

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Colleagues and partners,

It is an honour for me to address the Third Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions on behalf of ITF Enhancing Human Security. I wish to express our profound gratitude to the Lao Presidency for its leadership and hospitality in hosting this Conference.

ITF greatly values the remarkable humanitarian efforts of all those working in this field, particularly during yet another unprecedented year. At a time when armed conflicts are escalating across many parts of the world, reaffirming the fundamental goals of the Convention and sustaining strong international support for its implementation is more important than ever.

No single actor can do this alone.

Our experience across different contexts has shown the value of close cooperation between national authorities, local organisations, technical experts and international partners. Strong partnerships and close coordination help ensure that international support responds effectively and efficiently to national priorities and realities on the ground.

This is essential when supporting survivors and affected communities. While contaminated land can eventually be cleared, the consequences of cluster munition use often remain with survivors and their families for a lifetime. Access to medical care, rehabilitation, psychosocial support, social inclusion and economic opportunities requires sustained commitment and long-term investment. Effective victim assistance is therefore not a one-time intervention, but an ongoing process that depends on strong national systems and reliable international support.

International cooperation is particularly important where conflict has weakened institutions, disrupted services and increased humanitarian needs. At the same time, many affected countries already have established mine action structures, significant experience and highly qualified national expertise. International cooperation is therefore most effective when it complements existing capacities and helps address identified gaps, rather than replacing systems that are already in place.

In many cases, support is needed not to build systems from the ground up, but to provide specialised equipment, operational assistance, technical expertise or resources that enable national institutions to continue their work, especially during periods of crisis. Targeted support can reinforce existing capacities, maximise impact and ensure effective use of donor resources.

In this context, I would like to sincerely thank the Governments of the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Slovenia and the United States of America for supporting ITF's

efforts to address the humanitarian consequences of cluster munitions, including capacity support activities in Lebanon and Serbia. Our sincere gratitude also goes to the national institutions and mine action centres in both countries for their leadership, continuous cooperation and excellent partnerships.

We also believe that cooperation must extend beyond individual projects. Mine action does not follow donor funding cycles neatly. Clearance can take years, priorities can change, and new contamination can emerge, including in areas that have previously been cleared. Likewise, the needs of survivors often continue long after immediate humanitarian attention has moved elsewhere. Sustained international engagement is therefore essential to maintaining progress and meeting the Convention's commitments.

Five years after the adoption of the Lausanne Action Plan, we have an opportunity to take stock of the progress achieved and the challenges that remain. The discussions here in Vientiane provide an opportunity not only to reaffirm our commitments, but also to consider how international cooperation can become more predictable, better coordinated and more responsive to the needs of affected communities.

As we look towards the next phase of implementation, we encourage States Parties and partners to continue investing in strong partnerships, national capacities, technical expertise and sustained cooperation, alongside the financial resources required for clearance, risk education and victim assistance. We should also ensure that our efforts remain inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs and experiences of survivors and affected communities.

Ultimately, international cooperation is not simply about providing additional resources. It is about bringing together the expertise, capacities and resources needed to address gaps, sustain progress and ensure that support reaches those who need it most. This is how the Convention can deliver on its promise.

The objective is clear: fewer lives disrupted by cluster munition remnants, more land safely returned to communities, survivors better supported in rebuilding their lives, and a future in which the humanitarian consequences of these weapons are no longer passed on to another generation.

ITF remains committed to working with States, national authorities and international partners towards that objective.

Thank you.