



REPUBLIC

OF THE GAMBIA

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

No. 4 Marina Parade

Banjul

**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF DEFENCE OF THE
GAMBIA ON THE THIRD REVIEW CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO THE
CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS AT VIENTIANE, LAO PDR, SEPTEMBER
2026**

**Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

The delegation of The Gambia is honored to participate in this Third Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

We express our sincere appreciation and profound gratitude to the Government and people of the Lao People's Democratic Republic for hosting this Conference and commend the Presidency and the Implementation Support Unit for their leadership in advancing the Convention's humanitarian objectives.

We are glad to be here in Vientiane, a country that understands better than any other the human cost of cluster munitions. Thank you for the warm welcome and hospitality. We thank the GICHD for facilitating our participation in this important review conference of the CCM.

Mr. President,

The Gambia's position is clear: the protection of civilians must remain at the centre of humanitarian disarmament.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions embodies a powerful humanitarian principle—that the protection of human life and dignity must take precedence over the possession and use of weapons whose effects can extend far beyond the battlefield.

As a country that has never produced, acquired or stockpiled cluster munitions, our ratification of the Convention in 2018 is a testimony of our firm commitment to the Convention's provisions and humanitarian principles. We remain committed to maintaining this position.

Our commitment is not simply a matter of treaty compliance. It reflects our conviction that preventing civilian suffering is a shared responsibility of the international community.

Mr. President,

Universalisation must remain one of our highest priorities.

Every State that joins the Convention strengthens the international norm against cluster munitions. Every step towards universal adherence reduces the possibility that future generations will experience the devastating consequences of these weapons.

The Gambia therefore calls upon States that remain outside the Convention to consider joining this important humanitarian instrument. We further encourage States Parties and regional organisations to intensify diplomatic engagement and cooperation towards universalisation.

Mr. President,

We must also ensure that our commitments are translated into action.

For affected States, clearance, risk education and victim assistance are matters of immediate human security. They determine whether children can safely walk to school, whether families can return to their homes, whether farmers can cultivate their land and whether communities can rebuild their lives.

The international community must therefore continue to provide predictable, adequate and sustainable assistance to affected States.

The Gambia recognizes that humanitarian disarmament is ultimately about people. Survivors must not become forgotten casualties of conflicts that ended years or decades ago.

Mr. President,

The Convention's preventive value is equally important.

By establishing a clear international prohibition, promoting national implementation and strengthening humanitarian norms, the Convention contributes to preventing future civilian suffering.

It also reinforces the principles of International Humanitarian Law and the broader international commitment to civilian protection.

At a time when respect for humanitarian norms is under considerable pressure, our commitment to these principles must not weaken. On the contrary, this is precisely the moment when the international community must demonstrate that humanitarian principles remain relevant, universal and enforceable.

Mr. President,

The Political Declaration before us provides an opportunity to renew our collective commitment.

The Gambia supports an outcome that is ambitious but practical; principled but focused on implementation; and, above all, centred on protecting civilians and affected communities.

Mr. President,

The Gambia believes that the success of this Convention will ultimately be measured not only by the number of States that join it or by the number of conferences we hold, but by what we do after the conferences to ensure that there is an increase in the number of lives protected, communities made safe and survivors supported.

We must strengthen universalization, accelerate implementation, enhance international cooperation and ensure that the resources necessary to fulfil our commitments are available to end the suffering caused by these indiscriminate weapons.

We therefore reaffirm our unwavering commitment to working with all States Parties and partners towards the full implementation of the Convention's objectives.

A world free from cluster munitions is a safer world for all, a stronger world for humanitarian law, and a better world for future generations. The Gambia stands firmly behind that vision.

We look forward to working constructively with all delegations to achieve the objectives of this Conference.

I thank you
Khobchai
Sukran
Merci beaucoup
Mucha gracias
Obrigado
