

**Cluster Munition Coalition Statement – Clearance
Convention on Cluster Munitions 4th Meeting of the States Parties
Lusaka, 12 September 2013**



Thank you Mr Co-Coordinator.

The Cluster Munition Monitor has recorded the release of 78 square kilometres of land suspected or confirmed to be contaminated with cluster munitions in 2012. This is an area a little larger than the city of Lusaka, and it represents a 40% increase on the previous year's achievements. This progress shows that cluster munition survey and clearance is doable, that methods are improving and that achievements are being made. Let's do our utmost to keep this momentum and ensure that the problem of contamination does not exist for even one day longer than necessary.

We would like to express our appreciation to Norway for its paper on compliance with Article 4 and for its flexibility in receiving feedback. We fully endorse the paper and we are pleased that States Parties have endeavoured at an early stage in the life of the Convention to clarify what constitutes clearance completion. We urge all those involved in survey and clearance at any level to make use of the valuable guidance provided in the paper. There are two elements that we would particularly draw attention to. Firstly, the need to ensure that areas with suspected or confirmed contamination are *defined as narrowly as possible* based on adequate evidence. Secondly, there should be reliable and credible evidence for including contamination in the database. We would urge states to consider, in most cases, recording suspected hazardous areas as evidence points only, while confirmed hazardous areas can be recorded as polygons when there is clear information.

Our thanks also go to the Ireland and Lao PDR for putting forward a paper on addressing cluster munition contamination effectively, and for their openness to receiving comments. We understand that the latest paper incorporates much of our feedback, and we support it. We would like to emphasize that while the choice of appropriate survey and clearance technology is important, the implementation of an adequate *methodology*, in particular for survey, is essential in delivering effective operational work.

We would like to emphasise the pivotal role that National Mine Action Authorities hold in this process. We strongly encourage them to embrace new methodologies and approaches wherever possible, including the judicious use of non-technical and technical survey. An even closer dialogue with operators is essential to this end. Adopting sector best practices in survey methodologies will result in high quality information that can be used to better estimate the resources required for completion. It will also feed into the development of national mine action strategies that tackle real contamination and aim at completing the job as efficiently as possible.

We would like to emphasize once again that where there is little or no documented evidence of contamination, triangulation and corroboration of data is an essential element of achieving efficient and effective survey and clearance. Size and location of contamination can also be determined much more accurately if affected communities are included in survey process, with information included as part of data corroboration

National Mine Action Authorities should also consider how clearance facilitates socio-economic development. This is of particular relevance in States that still experience heavy contamination and therefore require much more time to complete their clearance obligations. Information gathered and analysed by mine action operators demonstrates how cluster munition clearance is supporting socio-economic development and the long-term recovery from cluster munition contamination. In Lao PDR, for example, an impact monitoring initiative showed that the majority of the households in communities benefitting from clearance lived on less than 2 US dollars per day. Consulting with communities identified needs, and information was used coordinate task prioritisation with local development initiatives. Post-clearance impact monitoring showed that clearance of contamination had contributed to a 26% drop in households reporting food shortages.

States and operators have a responsibility to communities living with contamination to maximise this developmental potential. There should be closer cooperation between mine action operators and development partners and closer synergy between mine action and development strategies. We urge National Mine Action Authorities to consider this in prioritisation and tasking while they work to fulfil their Article 4 obligations.

For more in-depth discussion you are welcome to two side events during lunch break today. Norwegian People's Aid and the CMC will discuss survey solutions, while the Mines Advisory Group (MAG) will present an analysis of development outcomes of clearance operations in Lao PDR.

Thank you.