Statement by the Cluster Munition Coalition

First Committee on Disarmament and International Security

Sixty per cent of the world’s states have now formally committed to the goals of the Convention on Cluster Munitions through their signature, ratification, or accession, while more than 70 per cent have demonstrated their support for its humanitarian goals through a 2018 UN General Assembly resolution.

The Convention is widely acknowledged as the only framework for the worldwide effort to eradicate cluster munitions and to prevent the suffering they cause and has established a strong norm against use. The fact that only one state – Syria – has used the weapon recently, confirms this norm.

Cluster munitions are indiscriminate, both at the time of use and also in the long-term because of the explosive submunitions they leave behind. Civilians accounted for 99% of all cluster munition casualties whose status was recorded in 2018 and 2017, according to the Cluster Munition Monitor. This horrible humanitarian toll is illustrated in Syria where government forces continue to use the weapon with support from Russia.

2020 marks ten years since the Conventions’ entry into force with the Second Review Conference to be held in Switzerland. At this juncture, it is critical to address ongoing use, and to convert Treaty progress to date towards the rapid achievement of implementation goals.

The Cluster Munition Coalition calls on First Committee delegations to:

• Vote in favour of the resolution on cluster munitions and encourage others, such as regional group members, to do so as well;
• Condemn recent instances of cluster munitions use;
• Report on steps taken to join the Convention and engage bilaterally in discussions on the universalization or implementation of the Convention;
• Encourage the strongest possible participation in and preparation for the 2020 Second Review Conference of the Convention;
• Provide institutional, financial and human resources to ensure sustainable assistance to victims; and
• Promote adoption of gender, age and disability inclusiveness in Treaty implementation.

All states should join the Convention to strengthen the international community's rejection of this weapon — even those that do not possess cluster munitions. By joining, each state adds one more voice in favour of the ban, thus demonstrating solidarity with affected countries and victims, strengthening the body of international humanitarian law, and helping to prevent further suffering caused by the weapon. Any step towards freeing the world from cluster munitions and advancing the rights of survivors is a step closer to the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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