

The Cluster Munition Coalition is led by a Steering Committee of:
Human Rights Watch, Landmine Action and Norwegian People's Aid (Co-Chairs),
Asociación para Políticas Públicas, DanChurchAid, Handicap International,
International Campaign to Ban Landmines, IPPNW Russia-Zambia,
Landmine Resource Centre (Lebanon), Mines Action Canada, Pax Christi, Protection (Egypt), Survivor Corps.



Mr. Sam Abal
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Dear Minister Abal,

I am writing on behalf of the Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC) to urge Papua New Guinea to sign the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions. This is a significant year for this important humanitarian agreement as it marks two important milestones. The Convention will enter into force on 1 August and Lao PDR will host the First Meeting of States Parties (1MSP) from 8-12 November. In the 100 days counting down to entry into force, the CMC is encouraging states that have not yet joined the Convention to do so as soon as possible.

Cluster munitions kill and injure innocent civilians during conflict and long after a conflict has ended. The international treaty comprehensively prohibits cluster munitions, requires destruction of stockpiled cluster munitions within eight years and clearance of contaminated land within 10 years, and recognises the rights of individuals and communities affected by the weapon to receive assistance. It also obliges all countries to support affected states in fulfilling their obligations. Since December 2008, a total of 106 governments have signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions including stockpilers, former users and producers of the weapon as well as the majority of affected countries.

Papua New Guinea took part in the Oslo Process and adopted the Convention on Cluster Munitions at the Dublin Diplomatic Conference in May 2008 and attended the Oslo Signing Conference in December 2008. Papua New Guinea should join this important Convention without delay and help to ensure greater protection for civilians. As Papua New Guinea is not known to stockpile cluster munitions or have any areas contaminated by these weapons, joining the Convention should be a straight forward procedure.

Every country wishing to prevent further suffering from the horrors of cluster munitions should join the Convention on Cluster Munitions and help stigmatise these weapons from being used again. We urge all countries to join as soon as possible and to participate in the upcoming First Meeting of States Parties (1MSP) that will be hosted in Vientiane, Lao PDR from 8-12 November 2010. We hope to see you in Vientiane.

Thomas Nash
Coordinator
Cluster Munition Coalition