



United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action

Seventh Meeting of States Parties to the **Convention on Cluster Munitions**

(4 – 6 September 2017)

Statement on Universalization Geneva, 4 September 2017

Mr. President,^{1 2}

The following statement is delivered on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA), comprising the United Nations entities³ involved in mine action.

The United Nations would like to commend you, Mr. Ambassador, for your excellent leadership as President of the 7th Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The United Nations supports the two-track approach developed under your Presidency, including the *country coalition concept* to enhance the implementation of the obligations under the Convention, and also your engagement in *structured dialogue* with states not party to promote the humanitarian values of the Convention. We would also like to commend France and Zambia for their commitment to Universalization efforts.

The United Nations warmly congratulates the Republics of Madagascar and Benin, who have recently joined as the 101st and 102nd States Parties to the Convention. This is a significant development on the road towards universalization; yet, increased action is required to reach the target of 130 States Parties by the Second Review Conference in 2020 set by the Dubrovnik Action Plan. The United Nations urges States who have not acceded to the Convention on Cluster Munitions to do so without delay.

The alleged use of cluster munitions in recent armed conflicts is of grave concern for the United Nations. Member States have also expressed such concern as stated in the last Resolution of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions⁴. Indeed, the presence of cluster munitions, along with mines and other explosive remnants of war, pose a tremendous humanitarian threat in affected countries, inhibiting the safe return of refugees and displaced persons and the delivery of humanitarian aid. In addition, such contamination hampers

¹ Ambassador Michael Biontino, Permanent Representative of Germany to the Conference on Disarmament

² Coordinators of the Working Group on Universalization: France and Zambia

³ The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) / United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) (Chair), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN Development Programme (UNDP), Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) (Observer), and the World Bank (Observer).

⁴ A/RES/71/45; Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions; 9 December 2016



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United Nations peace operations as well as social and economic recovery in countries impacted by conflict. In the current context of intense, protracted crises, and the urbanization of warfare, universal adherence to the Convention is more important than ever.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions has advanced disarmament and contributed to reducing the unnecessary and inhumane suffering of civilians. Its universalization is key to protect civilian lives and livelihoods from the harm caused by cluster munitions.

As we speak, 27 countries and territories are known to be contaminated by cluster munitions⁵, and the United Nations is invested in the most heavily contaminated. For example, in Lebanon, which is experiencing mounting humanitarian pressures to meet the needs of over one million Syrian refugees, UNDP builds national capacities to ensure that Convention obligations are met, and that broader humanitarian response and sustainable development goals are achieved.

Finally, the United Nations also encourages the 17 signatories that have not yet ratified the Convention to make every effort to accelerate progress towards ratification. The United Nations applauds the efforts of the Implementation Support Unit in establishing regional support workshops to help States to ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions, such as the one held in Kampala, Uganda, last June.

Progress towards the universalization of the Convention is progress towards the preservation of human life, protection of civilians from indiscriminate weapons, and enhancement of compliance with the core principles of international humanitarian law. The United Nations remains committed to assist States in their efforts towards ratification and implementation of the Convention.

Thank you.

⁵ Cluster Munitions Monitor 2016