

Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions

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Review of the operation and status of the Convention and other matters important for achieving the aims of the Convention
Universalization

Ways Forward on Universalisation of the CCM*

Submitted by the Coordinators on Universalization (Costa Rica and Norway)

1. While efforts to promote universal adherence to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and its norms have continued, a number of challenges to universalisation remain.
 - (a) In some regions, States continue to assess accession to the Convention in light of broader security concerns and regional dynamics.
 - (b) Domestic ratification and accession processes often require sustained political attention and coordination among multiple national stakeholders. Changes in government priorities, institutional turnover and competing legislative agendas can contribute to delays.
 - (c) In some States, decision-makers may have limited familiarity with the Convention and its obligations. Misperceptions concerning implementation requirements, associated costs, or compliance obligations may hinder progress towards adherence.
2. The Convention was designed to address the humanitarian harm caused by cluster munitions during armed conflict, and its relevance is therefore not diminished in times of heightened tensions. On the contrary, continued reports of civilian suffering resulting from the use of cluster munitions underline the need to strengthen adherence to the Convention and advance its universalisation.
3. While universal adherence remains the ultimate objective, efforts to strengthen respect for the Convention's norms among States not party remain an important component of universalisation efforts. Support expressed by States not party, including through participation in Convention meetings and support for the annual United Nations General Assembly resolution on the implementation of the Convention, can serve as important indicators of alignment with the Convention's humanitarian objectives and norms. States not party should therefore be encouraged to take practical steps that reinforce these objectives, including participation in the Convention's work, increased transparency, alignment of national policies and practices with its provisions, and public support for its humanitarian goals.
4. Notwithstanding the challenges outlined above, continued efforts are required to sustain progress towards broader adherence to the Convention and its norms. Such efforts should remain pragmatic, targeted and adapted to the circumstances of different regions and

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States. Strengthened joint and coordinated efforts will remain key to increase momentum towards broader adherence to the Convention and its norms.

5. It is in this context that Norway and Costa Rica, in their capacity as Coordinators on Universalisation, recommend that States Parties, under the leadership of the Presidency, continue to undertake the following actions:

(a) Strengthen coordination and strategic planning for universalisation: Continue to enhance coordination among interested States Parties, the Presidency, the Coordinators on Universalisation and the Implementation Support Unit, including through using the informal working group on universalisation as a platform for information-sharing and practical follow-up. Efforts should be guided by a streamlined and action-oriented workplan on universalisation with clearly identified responsibilities, priorities and follow-up mechanisms.

(b) Prioritise engagement with States where progress towards adherence may be achievable: Identify and regularly review States where ratification or accession may be attainable, including remaining signatory States, to focus outreach and engagement efforts where they are most likely to produce concrete results. Such efforts should be informed by regular assessment of opportunities, challenges and developments at the national and regional levels.

(c) Expand diplomatic outreach and regional engagement: Encourage States Parties to systematically promote the Convention and its norms through bilateral, regional and multilateral engagement, including through political dialogue, diplomatic outreach and cooperation with regional organisations. Particular attention should be given to identifying regional champions and focal points to sustain engagement in priority regions.

(d) Increase awareness, capacity-building and support for implementation: Continue facilitating outreach activities, workshops, briefings and other initiatives aimed at improving understanding of the Convention and addressing concerns related to accession and implementation. These efforts should highlight available implementation support, international cooperation and assistance measures, while also promoting the sharing of national experiences and good practices among States.

(e) Encourage progressive alignment with the Convention among States not party: Encourage States not party that support the humanitarian objectives of the Convention to engage with its work and progressively align their policies and practices with its provisions, including through participation in meetings, increased transparency and support for the annual United Nations General Assembly resolution on the implementation of the Convention.

(f) Reinforce and promote the Convention's norms: Continue efforts to strengthen respect for the Convention's norms and humanitarian objectives by actively encouraging all States to refrain from the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions, and by consistently condemning any use of cluster munitions by any actor.
