

Convention on Cluster Munitions

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**Review of the status and operation of the Convention and other matters
important for achieving the aims of the Convention****International cooperation and assistance**

Country Coalitions to Promote the Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Submitted by the President of the Seventh Meeting of States Parties

1. Article 6.1 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) declares that “in fulfilling its obligations under the Convention each State Party has the right to seek and receive assistance”. Therefore cooperation and assistance is critical to the full implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. As the Convention on Cluster Munitions does not have a dedicated implementation mechanism to assist countries in need of assistance with the implementation of their treaty obligations, the Presidency together with ICBL-CMC launched an initiative that builds on a country specific approach. This individualized approach dubbed “country coalitions” shall notably promote the destruction and clearance of cluster munitions in particularly affected States Parties as well as facilitate improved assistance to victims of cluster munitions. The objective of the country coalition concept is to foster comprehensive implementation of the CCM through comprehensive cooperation. Furthermore, all countries should be in a position to contribute to country coalitions as a means to further the implementation of the CCM. It thus supports the work of the coordinators on international cooperation and assistance to facilitate closer and more targeted donor state – recipient state cooperation.

2. The concept could in the long run also be used by non-States Parties and in a cross conventional context (together with APMBC or CCW Prot. V) as a coordinated approach concerning destruction and clearance (including mapping and securing of contaminated areas) of cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war. It might put non-State parties in a better position to accede to the Convention and thus promote universalization of the CCM.

3. The concept underscores the importance of national ownership as the key to a successful country coalition which requires that the objectives of the collaboration are clear with a national strategy document as the guiding document for the partnerships created.

4. A country coalition should be specific to address an affected country’s peculiar challenges. With this backdrop, the concept of establishing “country coalitions” (i.e. with a country specific focus) as a means to enhance international cooperation and thus promote the implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions seems to have considerable

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potential. In such an informal framework the relevant actors for such a coalition would include representatives of the affected country, donor states, and international organizations such as the ICRC, operators on the ground and other relevant experts, such as the GICHD.

5. In principle, the country coalition would be coordinated by the affected country together with a donor country (or lead countries) in order to promote a more comprehensive approach to the country's specific challenges. It emphasizes the need for the coordination of donor support especially in the case of smaller donor states that would have a challenge keeping up with monitoring requirements. It is critical that the funding channels employed facilitate more effective collaboration and provide a clear understanding of how the coalition is going to be implemented.

6. Within the Coordination Committee of the Convention on Cluster Munitions this would fall in particular in the purview of the following thematic areas:

- Universalization
- Clearance and Risk Reduction Education
- Stockpile destruction
- International Cooperation and Assistance
- National Implementation Measures

7. It should be underlined that such an approach should not duplicate existing bilateral, multilateral or international activities/programs for destruction and clearance of cluster munitions in general, but coordinate these activities with a focus on specific affected countries.

8. In order to conceptualize and promote the concept, a number of informal meetings and seminars were organized by the Presidency in areas with significant cluster munition contamination (South East Asia and South East Europe). The meetings in Bangkok (March 2017, financed by the EU) and in Zagreb /RACVIAC (June 2017, financed by the Presidency) were designed to test the viability and attractiveness of the concept in a reality based context and brought together interested donor states, international organizations, operators on the ground and other relevant experts. The meetings notably served to identify:

- the concrete challenges in terms of destruction and clearance of cluster munitions
- possible activities/programs to overcome these challenges
- coalitions of actors to assist the affected country in the implementation of these activities/programs.

9. The country coalition concept was also actively promoted by the coordinators on international cooperation and assistance (Australia and Iraq) during the June 2017 intersessional meeting of the APMBC in the form of a dedicated and informal closed meeting.

10. After refining this concept in the initial phase the Coordination Committee might identify potential target countries including both States Parties to address concrete challenges like contamination, stockpile destruction and victim assistance. The Bangkok seminar clearly demonstrated the potential for establishing such coalitions in the case of Lao PDR. As a next step, the affected State plus the coordinators on clearance and international cooperation and assistance will investigate the idea to have a country specific seminar in order to further operationalize the concept in a needs based approach.

11. After the successful application of the initiative in States Parties, country coalitions could also be extended to the most affected non-State Parties, notably those suffering from a more general and complex contamination of explosive remnants of war like Vietnam or Cambodia.