



## **Mine Action Fellows Statement to the 2nd Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions**

Thank you Mr. President for the opportunity to speak to the 2nd Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions on behalf of the over sixty Mine Action Fellows from over a dozen countries around the world.

It has been a challenging year for all of us. COVID-19 has changed our lives in countless ways adding an additional layer of difficulty for those of us who live in conflict zones or who are dealing with cluster munition contamination in our communities including survivors.

The pandemic forced some clearance and victim assistance programs to stop working which has slowed progress towards our shared goal of a cluster munition free world and had a direct negative impact on the lives of survivors, their families and communities.

We have adapted - we carried out community liaison work via telephone, we used street art to advocate for the rights of survivors, we went virtual when we had to, we added public health and domestic violence prevention messages into our risk education programs, and we reached out to vulnerable communities in any way we could. We kept the momentum going.

We call on you to do the same - change, adapt and keep the momentum going. Donor states, the COVID-19 pandemic should not be used as an excuse to cut your funding for the implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Affected states, you must keep the work going. We now know how to - safely - clear cluster munitions, provide victim assistance and risk education and it has been shown to work so let's get on with it. In fact the pandemic is a reason to increase funding for these efforts.

We cannot leave cluster munition victims behind - victim assistance must be a focus of our work to implement the Convention. Although the global economy has been affected by the pandemic, we must deal with cluster munition contamination. Assistance to victims, from an intersectional perspective, must be a focus of our work to implement the Convention and to be able to better rebuild our societies without leaving anyone behind. We cannot let one global crisis inhibit progress on this global problem. Now is the time to step up and show leadership.

We are outraged to see new use of cluster munitions in 2020 added to the continued use over the past five years. Any use of cluster munitions by any actor under any circumstances

must be swiftly and strongly condemned. As our representatives, we call on you to reflect our anger at the use of these banned weapons. There is no room for weak condemnations when it comes to the use of cluster munitions.

We appreciate the references to gender and the environment in the Lausanne Action Plan. The inclusive and sensitive implementation of gender and other differential aspects of the CCM is and always has been more than necessary. There is no doubt that different people feel the impact of cluster munitions in different ways, so we cannot expect to have success in reaching a cluster munitions free world without including differential approaches. On the environmental provisions, we are pleased to see that the Lausanne Action Plan recognizes that we should not have to choose between safety and protection of the environment.

We are committed to supporting your implementation of the Action Plan and remind you that it is called an action plan for a reason. All States Parties must act. Even if your obligations are solely to submit annual article 7 reports, you need to do it.

Amid all the challenges of 2020, there has been one bright spot. The shift to virtual meetings meant that for the first time ever all Mine Action Fellows were able to participate in the Review Conference. With support from donors and Mines Action Canada, we all had access to the diplomatic meetings. In previous years, our ability to participate has been limited by costs and our inability to obtain visas.

Youth like us are working with our communities to meet their immediate and long-term needs. Our work also helps the implementation of decisions you make here and to support our collective efforts for a global ban. We have first hand knowledge of the situation on the ground and our inputs are valuable, but too often we are unable to share our knowledge and insights because of logistical barriers. When this community is able to convene again in person, please consider ways to ensure wider participation in these meetings. We need everyone contributing if we are going to reach our goal of a world without cluster munitions. 2030 is not that far away - time is running out.

Once we have solved the cluster munition problem (and this IS a global problem that can be solved very soon) we will have more resources to tackle the other problems facing our planet like climate change, public health and inequality. Our generation cannot solve all of these problems alone. Those in power now must take action so that those of us on the ground can continue our work. We have to work together for a world free of cluster munitions.

Thank you.