

**Statement delivered by  
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*First Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions High-Level Segment*

*September 2015*

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for giving me the floor and for welcoming us so warmly this week.

Allow me also to thank the victims of cluster munitions for the precious testimony we just heard, which reaffirms the value and importance of the convention as well as its full implementation for fellow human beings.

I would like to make three points.

**First, we believe it paramount to anchor the Convention within broader security and development efforts.** In addition to meeting the basic security needs of civilians, action against cluster munition must be designed, implemented and monitored as a long-term effort contributing to both security and development – shortly to human security. We should aim to make a real difference at the level of individuals, both women, men, girls and boys, and societies.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to be formally adopted by end of this month, comprises 17 goals and 169 targets. We – the mine action community – should understand and be aware of how we can contribute to the fulfilment of these goals, not least goal 16 which sets the target to reduce all forms of violence. By building conceptual and operational bridges to areas such as Security Sector Reform, Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration, and Socio-Economic Development, the implementation of the CCM will be more relevant, productive and sustainable. It will ensure that the CCM is about saving lives AND improving livelihoods.

It will also open new sources of funding: the link between clearance operations and the protection of the environment promoted by Croatia is a case in point. Funding dedicated to the protection of the environment is partially allocated to clearance projects in natural parks. An inspiring initiative, indeed.

**Second, respecting Convention's deadlines must remain a priority.** Mine action has considerably improved both in terms of institutions, strategies, management and operations. National capacities are strengthened and efficiency and effectiveness of operations enhanced. These improvements are captured in the international mine action standards and, in an increasing number of regions, are yielding concrete results on the ground. For example: progress made in surveys translates into significant acceleration of land released – as demonstrated by the Cluster Munitions Remnant Survey approach implemented by NPA in Laos. Sharing and promoting these good practice and innovative approaches will make missing deadlines a non-option.

**Third, we need to ask ourselves how to address the challenges posed by conflicts, and new conflict forms, for the implementation of the Convention.**

The GICHD is deeply concerned by the use of cluster munitions in several new and ongoing conflicts, as reported in the freshly-released Cluster Munition Monitor.

There exist significant operational challenges as well: While mine action traditionally takes place in post-conflict settings, current circumstances of protracted conflicts might call for mine action to be conducted during hostilities, for the benefit of the civilian population. Is the mine action community ready to respond? Not necessarily I daresay.

- Are we in a position to initiate or continue appropriate survey and clearance operations in conflict settings?
- Can we ensure the safety and security of as well as unhindered humanitarian access for operators?
- Who are the interlocutors to liaise with?
- How can we uphold the basic humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence?

The GICHD looks forward to engaging with partners around these and other questions. Admittedly, they are not easy and will require a critical look at the modus operandi of mine action actors – and humanitarian actors more in general for that matter.

The GICHD remains committed to working with all of you towards a world free of cluster munitions and mines, towards a better protection of civilians, and towards increased human security.

Thank you.