



**Nonviolence International Southeast Asia
Statement on the Third Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions**

Agenda 9(f) - International Cooperation and Assistance

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Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic

Statement delivered by Mitzi Austero, Programmes Manager

President,

International cooperation is where the language of decolonial mine action must become real. Power cannot be redistributed while resources remain controlled through distant priorities, short project cycles, and layers of intermediaries.

Many societies in the Global South inherited contamination from conflicts shaped by external powers yet they expected to finance clearance, risk education, environmental recovery, and lifelong assistance from limited public budgets. Cooperation should reflect legal commitment, solidarity, differentiated capacity, and historical responsibility.

NISEA calls for direct, predictable, flexible, and multi-year funding for national institutions, survivor-led groups, and local organizations. An example of this is the UN Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR), which promotes fair overheads, national ownership, safeguarding, translation, information management, monitoring, and organizational growth as part of sustainable implementation.

National ownership means affected states and communities define priorities and make decisions. It should never become a polite label for donor withdrawal. The Global Majority should be treated as protagonists and partners, rather than as low-cost implementers of agendas developed elsewhere. Technology should be maintainable locally and accompanied by training, spare parts, and accessible knowledge.

We should also ask whether international cooperation and assistance changes the lives of affected people and changes the unequal systems around them.

For this reason, NISEA proposes **“How Are You? A Global Decolonial Observatory for Humanitarian Disarmament.”**

The Observatory would complement existing monitoring systems. Current reports give us essential information about weapons destroyed, land cleared, casualties recorded, services delivered, and money committed. The Observatory would ask additional questions:

How are survivors, families, and communities?

What has changed in their lives?

Who was heard?

Who made the decisions?

Where did the resources go?

Did cooperation build local power, or did it create another form of dependency?

The Observatory would combine global questions with measures chosen by local communities. It would use listening circles, life stories, community assessments, and reviews of how money and decision-making power move through the system.

Affected people should hold the majority of the decision-making authority. Their participation should be paid and properly supported. Communities should decide how their information is collected, protected, interpreted, and shared.

Possible outputs could include a regular **State of Life After Harm Report** and a **Power and Resource Justice Tracker**. These would show whether funding reaches affected communities, whether local organizations gain lasting capacity, and whether survivors experience greater safety, dignity, livelihood, inclusion, and influence.

This Observatory would not replace existing monitoring. It would broaden our understanding of success. Its guiding message is: **Beyond weapons destroyed, toward lives restored and power returned.**

NISEA invites States Parties, donors, survivors, affected communities, civil society, and researchers to help develop and support this initiative as a shared Global South contribution to humanitarian disarmament.

The success of cooperation cannot be measured only by how much money was promised. We must ask whether resources reached the people who needed them, whether knowledge remained in the country, and whether affected communities gained greater power over their own future.

International assistance should leave behind stronger people and institutions, rather than deeper dependency.

Rebalanced resources create the material foundation on which shared power and recognised knowledge can stand.

Thank you.