
CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Statement by Ambassador Tobias Privitelli GICHD Director

Third Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions Vientiane, 14–18 September 2026

General exchange of views

Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished colleagues,

It is an honour and a great pleasure to address you at this Third Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Let me start by thanking the Presidency for steering our preparations throughout this year, and for the warm welcome we have received here in Vientiane. Let me also thank the Director of the Implementation Support Unit, Pamela Moraga, and her team for their constant and dedicated support to States Parties, and for our fruitful cooperation.

Every five years, we have an opportunity to stop and reflect.

Are we going in the right direction? How far have we progressed since we last paused to take stock? What do we need to do more, or differently, to achieve the ambitious goals that united the international community in foreswearing cluster munitions? And how can each of us contribute?

A Review Conference is about looking back. But, more importantly, it is about deciding how we move forward.

The Vientiane Capital Action Plan provides that roadmap for the next five years. I would like to thank the Presidency for leading its preparation through an inclusive process. The GICHD was pleased to contribute its technical expertise to its development.

From our perspective, several elements of the Plan are particularly important.

First, we strongly welcome its continued emphasis on national ownership and national capacity. Full and effective CCM implementation ultimately depends on affected countries having the institutions, knowledge and capacities they need to lead their own responses. This includes the capacity to respond effectively to new or newly discovered contamination

after the declaration of completion and to sustain risk education and victim assistance where these remain necessary.

Second, we particularly welcome the attention given to information management – an aspect that is often overlooked, despite its centrality. Sound and comprehensive information is the foundation for good decisions. Reliable data and strong national information-management systems allow States Parties to understand the problem, set priorities, allocate resources effectively and measure progress.

Third, we welcome the Plan's emphasis on connecting implementation of the Convention with other relevant frameworks and policy agendas. We especially welcome the Plan's commitment to prioritize implementation activities based on humanitarian needs, sustainable development priorities, environmental and climate considerations, and the benefits that can be brought to affected communities.

This also means understanding who is affected, how, and what different people need. Inclusive mine action is not an abstract principle. It is a condition for effectiveness. Understanding the different experiences and priorities of women, men, girls and boys, persons with disabilities and diverse affected communities helps us understand risks better, establish the right priorities and ensure that our interventions reach those who need them most.

As an expert Centre aiming to support national authorities and other partners in establishing the structures and processes needed to address the challenges posed by cluster munition remnants and other explosive ordnance, the GICHD works actively across all these areas: from supporting the development of national strategies that connect mine action to broader humanitarian, development and peace efforts; to helping establish national information management systems and the processes to collect, validate and analyze data; to integrating gender and diversity considerations throughout the design, planning and implementation of mine action programmes.

Our experience shows how relevant these areas are to build effective and sustainable national responses. We therefore welcome their prominence in the Vientiane Capital Action Plan and stand ready to continue supporting States Parties in turning these commitments into practice.

Mr. President,

Five years ago, we met for the Second Review Conference in the midst of a global pandemic. COVID-19 forced us to reconsider *how* we worked.

Today, we face a different and perhaps deeper challenge. In a profoundly changed security environment, the question is increasingly being asked whether the goals embodied in the Convention can still be maintained.

To answer it, we should remember why the Convention was adopted in the first place.

Cluster munitions were not prohibited because they had no military utility. They were prohibited because States concluded that their humanitarian consequences were unacceptable.

That fundamental rationale has not changed.

The Convention is part of a broader framework that the international community has built, carefully and deliberately, to protect civilians from the consequences of armed conflict. The pressures on that framework are real. But so is our responsibility to preserve it.

This Conference gives us the opportunity both to reaffirm that commitment and to equip ourselves with a strong, practical plan for turning it into action over the next five years.

The GICHD will continue to play its part.

Thank you.