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**US led attempt to allow cluster bomb use is rejected at UN negotiations
Campaigners call on remaining states to join international ban on these weapons**

(Geneva, November 25, 2011) – An attempt by the United States and other remaining producers and stockpilers of cluster munitions to push through a weak new law which would have allowed these indiscriminate weapons to be used, has failed. Over fifty states at the United Nations negotiations rejected outright the cynical attempt to give legal cover to use these weapons in the future. This ends four years of negotiations on this issue.

“This was not a diplomatic game. It was about saving a great number of lives – the outright rejection of weaker standards shows that small and medium size states in partnership with the UN, ICRC and civil society can set the agenda in international politics” said Grethe Ostern, Policy Adviser, Mine Action Department, Norwegian Peoples Aid, Cluster Munition Coalition member.

The failure to set up a weaker alternative to the existing ban strengthens the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions which like the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty prohibits the use, production and transfer of an entire category of weapons and promotes the rights of victims and survivors. The Cluster Munition Coalition calls on all remaining countries to join the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

“The message from the failed efforts today is clear – cluster bombs are indiscriminate, kill long after they are dropped and are illegal. Countries like China, India, Israel, Russia and the US who say they are seriously concerned about the humanitarian impact, should go home and immediately begin destroying their stockpiles” said Amy Little, Campaign Manager for the Cluster Munition Coalition.

The US was the key promoter of the proposed law. Opposition was led by Norway, Austria, and Mexico, with powerful support from the Cluster Munition Coalition, the ICRC, and a large number of UN agencies, notably the UN Development Programme, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions has been signed by 111 nations, including some of the biggest users, producers, and or stockpilers in recent decades, such as the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and the Netherlands. Twenty-two of the twenty-eight NATO members have joined the ban convention.

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Notes to editors:

For more information, see:

- Avaaz petition: http://www.avaaz.org/en/cluster_bombs_ii_b/?fpla
- Draft chair's text of CCW protocol on cluster munitions: <http://bit.ly/ozC7iY>
- CMC on Facebook: www.facebook.com/banclusterbombs
- CMC on Twitter: www.twitter.com/@banclusterbombs
- CMC on Storify: <http://storify.com/banclusterbombs/convention-on-conventional-weapons-review-conference>

About cluster bombs:

A cluster munition (or cluster bomb) is a weapon containing multiple - often hundreds - of small explosive submunitions or bomblets. Cluster munitions are dropped from the air or fired from the ground and designed to break open in mid-air, releasing the submunitions over an area that can be the size of several football fields. This means they cannot discriminate between civilians and soldiers. Many of the submunitions fail to explode on impact and remain a threat to lives and livelihoods for decades after a conflict.

About The United States Campaign to Ban Landmines (USCBL) :

The USCBL, currently coordinated by Handicap International, is a coalition of thousands of people and U.S. non-governmental organizations working to: (1) ensure no U.S. use, production, or transfer of antipersonnel landmines and cluster munitions; (2) encourage the U.S. to join the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty and the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions; and (3) secure high levels of U.S. government support for clearance and assistance programs for victims of landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war. The USCBL is the U.S. affiliate of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL)—the co-laureate of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize—and is a member of the Cluster Munition Coalition.

About the Convention on Cluster Munitions:

The Convention on Cluster Munitions bans the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions and requires countries to clear affected areas within 10 years and destroy stockpiles of the weapon within eight. The Convention includes groundbreaking provisions requiring assistance to victims and affected communities. Signed in Oslo in December 2008, the Convention entered into force as binding international law on 1 August 2010 and is the most significant international disarmament treaty since the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty banning antipersonnel landmines.

About the Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC):

The CMC is an international coalition with more than 350 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in around 100 countries to encourage urgent action against cluster bombs. The CMC facilitates NGO efforts worldwide to educate governments, the public and the media about the problems of cluster munitions and to urge universalisation and full implementation of the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions.

111 countries have joined the Convention on Cluster Munitions (full States Parties - bold):

Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, DR Congo, Republic of Congo, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Côte D'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Fiji, France, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, The Holy See, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia FYR, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Rwanda, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, St. Vincent and Grenadines, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Kingdom, Uruguay, and Zambia. See www.stopclustermunitions.org/treatystatus for details.