

The Cluster Munition Coalition is led by a Governance Board of:

Afghan Landmine Survivors Organisation, Action On Armed Violence, Asociación para Políticas Públicas-APP, Cambodia Campaign to Ban Landmines, Campaña Colombiana Contra Minas, DanChurchAid, Handicap International, Human Rights Watch, ICBL Georgian Committee, IKV Pax Christi, IPPNW, Japan Campaign to Ban landmines, Mines Action Canada, Nepal Campaign to Ban Landmines, Norwegian People's Aid, Protection and Religions for Peace.



Global conference on cluster bomb ban ends with even more states pledging to join the treaty

N.B a closing press conference will be held in Beirut today at 5.30pm in the Monroe Hotel, 1st floor, Ballroom.

(Beirut, 16 September 2011): The Second Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions ended in Beirut today with a strong international declaration to rid the world of cluster munitions.

The 90 States Parties and signatories to the Convention at the meeting adopted the Beirut Declaration, which notes the lifesaving gains made already by the ban. It also strongly condemns the use of cluster munitions by any actor, anywhere.

“We acknowledge that the progress made since the First Meeting of States Parties and throughout the Oslo Process is the result of the successful partnership between States, international organizations and civil society,” the Declaration says.

In closing the Declaration says: “Together, we are compelled to do more, for as long as people remain at risk, to accomplish our collective goal – a world free of cluster munitions.”

Steve Goose, Chair of the CMC, said: “This meeting has made abundantly clear that this treaty is working. It is already making a real difference in alleviating the suffering caused by cluster munitions, and is preventing future harm.”

The conference in Beirut, capital of heavily cluster munition-affected Lebanon, was attended by representatives from more than 120 states and hundreds of civil society campaigners from all over the world.

Amongst these were cluster bombs survivors, or families of people killed by this indiscriminate weapon, from Lao PDR, Vietnam, Serbia, Ethiopia, Lebanon, the United States and Iraq, amongst many other countries.

During the meeting countries announced promising progress they've made against their treaty obligations, or how they intend to become full States Parties to the Convention. Amongst the most significant announcements were:

- Swaziland's accession to the Convention, becoming the 63rd State Party;
- Signatories Italy, Hungary, Gambia, Cameroon, Mauritania, Czech Republic, and South Africa confirming that steps they are taking to ratify the Convention should soon be complete;
- Slovenia has completed its stockpile destruction and major stockpilers the UK and Germany announced that they each have destroyed more than 60 per cent of their stockpiles;
- The UK will exceed its 30million GBP commitment to funding clearance of cluster munitions between 2010-2013, and Germany will provide 700,000 Euros to clearance in Lebanon in 2012;

In addition, it appears that those States Parties contaminated by cluster munitions should finish clearance operations before the treaty's 10-year deadline, with the exception of Lao PDR, the most heavily-affected country in the world.

States also pledged to expand their victim assistance programs, although much more needs to be done. CMC cluster munition survivors issued a Victim's Declaration calling on governments to “move beyond words and take action.”

Representatives from 40 countries who have not yet joined the Convention came to the conference as observers. Delegates from Malaysia, Gabon, Kiribati, Tajikistan and newly independent South Sudan all indicated that they plan to accede to the Convention.

ENDS

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For real time updates from the conference please visit us on Facebook www.facebook.com/banclusterbombs and follow us on Twitter www.twitter.com/banclusterbombs

For details on the Convention and the CMC's work please visit www.stopclustermunitions.org

Resources available – please contact Kate Wiggans to arrange access to interviewees

1. Specialist interviews with CMC spokespeople, campaigners and cluster bomb survivors from all over the world in a huge variety of different languages.
2. High resolution images of the conference, survivors, contaminated land, and clearance, with captions and credits, available to download on Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/clustermunitioncoalition/collections/72157627347166682/>
3. Web-sized short films for use online and/or to embed codes for existing films: www.youtube.com/user/CMCInternational

Notes to editors:

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 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.

<http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/>

110 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, Tunisia, Uganda, United Kingdom, Uruguay, and Zambia. See www.stopclustermunitions.org/treatystatus for details.