



Mine Action Fellows Statement to the 3rd Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Thank you Mr. President and the Government of Laos for hosting us. We appreciate your commitment to youth inclusion in this meeting, especially after seeing many more Lao youth being engaged in the Conference.

We are a small number of the over 177 Mine Action Fellows from 50 countries around the world. This week, 11 of us were able to join you thanks to the support of Switzerland and Ireland to the Mine Action Fellows Program. Thank you to Ireland and Switzerland. We call on many more countries to invest in the youth, create opportunities for meaningful participation, and provide us with platforms where our voices can be heard, and our contributions can shape the future of mine action.

We not only hope for a day where a child does not have to mistake a bomb for a toy, or a farmer loses their limbs trying to make a livelihood but work towards a future where those who come after us do not have to clean up the mess left behind by cluster munitions.

When speaking about the remnants of cluster munitions, we must look beyond the weapons themselves and recognize the profound and lasting impact they have on people, families, and entire communities. The harm caused by cluster munitions does not end when a conflict is over. Their remnants continue to endanger communities and hinder recovery for decades.

Many of us are at the frontlines in implementing this convention. We are present in demining, victim assistance, risk education, but we also call home these contaminated countries, such as Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Syria, and Ukraine. We call on states to increase their investments in countries and organizations that implement the pillars of our convention. States must acknowledge that while clearance is crucial, it is only a fraction of the support that affected communities need. Victim assistance and risk education acknowledge the humanity of those who live alongside cluster munition contamination, and should be treated as priorities alongside land clearance.

Further, support should be extended to people who have been displaced by cluster munitions. Mine action is a prerequisite for the conditions that all people deserve to live and thrive. There can be no truly safe return, recovery, or sustainable development while communities continue to live with the daily threat of cluster munitions.

Within the Convention's implementation, inclusivity is far more than a moral necessity, it is a non-negotiable. Pathways to this work must be intentionally built to provide equal access for people across all genders, abilities, ethnicities, and nationalities.



The Convention does far more than work against cluster munitions. It sets a precedent that the next generation can carry forward and apply to harm in the future. Already, conversations around emerging technology have been present at this conference and the side events. Advancements in technology create the illusion that using munitions can be precise and selective. But we urge against relying on these illusions.

In Ukraine, the widespread use of new technology clearly shows this. No amount of technological advancement makes an inherently indiscriminate weapon acceptable.

As young people, we recognize that emerging technology is a powerful tool that should instead be used to further the aims of the convention. Technology should prioritize giving people the support they deserve in the form of risk education, victim assistance, and clearance.

We, as youth, have the most at stake in ensuring that progress achieved today is not lost tomorrow. Therefore, it is in our best interest to strengthen the convention. Mr. President, after the deeply disappointing withdrawal by Lithuania, we are excited about the announcement made by Timor Leste and look forward to welcoming it to the Convention very soon ! It is through young people that we can achieve universalization of the convention.

The majority of the Mine Action Fellows here come from countries that are not party to the Convention, yet we are all here, advocating for a world free from cluster munitions. My own country, Brazil, is not party to the Convention, and still I'm here as a young person fighting for a different future. We aim to offer a different path forward. Our responsibility is to ensure that this legacy ends with us.

Thank you.