



## Speaking notes Taking Action against Cluster Bombs – PowerPoint presentation

### SLIDE 1

- The purpose of this presentation is to provide an overview of what cluster bombs are, why they have been banned, what is being done and remains to be done, and how you can help.

### SLIDE 2

- Cluster bombs are large weapon systems containing multiple - often hundreds - of smaller bomblets.
- They can be dropped from the air or fired from the ground.
- Cluster bombs are wide area-effect weapons. This means that their impact is not limited to one precise target, such as an individual tank.
- Housed like peas in a pod, the container opens in the air and scatters the bomblets over a wide area – sometimes the size of several football fields. This impact is referred to as a “footprint”.
- Cluster bombs are also known as “cluster munitions” and the bomblets can also be called “submunitions”.

### SLIDE 3

- Cluster bombs were first used in World War II. This eyewitness account is of a German Luftwaffe cluster strike against the UK port town of Grimsby in June 1943:
- *“As they descended, the outer casings were released allowing a number of small anti-personnel bombs to be scattered over a large area. Some exploded on impact with the ground, some landed in the trees and were suspended by their wings on the branches of trees, others caught on guttering, telephone wires, chimney stacks. The public was asked to report any sighting but under no circumstances attempt to move them. There was complete terror among the population of the town for many months.”*
- From the very beginning cluster munitions were used against civilian targets and had devastating impact on personnel due to their high dud rate.

### SLIDE 4

- Cluster Munitions were designed for use defensively to stem the tide of advancing forces, such as large columns of tanks, during massive conventional attacks (so called “industrial war”).
- A classic example given for the military utility of cluster bombs is that of a fighter aircraft on a mission to destroy a column of five enemy tanks. Using a single bomb (or “unitary bomb”), the fighter pilot would have to make five different passes over the tank column, exposing the crew to anti-aircraft fire during each pass. However, using a weapon with multiple bombs (i.e. cluster bombs) the fighter pilot could theoretically destroy the column with one pass by dropping a cluster bomb containing hundreds of bomblets, broadly covering the entire area where the tanks are moving.
- However in modern conflicts, the circumstance of a column of tanks being targeted in open terrain rarely occurs. Current military trends all point away from this type of Cold War-era warfare. We have seen a shift away from “industrial war” towards “war amongst the people”

## **SLIDE 5**

- There are two main humanitarian concerns about cluster bombs.
- One concern is the impact on civilians at the time of use because of its wide area effect.
- To give you a sense of how wide the “footprint” of a cluster bomb strike can be, here is an ariel view of the corner of 5th Avenue and Central Park.

## **SLIDE 6**

- This next slide illustrates what a cluster strike would look like using a CB500 cluster bomb.
- The red area is the area the strike is expected to cover if all goes as intended – approximately 90,000m<sup>2</sup>.
- This means that when they are used in or near populated areas – where almost all modern conflicts have taken place – it is inevitable that there will be civilian casualties.

## **SLIDE 7**

- If we consider the actual use of cluster bombs in the past 40 years, they have often been used as compensation for a lack of ability to hit targets with precision. In Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, cluster bombs were used in a largely unsuccessful attempt to hamper and interdict enemy movement, lines of communications and logistic stores.
- The place most devastated by cluster munitions was the plain of jars in Laos. A UN Adviser in Laos, George Chapelier wrote that “By 1968 the intensity of the bombings was such that no organised life was possible in the villages”.

## **SLIDE 8**

- Cluster munitions are not particularly effective in offensive operations: they do not have the force or penetrating power to damage troops or vehicles in prepared defensive positions.
- According to NATO battle damage reports only 28% of cluster strikes are judged to have caused any damage during the Kosovo Campaign.

## **SLIDE 9**

- In the latest conflict in Iraq, Coalition Forces used cluster bombs against unseen enemy fighters hiding in urban areas and because of the high failure rates they were obliged to advance through areas contaminated with their own cluster munitions, leading the US Third Infantry Division to describe them as “battlefield losers”.
- In the above examples, cluster bombs caused unacceptable civilian casualties. They were used because precision weapons were not available and it is not clear whether the military objective was always achieved.

## **SLIDE 10**

- The second humanitarian concern is the impact on civilians after a strike.
- Because of the large number of bomblets in each cluster bomb and the predictably high numbers of bomblets that fail to explode as intended, areas bombarded with cluster bomblets become densely contaminated with failed munitions.
- These ‘duds’ must be treated and cleared as de facto landmines that can explode when children pick them up, when people inadvertently hit them with tools while farming, or are carrying out other livelihood activities. These duds are more lethal than antipersonnel mines; incidents involving submunition duds are much more likely to cause death than injury.

- Like anti-personnel mines, the presence of unexploded bomblets puts lives and livelihoods at risk long after the conflict has ended. Cluster bombs also hampers post-conflict development and prevent people from rebuilding their livelihoods.

#### **SLIDE 11**

- An example of a cluster bomb that failed to detonate and still poses risk to the community trying to go about their daily lives.

#### **SLIDE 12**

- Several million bomblets are estimated to have been dropped in Southern Lebanon in the July 2006 conflict, people were not able to harvest their crops, which significantly impedes people's ability to earn a living. This barrier will remain until bomblets that failed to function are cleared from the land.

#### **SLIDE 13**

- Some cluster munitions contain submunitions that are equipped with self-destruct or self-deactivation mechanisms designed to ensure that they do not remain on the battlefield if they fail to explode on impact.
- Self-destruct mechanisms also experience failure and large numbers of M85 submunitions equipped with self-destruct mechanisms were found unexploded after they were used in Lebanon in 2006.

#### **SLIDE 14**

- Because cluster bomblets are designed to pierce through tank armour, they carry more explosives than an anti-personnel landmine.
- When cluster bombs explode, they disperse fragments, or shrapnel, over an area as large as one square kilometer, an area of effect much greater than that of a landmine. A cluster bomb's effects are therefore much more lethal than that of an anti-personnel landmine which is specifically designed to maim or kill a person versus destroy armoured vehicles.

#### **SLIDE 15**

- Unexploded cluster bombs do not just litter the ground, but have also been found hanging from vegetation and on various forms of infrastructure. Because of their lethal charge, these are extremely difficult to clear.

#### **SLIDE 16**

- Ten of thousands of civilians worldwide have been killed or injured by cluster bombs.
- Handicap International reports that on average, a quarter of civilian casualties are children. In some areas more than 50% of victims are children. The small size and curious shapes of the bomblets dispersed by cluster bombs make them particularly interesting to young people.
- 60% of cluster bomb casualties are injured while carrying out normal daily, livelihood activities in usual and accustomed places.
- Because of the lethal charge of cluster bomblets, generally it was not just one person injured or killed in a blast but 2-3.

### **SLIDE 17**

- The UK fired 98,000 Israeli manufactured M85 submunitions in and around Basra, Iraq in March 2003.
- Six year old Abdullah was injured during a cluster bomb strike on a residential area of Basra. Shrapnel smashed through the window of his home, cut off his arm and tore open his abdomen.

### **SLIDE 18**

- Since 1999, users of these weapons have dropped millions of submunitions on Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo and Lebanon. Evidence from humanitarian operations shows that it is civilians who bear the brunt of the deadly effects of these weapons. In these recent conflicts, cluster submunitions with high failure rates were knowingly used.
- For over 40 years cluster bombs have killed and injured civilians during and after conflict. Unexploded cluster bombs continue to kill and injure for days, months, even decades after conflict.

### **SLIDE 19**

- For over 40 years cluster bombs have killed and injured too many civilians both during attacks and after the conflict has ended. Cluster bombs have been used in at least 31 countries and areas in the world causing excessive harm to civilian.
- If nothing is done to prevent cluster bombs from being used in the future, the contamination caused will far surpass the contamination of landmines.

### **SLIDE 20**

- In February 2007, 46 governments met in Oslo to endorse a call by Norwegian Foreign Minister to conclude a new treaty in 2008 that prohibits the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians and provides adequate resources to assist survivors and clear contaminated areas. Subsequent International Oslo Process meetings were held in Peru, Austria and New Zealand to discuss the terms of the treaty.
- In May 2008, the treaty (the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM)), was negotiated and adopted by 107 countries at the Dublin conference.

### **SLIDE 21**

- The treaty was first opened for signature on 3 December 2008 at the signing conference in Oslo, Norway where 94 countries signed the treaty
- The Convention is now open for signature at the United Nations in New York and the CMC is calling on all governments that haven't yet signed it to do so in New York as soon as possible

### **SLIDE 22**

- The main aim of our campaigning work now will be to get 30 countries to ratify the Convention to bring it into force
- Only when 30 countries have ratified the Convention will it enter into force and become international law
- It is only when the treaty enters into force that the deadline begin for clearing contaminated land and assisting victims and affected communities

### **SLIDE 23**

- So what can you do?

### **SLIDE 24**

- We need your help to ensure the treaty becomes more than words on paper but binding international law for as quickly as possible.
- You can help collect by:
  - Signing the People's Treaty petition and getting others to sign it too. Send a link to the online petition round to friends and colleagues, or help collect signatures at a public event.
  - Write to your government and ask that it signs and ratifies the treaty if it hasn't done so already. You can download template letters from the CMC website
  - Write to your Member of Parliament. MPs have an important role to play – particularly in making sure governments ratify the treaty and in most countries it requires discussion in parliament
  - Tell people about the problem of cluster bombs. Spread the word, there are lots of educational resources on the CMC website that you can download and use including this PowerPoint presentation as well as fact sheets to leaflets and badges

### **SLIDE 26**

- For more information on what is happening and for additional information on how you can get involved, please visit [www.stopclustermunitions.org](http://www.stopclustermunitions.org)
- You do not need to be an expert in disarmament to take action on this issue – this is not a technical issue, it is a humanitarian one and everyone's actions will count!