



Statement delivered by South Africa on Universalization 9(a)

**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,

South Africa considers universalisation to be essential for the effectiveness and credibility of the Convention and welcome the report of the Coordinators Norway and Costa Rica.

Universalisation is not solely measured by growth in membership, but it must also be reflected in the retention of membership, continued implementation of obligations, and the strengthening of the norm against cluster munitions.

The continued use and possession of cluster munitions by States outside the Convention demonstrates that universal adherence remains an urgent priority. The objective established in Article 21 is clear, States Parties should encourage States not party to ratify, accept, approve or accede to the Convention, with the goal of enhancing the adherence of all States.

South Africa welcomes the continued growth of the Convention's membership although the rate of accession has slowed significantly. Since the Second Review Conference, only three states have joined the Convention, we join in welcoming Nigeria, South Sudan who ratified and accessed in 2023, and Vanuatu in 2025 while we congratulate Timor Leste for today's accession to the convention.

We further commend the outreach initiatives undertaken regionally and bilaterally through the coordination of Norway and Costa Rica with the Laos Presidency as well as Cameroon, some of which South Africa was able to join in the African continent. We further support the strengthened and targeted universalisation efforts, particularly in regions where membership remains limited.

We believe the Action Plan should include references to sustaining adherence, promoting dialogue among States Parties, and safeguarding the humanitarian achievements of the Convention for future generations.

We further encourage the integration of universalisation efforts into broader disarmament, international humanitarian law and civilian protection dialogues.

The international stigmatisation against the use of cluster munitions remains one of the Convention's greatest achievements and should continue to guide our collective efforts.

I thank you.