



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

Agenda 9(k) - Other Matters Important for Achieving the Aims of the Convention

17 September 2026
Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic

Statement delivered by Gene Gesite Jr, Humanitarian Disarmament Senior Fellow

Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, colleagues, and friends,

Nonviolence International Southeast Asia, welcomes the attention given to gender equality, diversity, and meaningful participation in the Vientiane Capital Action Plan.

Gender-responsive mine action must extend beyond starting measures such as collecting sex- and age-disaggregated data or increasing the number of women appearing in meetings. They do not tell us whether women and known genders possess real authority, whether their knowledge is respected, whether they can question decisions safely, or whether institutions protect their dignity when conflicts arise.

Taking gender-based harm requires survivor-centered protection to strengthen each other. Neither should be sacrificed.

A decolonial approach asks us to look beneath formal policies and examine power. Local women and known genders must be recognized as leaders and knowledge holders, with genuine influence over programmes, budgets, personnel decisions, and organizational policy. If our sector seeks to restore dignity to communities, dignity must also guide how we treat the people who carry out this work.

Across this Conference, NISEA has advanced one connected message: The Convention will protect its humanitarian promise when implementation redistributes power, rebalances resources, and recognises diverse knowledge.

We therefore propose a clear test for the Vientiane outcomes.

First, do they redistribute power? Survivors, affected communities, Indigenous Peoples, women and known genders, youth, persons with disabilities, local organisations, and affected states should influence agendas, budgets, data, evaluation, leadership, and review.

Second, do they rebalance resources? National and local institutions need direct, flexible, predictable, and multi-year support. States with greater capacity, including those historically connected to use, production, or transfer, should contribute fairly to clearance, risk education, victim assistance, environmental recovery, and residual risk. National ownership should be

sustained by international responsibility.

Third, do they recognise diverse knowledge? Community experience, survivor leadership, Indigenous understandings of land, feminist analysis, youth perspectives, and local practice should shape evidence and policy alongside technical and legal expertise. Data should serve communities and remain accountable to them.

The Political Declaration should condemn every use of cluster munitions by any actor under any circumstances, address production and transfer, resist further withdrawals, and reject geopolitical double standards. The Action Plan should retain strong commitments on local strategies, participation, inclusion, climate justice, South-South cooperation, national capacity, and measurable implementation.

Measurable implementation should go beyond joining the Convention, weapons destroyed, land cleared, and reports submitted – it should also include: are survivors shaping decisions? Are communities safer and more autonomous? Are resources controlled closer to affected land? Are diverse knowledge changing priorities? Have dignity, trust, and livelihoods been restored?

Vientiane gives these questions moral force. Here, the distance between military decisions and human consequences is measured in generations. This Conference can respond by making humanitarian disarmament more accountable to those who continue to live those consequences.

NISEA stands ready to work with States Parties, the ISU, the Cluster Munition Coalition, survivors, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and communities across Asia and the Pacific.

Humanitarian disarmament must be decolonial to remain humane. Its truest meaning will be found in weapons removed, land returned, dignity restored, voices empowered, and communities strengthened.