

# UNDP Welcomes Second Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions



The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) commended the Government of Lebanon on the opening day of a landmark meeting on cluster munitions for its leadership role to advance this important agenda.

On 12 September 2011 in Beirut, States parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions gave progress updates on implementing their treaty obligations and are expected to take key decisions on items including the structures to support the implementation and universalization of the Convention. States that have not yet joined the Convention will also be present to give updates on steps they are taking towards joining. Meetings of States Parties will be held annually until the first Review Conference in 2015 – five years after the Convention’s entry into force.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions is a critical step toward ridding the world of the threat of these indiscriminate weapons, which maim and kill civilians, and hinder access to property, vital infrastructure, basic social services, and local livelihoods, further inhibiting development.

“Removing these remnants of war is about safety, but it is also about a return to economic sustainability and hopes for a future of renewed development. And it is this fact, precisely, what resonates loudly and clearly with UNDP’s core task—empowering lives and helping to build resilient nations,” said Jordan Ryan, Assistant Administrator of UNDP and Director of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, representing UNDP Administrator Helen Clark.

The convention entered into force on 1 August 2010 and currently has 109 signatory countries, 62 of which have ratified it, including Afghanistan who joined on the 8 of September. Lebanon, a country which knows first-hand the burden and hazards of contamination with cluster munitions and countless other explosive remnants of war, is the second president of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and has been actively engaged from the very beginning of the diplomatic Oslo Process to negotiate the Convention.

It is estimated that 4.2 million sub munitions were dropped over southern Lebanon during the conflict of 2006, contaminating some 54.9 square kilometers of land covering inhabited areas, houses, school yards, hospitals, and farmland. Thanks to national and international efforts to increase coordination and clearance capacities, today, two thirds of the contaminated land has already been cleared.



“For UNDP, the Convention on Cluster Munitions is a prime example of what states, international organizations and civil society can accomplish together to save lives and limbs, protect personal security and integrity and preserve livelihoods, three elements that are universally important and underpin the prospects for sustainable development and achieving the Millennium

Development Goals,” said Robert Watkins, Resident Representative of UNDP in Lebanon.

UNDP has, together with sister agencies, supported mine action programmes to eradicate the threat of cluster munition contamination for several decades, currently providing assistance in 21 of the 28 states and territories affected by cluster munitions, either through direct coordination of clearance work or supporting national governments in their efforts to fulfill their treaty obligations, clear contaminated land and assist victims.