

Convention on Cluster Munitions

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Any other business

Victims' declaration¹

We, as cluster munitions victims, including survivors of cluster munitions, and survivors of mines and explosive weapons from around the world, are pleased to see good progress on the Convention on Cluster Munitions in the past year. We are heartened to hear that many stockpiles are being destroyed and cluster munition remnants are being cleared from the ground. And, while more countries still need to “join the team” to ban cluster munitions, we welcome the many countries that ratified and acceded over the last year, including most recently Afghanistan and Swaziland.

However, we were saddened that there were still countries that used cluster munitions, and that cluster munition remnants left after use continued to kill and injure. And, as we experienced firsthand throughout the first year of the Convention, many cluster munition victims continue to wait for much-needed assistance that seems to be out of reach.

Governments must take all their obligations for action under the Convention on Cluster Munitions seriously. We believe receiving such assistance is our right and states have a human and a moral duty as well as legal obligations to respect our rights. And the Vientiane Action Plan gives deadlines for victim assistance responsibilities. Now is the time to move beyond words and take action.

We, survivors of cluster munitions and landmines, remind States Parties first and foremost of their commitment in Vientiane to take immediate action to make victim assistance services accessible for all. What does this mean to each of us? It might mean that:

- Emergency response is immediate and health care is free or affordable for survivors and our communities
- All cluster munition victims, including women and girls, as well as all affected families, have services that match their needs
- All public spaces, and especially schools, training centres and workplaces are physically accessible
- Survivors are offered opportunities to make a decent living to support our families, to access jobs, start businesses and get loans.

In reality, it will mean all of these things and more. Life with dignity for everyone injured by cluster munitions. That is our basic human right.

The obligation of countries is for the lifetime of all of us, according to our needs. This means there must be a long-term commitment from States Parties. Such commitment must include developing or adapting national

¹ Issued in the language of submission without any editing, as received by the Secretariat.

plans based on the real needs and securing sufficient funding, through national resources, as well as international assistance. That means asking clearly for funding and then using it efficiently.

In addition, the process of clearance and the subsequent development of cluster munition-affected land must take into consideration the needs of communities where cluster munition victims live.

Banning cluster munitions is the best way to prevent future incidents. We have been physically and mentally scarred by these weapons. We dream of a world where cluster munitions are banned completely and our children live safely.

We remind governments that we have a right to be involved in all decisions being made about our lives. This is a right, and it is a smart idea; those of us that are here today are experts and we are also experts at home. There is much work to be done, please do not overlook the valuable resources that you have in cluster munition victims.

For our part we commit to sharing our experiences and to push for the full implementation of all articles of the convention; to actively engage our governments to work in collaboration with us to bring about real change in the lives of survivors and our communities; and to advocate for all governments to join the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We are ready to help more, to continue to advise, implement and monitor. And we are ready for you to act too.
