



**United Nations Office
for Disarmament Affairs**

Message from the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs
Twelfth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Izumi Nakamitsu
High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

As delivered

Geneva
10 September 2024

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor to address the Twelfth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. I wish to commend Her Excellency Ambassador Francisca Méndez Escobar of Mexico for her stewardship of the Convention in the past year.

Today, we gather to reaffirm our commitment to this crucial humanitarian convention, to reflect on our progress, and to address the challenges we currently face. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Peru and South Africa for successfully fulfilling their responsibilities under Article 3 of the Convention pertaining to the destruction of their cluster munitions stockpiles. These achievements should be celebrated as we work towards fully implementing the Lausanne Action Plan.

However, we still face considerable challenges. The geopolitical landscape remains complex and volatile. The production and transfer of cluster munitions is increasing at a global level. The continued use of cluster munitions is reported in Ukraine, and new use was recorded in Myanmar and Syria. While casualty rates seem to have decreased from last year, it is more likely that a high number of incidents go unreported. And with increased use comes increased risk. We must remain vigilant and fiercely condemn the use of cluster munitions.

Cluster munitions cause unacceptable harm. They worsen humanitarian crises, hinder development, and undermine human rights. Their wide-area effect and high failure rate leave behind unexploded ordnance that remains lethal for years, long after conflicts have ended. The deteriorating security context does not justify the use of these weapons. The Secretary-General has made it clear that cluster munitions must be consigned to history.

Now is not the time to abandon the values enshrined in humanitarian disarmament. On the contrary, it is when peace and security are at their most fragile state that we must reaffirm our commitment to these instruments. and to the global efforts to protect civilians. Turning away from these principles is not an option.

By continuing to work together in the spirit of partnership that has always defined this Convention, we can achieve its goals, overcome remaining obstacles, and build on the progress we have made. The Secretary-General remains fully committed to the implementation and universalization of the Convention.

In closing, I congratulate Ms. Julianny Alcocer for winning the Youth Multimedia Contest organized by the Presidency of Mexico. Meaningful youth participation is crucial, as their voices and actions inspire change, mobilize communities, and drive the global movement toward a safer, more peaceful world free from cluster munitions.

I wish you successful deliberations in the days ahead and urge you to find practical measures to restore global efforts on this crucial convention. The Office for Disarmament Affairs is ready to support you in our shared commitment upholding the core principles of the Convention.

Thank you!



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**UNODA/OCHA/OHCHR/DPO/UNICEF joint statement Twelfth Meeting
of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions**

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I now have the honour to deliver the following statement on behalf of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UN Department of Peace Operations, and the United Nations Children's Fund.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Cluster munitions are a weapon of the past.

Since their first use in the 1940s, cluster munitions have caused extensive civilian death, injury and suffering, as well as long-term negative impacts on a host of economic and social rights, with children representing a large proportion of victims. This harm continues for decades after wars have ended, contaminating land and disrupting livelihoods.

Under the Convention on Cluster Munitions, States agreed that the civilian harm inflicted by these weapons is unacceptable and that humanity must impose limits on their use.

This idea lies at the heart of international humanitarian law, which seeks to limit human suffering in the midst of armed conflict.

For 16 years, a growing majority of States have translated their rejection of cluster munitions into a legal commitment never again to use, produce, transfer or stockpile them and to clear existing contamination and provide assistance to survivors. Under the Convention, States Parties expressed their determination “to put an end for all time to the suffering and casualties caused by cluster munitions.”

We deeply regret the decision of Lithuania to withdraw from this Convention. This marks the first time a State withdraws from a global humanitarian disarmament treaty. Such a precedent will have long-term repercussions for the integrity of the Convention and for the sanctity of international humanitarian law more generally.

We strongly urge Lithuania to reconsider its decision to withdraw from the Convention. It is vital to continue to foster the stigma around the use of cluster munitions and promote adherence to the Convention by all States.

Thank you.