

**Cluster Munition Coalition Statement on Universalization
5MSP - Convention on Cluster Munitions
3 September 2014**



Mr President, and all states here this week, the Cluster Munition Coalition would like to thank you for welcoming us here and for our continued partnership to rid the world of cluster munitions. We believe that we *can* stop cluster bombs, and that through our collective efforts we *will* stop cluster munitions for good.

We warmly congratulate Belize and the Republic of Congo for becoming new states parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and Saint Kitts and Nevis for acceding on 13 September 2013. Costa Rica, your energy as President of the Convention is infectious. We offer our congratulations that your goal of Central America becoming the world's first cluster munition-free zone has been realised at the first opportunity. We also welcome the statements of support for the Convention and of intention to ratify or accede soon by several states here this week.

This Convention is mainly about prevention. It's about preventing future harm to civilians from the devastating impact of cluster munitions. It is within the power of all of us to create a future safe from cluster munitions and to work quickly to achieve this goal. This is a future surely all of us in this room want to see. To help get us to that future, permit me to first take a few moments to reflect on the recent past.

One year ago at the Fourth Meeting of States Parties in Lusaka we urged you not to let another year slip by before you ratified or acceded to the treaty, or encouraged others to do so. In Lusaka and throughout the months afterward we were reassured by a good number of you that efforts were 'in progress' that 'it will be done soon', that 'it's at an advanced stage', that 'it will be done by the 5MSP', and even that 'it's on the president's desk'. Yet in the year that ensued we only saw one new state party to the Convention until this week. We congratulate our three new states parties. But we must ask the rest of you – what happened? Why the long delay? We have seen that when there is the political will, joining the treaty can be pushed forward quickly. So where is that will?

Two years ago cluster munitions began to be used in the Syrian conflict. The Cluster Munition Monitor reports at least 1,584 casualties during this period, and of those killed, 97% were civilians. One cluster munition strike is one too many. *Two years* of cluster munition strikes is an outrage. How many more days and nights will Syria's children, women and men be put through this peril? Syria must be encouraged to join the Convention on Cluster Munitions just as it has the Convention on Chemical Weapons. And for the sake of the civilians suffering in Syria and elsewhere, all other nations should ratify or accede without delay. There is no clearer way to ensure civilians are protected from use of this weapon than via universalisation of the treaty.

Looking to the future and the year ahead. In one year's time we will have the First Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. This will be an occasion for us to take stock of the success of the treaty, and this young treaty so far *is* a success. These achievements need to be protected and there is no better way to protect them than by ensuring the treaty remains strong and energised by continued universalisation.

Some 17 signatory states are demonstrating their commitment to the Convention on Cluster Munitions by being here this week. Angola, Benin, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gambia, Haiti, Jamaica, Liberia, Madagascar, Namibia, Paraguay, the Philippines, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda – we call on you to prove this commitment by completing your ratification process without further delay and ahead of the First Review Conference next year. This is a realistic goal especially with the support available to you

from the CMC, ICRC, the interim implementation support unit and of course existing states parties. These ratifications alone would take us to over 100 States Parties to the Convention. For those states working on their national legislation as part of the ratification process the CMC believes such implementation measures should reinforce the global stigma of the Convention against any use of cluster munitions. We encourage you to utilise the resources and expertise available in this regard.

Over 20 non-signatories are here this week, most of which have expressed concern at the unacceptable humanitarian harm that cluster munitions cause – either this week or in the past. We need them to turn these words into action and to demonstrate that they mean them by acceding to the Convention on Cluster Munitions without delay. We know they have reasons for not yet acceding to the treaty, but the CMC believes that none outweigh the value of joining. We offer our resources, expertise, and also our continued time and dedication to support all non-signatory states here this week and look forward to helping you towards the goal of joining this treaty.

China, the Russian Federation and Singapore are states that have not yet declared an end to production of cluster munitions. We welcome them here this week and their willingness to engage in dialogue on the issue, but we also seek commitments. We implore them to at the very least introduce a moratorium on the production and export of this horrific weapon. Slovakia is the latest country to renounce *its* production of cluster munitions and has committed to accede to the treaty in 2015. We hope others will follow its strong lead by introducing interim measures ahead of acceding to the treaty.

We would like to thank the Coordinators on Universalisation, Norway and Ghana, and we look forward to working with Ecuador and Norway as Coordinators in the year ahead. Good initiatives have taken place in the last year, nationally and regionally, including the Santiago regional conference for Latin American and Caribbean states; the Geneva workshops for African states hosted by New Zealand, the Geneva Arabic speaking workshop hosted by Lebanon; the Spanish speaking workshop held this week here in San Jose; the missions to Zimbabwe, Mauritius and Vietnam and other outreach organised by the former President of the Convention Zambia and the mission organised by new President Costa Rica to Belize. We were pleased to work in partnership with these countries, UNDP and ICRC on these important initiatives. Promotion of universalization needs to come from a much broader group of states, however. **All** States Parties have a legal duty under Article 21 to promote universalisation of the treaty. You can and should be the champions of the treaty - we need you to be a global champion in the protection of civilians.

We look forward to continuing to work with Costa Rica and all states and partners in the year ahead. Our CMC campaign network has a presence in over 100 countries worldwide. We advocate for the treaty, share expertise and resources, work in close partnership with states and the treaty leadership, and we raise awareness of the devastating impact of cluster munitions. Most importantly our network includes survivors and people living in countries affected by the use of cluster munitions, and it is *with* and *for* them that we continue this important work.

While we concentrate our efforts on making progress ahead of the Review Conference in one year's time, let us do so with a sense of urgency. Civilians in Syria, Ukraine or any other country should not be living in fear of the next cluster munition strike. People in Laos, Vietnam, Iraq and other cluster munition contaminated countries should not have to continue to live with the threat of losing life or limb from this weapon. Committing your country to make a stand against cluster munitions must be a priority and must not wait any longer. Let's work together to achieve this goal, because together *we can stop cluster bombs*.

Thank you.