
Delivered by Allison Pytlak, World Religions for Peace, on behalf of the Cluster Munition Coalition

Thank you Mr Chairperson.

It has been a dynamic year for the Convention on Cluster Munitions. There are now 108 countries that have signed the Convention, and 42 that have ratified it. Many more are near to completing their ratification and will soon become States Parties. Most significantly, I would like to highlight the global celebration that took place on 1 August to mark the entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The widespread coverage and engagement from campaigners and governments in over 80 countries is a testimony to the strength of our collective endeavour. We would like to congratulate all States Parties here today for triggering such a rapid entry into force of the Convention. At the same time we urge all signatories to ratify without delay and call on all other states to accede as soon as possible.

As many of you know, this is a groundbreaking Convention that bans a whole category of unacceptable weapons. The fundamental provision of the treaty is its ban on the use, production, stockpiling, and transfer of cluster munitions. The Convention also sets the highest standard to date in international law for assistance to victims and contains strong provisions regarding the rights of affected communities and survivors. It makes mandatory the destruction of stockpiles and clearance of contaminated areas.

This cooperation between states, civil society and organisation, the informal and constructive atmosphere and the leadership of affected states have been hallmarks of the process to deliver the Convention on Cluster Munitions. In order to maintain the momentum and continue to achieve the remarkable successes we have seen so far we will need to maintain these this way of working into the implementation phase.

We have two main messages for states today: first ‘get on board’ and second ‘deliver results now’.

We say ‘get on board’ to those who have signed, but not yet ratified the Convention; to those who have not yet signed or acceded; but also to those who have joined the Convention to reach out to and convince other countries to get on board and join the Convention. We have been working hard on universalisation through our many campaign members around the world, through advocacy visits to places like Argentina and Vietnam and through the coordinated universalisation efforts led by Japan and Mexico. In particular we urge affected states such as Cambodia and Vietnam, Serbia and Tajikistan to join the Convention so that you can share your experiences and expertise with other affected countries and begin to reap the benefits of the Convention’s humanitarian provisions.

The ‘get on board’ message is also relevant for the ongoing efforts in the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) to negotiate a lower standard of international humanitarian law. States have a clear choice to make. Either you can join the growing consensus recognising that this category of weaponry causes unacceptable harm and join the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Or you can work through the CCW seeking to assert some legitimacy for the continued use, production and transfer of a weapon that is rapidly becoming stigmatised in the same way as anti-personnel landmines quickly became illegitimate after their prohibition in 1997. Rather than pursue a lower standard of IHL, states that do not consider themselves in a position to join the CCM at this time should focus on national measures to end use, production and transfer of some or all of their cluster munitions in order to come into line with the new global benchmark established by the CCM.
We say ‘**deliver results now**’ because this is the primary purpose of the CCM, the very reason it exists, to prevent future harm by eradicating the weapon and its remnants from the face of the earth, but also by addressing the harm already caused. This means clearing land, assisting victims and survivors so that they can enjoy their fundamental human rights.

Many states and organisations have noted that this treaty has already established a new benchmark and is already having an effect on the ground. Since the treaty was negotiated, Albania has declared itself free of cluster munition contamination, Spain, Norway, Moldova, Belgium and Colombia have destroyed their stockpiles of the weapon and new donor funding has been secured for affected countries such as Lao PDR.

But this is not enough. The treaty was not established to manage the status quo of clearance, victim assistance and international cooperation that is already going on, in particular in the context of the Mine Ban Treaty. The CCM requires new action, more work, increased resources and improved lives. For States Parties affected by cluster munitions, the Convention demands that we see positive change for individuals and communities. At the 1MSP, we expect to see plans set out by affected States Parties to accelerate clearance work and to expand the coverage of services to victims and survivors. We expect States Parties in a position to provide assistance to set out their intention to support these plans with additional resources.

The success of this treaty will be measured by the difference it makes on the ground. We have no doubt that the cluster bomb problem can be solved provided that all actors stay focused and dedicate the necessary resources both in the immediate term and for the long haul. This is the lesson of over a decade of successful implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty.

We will spare no effort between now and the 1MSP to promote the broadest possible adherence to the CCM and participation in this historic gathering and, at the same time, to encourage States Parties to come prepared to present the concrete actions they are already taking to deliver results to individuals and communities in need.

Thank you Mr Chairperson.