



Statement delivered by South Africa during the High-Level Segment of the Third Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic 14 to 18 September 2026

Mr President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

At the outset, South Africa commends the excellent cooperation of the Lao PDR Presidency, the ISU, UNODA, the CCM Committee Members and all stakeholders for their work undertaken during the intersessional period leading up to Vientiane.

South Africa congratulates the Lao People's Democratic Republic on its leadership as President of the Third Review Conference and expresses its appreciation to the Government and its people for their warm welcome and hospitality and for hosting this historic meeting while the country continues to demonstrate steadfast commitment to the humanitarian objectives of the Convention.

South Africa aligns itself with the statement delivered by Sierra Leone on behalf of the African Group.

Our gathering in Lao PDR, a country that has endured the devastating humanitarian consequences of cluster munitions, we are reminded of the imperative that underpins this Convention, the protection of civilians and the elimination of weapons that cause unacceptable harm long after conflicts have ended.

As States Parties convene to review progress in implementing the Convention on Cluster Munitions, South Africa reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the Convention and to its overarching objective of ending, for all time, the suffering and casualties caused by cluster munitions.

The Convention remains one of the most significant achievements in humanitarian disarmament. By comprehensively prohibiting the use, development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention and transfer of cluster munitions under Article 1, the Convention establishes a clear international norm against weapons that are inherently indiscriminate and that continue to harm civilian populations long after conflicts have ended. Article 1 further obliges States Parties never to assist, encourage or induce anyone to engage in any activity prohibited under the Convention.

Mr President,

South Africa remains concerned by reports of the continued use of cluster munitions in armed conflict. Such use runs counter to the humanitarian rationale underpinning the Convention and reinforces the urgency of universalising the treaty and strengthening compliance with its provisions.

We welcome the significant progress achieved since the Second Review Conference, including advances in stockpile destruction under Article 3, land clearance under Article 4, victim assistance under Article 5, and international cooperation and assistance under Article 6.

Nevertheless, important challenges remain. Contaminated land continues to threaten lives and livelihoods, survivors continue to require long-term support, and several States Parties continue to face difficulties in meeting implementation deadlines.

Mr President,

South Africa therefore underscores the importance of the next political commitment framework emerging from this Review Conference. We support a practical, achievable and victim-centred successor framework that builds on the lessons of the Lausanne Action Plan and strengthens implementation across all Convention obligations.

The Convention embodies the principle that humanitarian concerns must remain at the centre of international security. Effective implementation contributes not only to civilian protection but also to sustainable development, post-conflict recovery, food security and poverty eradication.

South Africa remains committed to working with all States Parties, and the relevant stakeholders and entities to ensure the full implementation of the Convention and the realisation of its humanitarian objectives.

I thank you.