

THIRD REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS

UNITED KINGDOM STATEMENT

Delivered by

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Mr President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies, and gentlemen

The United Kingdom congratulates the Lao Peoples' Democratic Republic for its leadership of the Third Review Conference. I also want to thank the Implementation Support Unit, UNODA and Civil Society Organisations for their efforts in support of the Convention.

Mr President,

The United Kingdom has a long and proud history of supporting unexploded ordnance clearance in the Lao PDR. We have provided over \$20 million of support since 2016.

Our partnership reflects the scale of the challenge. The Lao PDR remains the most heavily bombed country in the world on a per capita basis, with more than two million tonnes of ordnance dropped between 1964 and 1973 - equivalent to roughly one tonne for every person in the country at that time. We heard this morning from young victims, the devastating consequences that these unexploded ordinances can have on peoples' lives. I take this opportunity to commend these young people, and the many victims they represent, for their courage, commitment, and leadership.

The United Kingdom is proud that our support for the Lao PDR over more than a decade has become a central pillar of our bilateral cooperation and has helped communities reclaim land, improve livelihoods, and build a safer future for generations to come.

Mr President,

The United Kingdom remains fully committed to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and to the humanitarian principles on which it was founded. We reaffirm our

determination to end the suffering and casualties caused by cluster munitions and to work towards a world free from their humanitarian impact.

This Review Conference comes at a challenging moment for the Convention. States Parties have continued to make important progress on stockpile destruction, clearance, risk education, victim assistance, reporting, and international cooperation and assistance.

Yet, as we heard from the ICRC this morning, our determination to see a world entirely free of any use of cluster munitions is tested by growing conflict across the globe.

We must all work to ensure that confidence in the relevance of the Convention and its obligations remains high. Unwavering political and military commitment to the Convention by State Parties serves only to benefit our collective stability.

We share concerns regarding reports of the use of cluster munitions during this review cycle. These must not be allowed to erode the force of this Convention and should serve as a reminder to promote the Convention at every opportunity.

Universalisation remains central to this effort. The United Kingdom welcomes South Sudan, Nigeria, and Vanuatu, as new States Parties to the Convention during the second review cycle. Their accession demonstrates that progress remains possible, even in a difficult international context.

At the same time, universalisation cannot be taken for granted. Many States remain outside the Convention, and the withdrawal of a State Party during this review cycle has underlined the need for sustained engagement, careful diplomacy, and a Convention that remains capable of attracting new States Parties.

Mr President,

The United Kingdom shares the determination of States Parties to preserve and strengthen the norm against cluster munitions. That objective is best served by outcomes that are legally precise, politically durable, and grounded in the Convention as a whole.

Creating new interpretations or political commitments beyond agreed obligations risk undermining our efforts.

We must preserve the careful balance of rights and obligations negotiated by States Parties. Maintaining that balance supports implementation, protects the integrity of the Convention, and strengthens prospects for further universalisation.

The next review cycle should therefore focus on practical implementation and delivery. Any new actions or commitments should remain consistent with agreed Convention obligations.

Sustainable implementation also requires a stable financial foundation. The United Kingdom underlines the importance of all States Parties paying their assessed contributions in full and on time.

At a time when humanitarian and multilateral budgets are under pressure, we should focus on making more effective use of existing resources and increasing support from non-traditional donors rather than proliferating new spending mechanisms.

The Convention must continue to demonstrate that it can respond to evolving implementation challenges. This means supporting affected States Parties in meeting their time-bound obligations, strengthening national ownership and capacity, sharing good practice, and ensuring that international cooperation and assistance remain practical, targeted, and responsive to need.

This includes addressing environmental considerations in a practical and proportionate way, while recognising the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on affected communities.

Mr President,

The United Kingdom is proud to be one of the world's leading donors to mine action and will continue to invest in the clearance of explosive ordnance contamination. We call on all States in a position to do so to provide financial support to affected States that require assistance. To help address funding shortfalls, we should also pursue innovative sources of funding that can complement support from traditional donors.

The United Kingdom has committed over \$40 million until 2028 through the Global Mine Action Programme (GMAP) to support mine clearance and risk education operations across ten countries. Since the programme began in 2023, GMAP has rendered safe or relocated to secure storage 5,383 cluster munitions, including 4,225 in Laos alone.

Since 2023, GMAP has facilitated the release of more than 34 million square metres of land, enabling communities to safely access land for livelihoods and development, and has delivered life-saving risk education to more than one million beneficiaries.

Mr President,

The United Kingdom stands ready to continue working with all States Parties, international organisations, and civil society partners to strengthen implementation, advance universalisation, preserve the integrity and effectiveness of the Convention, and support affected communities.

I wish you, and all of us, a successful 3rd Review Conference and, thank you once again for your incredible hospitality.