Cluster munitions
The Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC)

Background
Cluster munitions have a devastating impact on the lives of civilians, both at the time of use and long afterwards. Their wide area footprint of destruction causes massive harm when deployed, with no way of distinguishing between civilian and military targets. In addition, all types of cluster munitions will contain duds, which mean unexploded submunitions remain on the ground after use and threaten lives long after a conflict has ended. Not only have cluster munitions killed and injured thousands of civilians during their history of use, but their presence over large areas of fertile land or urban areas has continued to pose a threat to the safety and livelihood of communities over the long term.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions was adopted in 2008 as a comprehensive and effective solution to this problem. It completely bans the use, production, stockpiling, and transfer of cluster munitions; requires destruction of stockpiled cluster munitions within eight years and clearance of contaminated land within ten years; protects the rights of victims of these weapons; and entitles affected states to international assistance to meet their legal obligations.

Current context
As there remain considerable stockpiles of cluster munitions around the world, the convention is largely aimed at preventing the potential consequences of future use. But it also seeks to redress the impact of past use. And it is already making clear progress towards these goals. Today 112 countries have joined the Convention on Cluster Munitions, of which 83 are states parties. As a result of the Convention’s clear and time-bound legal requirements, states parties are already working hard to destroy their stockpiles, clear their land, and assist cluster munition victims. Almost 122 million submunitions have already been destroyed by 19 states parties.

In addition, the Convention’s wide membership and even wider support from the international community has created a powerful stigma against cluster munitions. Use of cluster munitions has...
only occurred in a few states in recent years, most recently in Syria. Each incident of use has been followed by strong international condemnation and often denial or contrition by the state in question.

What is needed now:
- An immediate halt to any use of cluster munitions, anywhere;
- All states to join the Convention on Cluster Munitions;
- States parties to the Convention to increase their efforts to comply with all obligations, especially to clear their land of cluster munitions, rapidly destroy their stocks, and provide assistance to cluster munition victims; and
- All countries to provide the necessary resources to achieve the Convention’s goals quickly.

Recommendations for governments

During the UN General Assembly high-level debate and First Committee, governments should:
- Heed the UN Secretary-General’s call to advance the universal application of the framework of internationally agreed-upon norms and standards, and accede to the Convention on Cluster Munitions at the annual UN Treaty Event in September 2013.
- Emphasize that universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions is essential to preventing any further harm from their use.
- Condemn any use of cluster munitions, including the widespread use by Syria over the past year. They should also report on their contribution to the implementation and universalization of the convention.
- Report on progress made towards joining and may want to stress their support for the humanitarian objectives of the convention, as many of them do each year.
- Express positive views on the Convention on Cluster Munitions and announce any progress made towards full implementation.

Cluster munition survivors play a key role in advocating for all states to join and fully implement the convention. Lao campaigner Chanthava Podbouly interviewed by Lao TV.

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