

**CMC Statement on Clearance  
Convention on Cluster Munitions Intersessional Meetings  
Geneva, 17 April 2013**



Thank you Mr Co-Coordinator.

Monday's technical workshop clearly highlighted that there is a great deal of expertise and experience in cluster munition survey and clearance that is already being put in practice in most affected states. We thank all the states that have taken the floor during the present session and that are using the intersessionals as an opportunity to report not only on progress, but also on challenges. Open and informal dialogue is really a strength of the intersessionals and we are always glad to see some states trying to make the best use of this opportunity. Our thanks go to Ireland and to Lao PDR for fostering such exchanges.

In the Vientiane Action Plan, States Parties committed to increase their **capacity** for clearance, to **identify contaminated areas** within one year of the Convention's entry into force in each country, and to develop and start to implement a national clearance **plan** also within one year of the Convention's entry into force for each country. We are now mid-way through the Vientiane Action Plan's timeframe, and we would like to ask: what more could each of you do to be able to come to Zambia and announce that you are living up to the commitments made in Vientiane?

I would like to briefly reiterate some of the key points from the CMC's field operators and clearance experts. These points also apply to states that are not yet party to the convention but that also have cluster munition contamination.

Many of you are working towards getting an initial or an improved **estimate** of the size and location of contaminated areas, which is an absolutely essential step to develop a plan and for an efficient clearance program. At the Beirut meeting, States Parties welcomed a paper on how to best use **non-technical survey** and **technical survey** so that clearance will only be conducted on areas that are indeed contaminated. Conducting clearance without doing proper survey is a waste of resources and will delay the return of land to communities in need.

Tackling the cluster munition challenge requires a proper **plan** at the national scale, a plan that is developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders and that is clearly communicated to all of them. It must be developed on the basis of the best possible information available, and it must be developed *even though* not all information is available. It must also be **reviewed** regularly in light of newly available data.

According to the information that affected States Parties and signatories have made public so far, it seems that a number of countries do not yet have official and complete plans for survey and clearance. We encourage you to **set these up** as a matter of urgency and to make them public. This will help demonstrate how seriously you take the safety and well-being of your own people, in addition to respecting your Convention obligations. We believe that if the necessary financial and political support is made available, all current States Parties and signatories should be able to complete clearance well in advance of their deadline, apart from Lao PDR and Iraq where contamination is very heavy. The clearance plans should be prepared with that in mind. This also applies to non-signatories: the vast majority of non-signatories with contamination should be able to complete clearance well within ten years. Those with very high contamination can request an extension, so clearance deadlines should not be an impediment to accession.

In order for the international community and especially for donors to be convinced of how efficient your programmes are, whenever you report on your clearance activities, we strongly advise that you **disaggregate** data according to the method used for release: either non-technical survey, technical survey, or clearance. This is also a commitment made in the Vientiane Action Plan. Such data should anyway be available in your database for your own monitoring purposes, so disaggregation should not require extra work.

We cannot encourage you enough to ensure regular and thorough **communication** between national authorities and operators, among operators themselves, and with donors. Experience demonstrates that a good information flow is key to successful clearance programmes.

The CMC welcomes the President's **draft working paper** on compliance with Article 4 and is pleased that States Parties intend to clarify what constitutes clearance completion early in the life of the Convention. We would like to support the ICRC's comments and questions. A comment we could make at this stage is about the high evidence-threshold for including areas in the database, referenced on page 3. While we agree it is *very* important not to populate a database with irrelevant data, we would caution that areas with no immediate humanitarian impact or areas currently unpopulated could be left out of the database if the threshold were to be set unreasonably high. It is a balancing act to ensure the best quality data, and we believe the paper needs to be worded carefully to reflect that. We would be happy to work with the Presidency on language to this effect.

In addition, we would suggest that, in order to be comprehensive, the decision language on page 4 should include a reference to Article 4(1)(b), which describes the process states should follow in the event that new contaminated areas are created through new use of cluster munitions.

Now regarding the presentations made today, we are pleased to have heard from almost all affected States Parties. For those affected states that did not provide an update, we look forward to reading your transparency report due at the end of the month and to hearing you at the Fourth Meeting of States Parties.

Thank you.