convention. The Group reaffirms the rights and needs of victims, including survivors, affected families and communities, and the importance of their full, equal and meaningful participation.

Survey and clearance, effective risk education, reliable information management and sustainable national capacity must likewise remain priorities.

The Group underlines the importance of sustained progress towards the timely fulfilment of Article 4 obligations, through evidence-based and nationally driven survey and clearance, realistic implementation planning, sustainable national capacity and predictable international cooperation and assistance.

Transparency and effective national implementation are equally important. The African Group reaffirms the importance of timely and comprehensive Article 7 reporting as an essential tool for transparency, monitoring implementation and identifying cooperation and assistance needs. We encourage continued practical assistance, capacity building and peer support to enable all States Parties to fully meet their reporting obligations.

Mr. President,

As we consider the outcomes of this Third Review Conference, the African Group will engage constructively towards an ambitious, balanced and implementable package.

The Review Document should provide an accurate and balanced account of achievements, remaining challenges and lessons learned.

The Vientiane Capital Action Plan should build on the Lausanne Action Plan and provide a practical and measurable roadmap that strengthens national ownership, sustainable national capacity and effective implementation, supported by predictable international cooperation and assistance.

The Political Declaration should provide a strong and concise reaffirmation of the Convention's humanitarian purpose, protection of civilians, universalisation, full implementation, victim assistance and international cooperation and assistance.

Our ambition must be matched by the means to deliver it. The next review cycle should help narrow, rather than widen, disparities in implementation and access to assistance.

The African Group also underlines the importance of predictable support for the Sponsorship Programme so that affected and resource constrained States Parties can participate meaningfully in the Convention's work.

Mr. President,

The Third Review Conference comes at a time when humanitarian disarmament and multilateral cooperation face significant pressures. That makes our work here more, not less, important.

The true measure of the Vientiane outcomes will not simply be the adoption of documents. It will be whether they lead to fewer casualties, safer communities, land restored to productive use, victims receiving effective and sustainable assistance, stronger national institutions, more predictable cooperation and wider adherence to the Convention.

The African Group stands ready to work constructively and in good faith with the Presidency and all delegations towards an ambitious, balanced and implementable outcome that strengthens the Convention and advances our common humanitarian objectives.

I thank you.