

Cluster Munition Coalition Statement on Universalisation
INTERSESSIONAL MEETING - CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS



Thank you, Mr. President.

The Cluster Munition Coalition is pleased to see so many states represented here in Geneva this week, including States Parties, signatories, and 23 non-signatories. We believe that every country in the world can join and should join this convention; it is a matter of political will and prioritizing the protection of civilians during and after armed conflict.

We congratulate the states that have ratified since the 3rd Meeting of States Parties in Oslo-Peru, Australia, Nauru, Liechtenstein, Chad, and most recently Andorra which acceded last week, becoming the 81st State party to the Convention. And we welcome announcements made today by

Full universalization of this Convention remains the number one priority for the Cluster Munition Coalition. One-hundred and twelve states from every region of the world have already signed, ratified, or acceded to the Convention, with each new member strengthening the global stigma against this horrific weapon.

At least 44 countries that have stockpiled, produced, and/or used cluster munitions have joined the Convention, including key international and regional military powers. We continue to call on countries with stockpiles, and former users, to renounce this weapon by joining the Convention.

We encourage all remaining affected states to join the Convention in order to benefit from the collective support the treaty can bring.

Sometimes we hear that national security needs prohibit a state from joining the Convention. Yet, the majority of countries worldwide have already recognized that the negative humanitarian impact of cluster munitions far outweighs any perceived military benefit. It is now widely acknowledged that cluster munitions are not essential to effective national defense, and instead are counterproductive weapons.

We have been deeply disturbed by the extensive use of cluster munitions by Syrian government forces. Use of this indiscriminate weapon has led to mounting civilian casualties, including women and children. In addition, there is a growing concern for the potential scale of post-conflict casualties as this notoriously unreliable weapon leaves a trail of unexploded submunitions in its wake.

Any user of cluster munitions is knowingly putting civilians' lives at risk, and we strongly condemn such acts. We call on all states to echo this condemnation and we thank the 15 states that have already done so. Expressing condemnation assists universalization efforts by showing the high standards of the treaty are more than just words. Ensuring more

countries join the Convention on Cluster Munitions is an important means of strengthening the global stigma against the weapon and preventing future atrocities such as are occurring now in Syria.

Article 21 of the Convention makes it a legal requirement for States Parties to promote universalisation and we were pleased to work in partnership with the governments of Ghana, Zambia, and Togo to support the Accra Regional Conference on the Universalisation of the Convention last year. We will continue our support to ensure the Accra Action Plan reaches its goals at the regional meeting in Togo in May.

We are encouraged by the growing number of African countries working in unison to ensure all governments join this lifesaving treaty. It is crucial that African signatory states set a strong example and complete ratification in the countdown to the 4th Meeting of State Parties in Zambia. The relatively small number of African non-signatory states yet to accede must make every effort to do so too.

We are also encouraged by progress made in other regions. Latin America has only a few states left to join. In Europe, 20 out of 27 EU members have now joined, as have 20 out of 28 NATO members. We urge you all now to make this your cause, and support progress toward full universalisation of the treaty. For countries that have already joined the Convention, remember your obligations under Article 21 to encourage states not party to join. Which countries will you reach out to this week and in the coming year?

CMC member organizations in around 100 countries worldwide will continue to advocate for governments to ratify and accede to the Convention as a matter of urgency. We stand ready, as always, to continue to work in partnership with you all to protect civilians worldwide from future harm.

Thank you.