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United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action

Convention on Cluster Munitions 12th Meeting of States Parties Statement under agenda item 8 – General Exchange of Views

Geneva, 10 September 2024

Delivered by Ms. Christelle Loupforest, OiC, Geneva office, UNMAS

Madam President,¹

As this is my first time taking the floor, I would like to extend my congratulations to you and to Mexico on assuming the Presidency of the Twelfth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). You can count on the full support and cooperation of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA)², on behalf of which I am delivering this statement.

Excellencies,

The CCM is a critical response to the devastating impact of cluster munitions on civilians, both in ongoing conflicts and years – even decades – after conflicts end.

The Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs has conveyed on behalf of UN leadership the concern sparked by Lithuania's withdrawal from the Convention. The Twelfth meeting of States Parties provides an opportunity for frank exchanges on the Convention and will, we hope, strengthen our collective resolve to free the world from the threat of cluster munitions now and for future generations.

¹ Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Mexico, Francisca E. Mendez Escobar.

² The United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action consists of twelve United Nations Departments and Offices of the Secretariat, specialized agencies, funds and programmes: the United Nations Mine Action Service of the Department of Peace Operations, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the World Bank are observers.



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There are many reasons to universalize the commitment to ban cluster munitions. First and foremost, there is the humanitarian argument: cluster munitions are indiscriminate and disproportionately harm civilians. Due to their high failure rate and wide-area effect, they leave many unexploded bomblets, which pose a grave danger, particularly to children.

Second, there is the economic argument: cluster munitions reduce access to land and hinder the development of affected regions for decades after their use, as seen in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Clearing unexploded cluster munitions is an expensive, lengthy, and dangerous task.

Third, cluster munitions have low military value; there are other weapon systems that can be more precise and cause less harm to civilians.

Finally, operations to clear or destroy cluster munitions could have adverse environmental impacts if precautions are not taken. Adverse impacts include short-term effects, such as the removal of vegetation, and long-term effects, such as the contamination of soil and water systems when the weapons are destroyed in place. Operations may also impact the natural habitats of insects and wildlife.

For all these reasons, we deplore the use of cluster munitions. We call upon non-States Parties to refrain from using and transferring cluster munitions and consider joining the Convention on Cluster Munition as a matter of priority. We urge the twelve countries that have signed to expedite their ratification of the Convention.

Thank you.

END