



LIMA CONFERENCE ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS
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Intervention on behalf of United Nations

Delivered by

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for this opportunity to make a few comments on international assistance and cooperation on behalf of the United Nations.

As you will be aware, the United Nations, through its agencies, departments, funds and programmes, is present in all countries known to be affected by explosive remnants of war (ERW), including all those affected by cluster munitions. The UN, therefore, has first-hand experience of both the short-term humanitarian impact and the longer term development impact that cluster munitions have on populations and communities.

Cluster munitions undermine food security through land denial and loss of livestock. They exacerbate health and hygiene problems as a result of a lack of access to shelter, water and sanitation. And they prevent people returning to their homes once conflicts have come to an end. In Iraq, for example, a recently completed impact survey demonstrated that much of the contamination is around populated areas. A large portion of the communities in urban and rural areas depend on land to directly sustain their families and maintain their livelihoods. Many activities they engage in such as planting crops and grazing and trading in livestock have been halted, due to contamination. This loss of livelihoods has resulted in losses in income generation for many families and thus has increased poverty levels.

In other words, beyond the humanitarian impact, cluster munitions have the potential to exacerbate poverty, and to block local and national economic recovery and long-term development, thereby impeding states' abilities to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

With these comments in mind, we believe that the provisions on international cooperation and assistance will be critical to the success of any new treaty. Particular attention should be given to establishing a framework for cooperation and assistance that will assist affected governments to develop their capacity to provide adequate care and rehabilitation to survivors and their communities, to enable them to identify and clear contaminated areas in a timely manner, to provide risk education and ensure the destruction of stockpiles of prohibited munitions.

We would also suggest that particular attention be given to establishing clear obligations on users responsible for any existing and future contamination. This should include the sharing of information (for example, on the type, quantity, date and location of sub-munitions deployed), as well as the provision of financial and other types of assistance and cooperation to assist in addressing the contamination problem.

We also need to be mindful of the need for the international community to sustain levels of international assistance, and to ensure that an emphasis is placed on building national capacity to address the problems posed by cluster munitions. In Laos, for example, the current Lao National Strategic Plan for the Unexploded Ordnance Programme covers a ten-year period ending in 2013, but the Lao government now envisages the need to develop a new 10-year plan at the end of this period to effectively deal with the problem.

Finally, Mr Chairman, we would like to highlight that the United Nations' organisations stand ready to play an active role in assisting states in implementing a new legal instrument, building on our broad experience in coordinating, managing and implementing clearance programmes, stockpile destructions, risk education, capacity building, training, legislative frameworks, and the integration of legal provisions and related activities into the broader development agenda.

Thank you.