



For Immediate Release

Cluster bomb ban treaty takes effect worldwide ***Campaigners celebrate as Convention becomes binding international law***

(London, 29 July 2010) – The Convention on Cluster Munitions takes effect on Sunday, 1 August 2010, when it becomes binding international law in countries around the world. In dozens of countries, campaigners from the Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC) will join UN agencies, governments and international organisations in events celebrating the swift entry into force of the most significant disarmament and humanitarian treaty in over a decade.

“Campaigners around the world are celebrating a triumph of humanitarian values over a cruel and unjust weapon,” said Thomas Nash, Coordinator of the CMC. “At a time when concern over civilian deaths in conflict is in the news, this treaty stands out as a clear example of what governments must do to protect civilians and redress the harm already caused by cluster bombs, by assisting victims and making land safe.”

Adopted in Dublin on 30 May 2008 and opened for signature in Oslo in December 2008, the Convention bans the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions and calls for the destruction of stockpiles within eight years, clearance of cluster munition-contaminated land within 10 years, and assistance to cluster munition survivors and affected communities. On 1 August, all of the Convention’s provisions become fully and legally binding for states that have joined.

“Nations that remain outside this treaty are missing out on the most significant advance in disarmament of the past decade,” said Steve Goose, director of the Arms Division at Human Rights Watch and CMC co-chair. “If governments care enough about humanitarian law and protecting civilians from the deadly effects of armed conflict, they will join immediately.”

To date, 107 countries have signed the Convention and 37 have ratified. Among them are former users and producers of cluster munitions, as well as countries affected by the weapons. The international stigma against cluster munitions is already taking root and the last confirmed use of cluster munitions in a major armed conflict met with international condemnation when both Russia and Georgia used them in the conflict over South Ossetia in August 2008.

“Work is already under way to implement the Convention’s provisions, which shows that states are serious about ending the civilian suffering caused by cluster bombs and helping survivors and affected communities to enjoy their full human rights,” said Marion Libertucci, advocacy officer at Handicap International and CMC co-chair.

In recent weeks, Moldova and Norway destroyed the last of their cluster munition stockpiles, joining Spain, which eradicated its stockpile last year. Nearly a dozen other states have begun destruction, including the United Kingdom, a major former user and producer of the weapons. In December 2009, Albania completed clearance of cluster submunition contamination on its territory, the first signatory country to do so.

The CMC calls on all governments to attend the First Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, which will be held from 9-12 November in Lao PDR, the world’s most cluster-bombed country. This key meeting will lay the foundation for future work on the Convention by bringing together for the first time states parties to the treaty, UN agencies, international organisations, civil society, and cluster bomb survivors. Governments will share progress to date and draw up plans for action to implement the treaty’s lifesaving provisions within the established deadlines.

“Only a few years ago, many people said it was an impossible dream to ban cluster bombs,” said

Branislav Kapetanovic a CMC spokesperson who lost all four limbs to a cluster submunition during a clearance operation in Serbia. "What this treaty shows is that ordinary people, including cluster bomb survivors like me, can be a part of extraordinary changes that bring real improvements to people's lives all over the world."

Since its founding in 2003, the CMC has worked as a global network of civil society organisations and cluster bomb survivors in collaboration with governments, UN agencies and international organisations to negotiate and promote universal adherence to the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

CMC campaigners are holding events in around 75 countries on all continents and on board a ship in the Arctic Ocean to mark the Convention's entry into force and "beat the drum to ban cluster bombs," including drumming sessions, film screenings, panel discussions, football games, and photographic exhibitions. (See below for a list of countries where events will take place.)

To read the CMC fact sheet, "From Words to Action: questions and answers on the Convention on Cluster Munitions," please visit:

<http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/cmc-from-words-to-action-qa.pdf>

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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, it 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/>

The following 107 countries have signed the Convention

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, Dominican Republic,

Ecuador, El Salvador, Fiji, France, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, 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, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Zambia.

Of these, the following 37 countries have ratified the Convention

Albania (16 Jun 2009), Austria (2 Apr 2009), Belgium (22 Dec 2009), Burkina Faso (16 February 2010), Burundi (25 Sep 2009), Croatia (17 Aug 2009), Denmark (12 February 2010), Ecuador (11 May 2010), Fiji (28 May 2010), France (25 Sep 2009), Germany (8 Jul 2009), The Holy See (3 Dec 2008), Ireland (3 Dec 2008), Japan (14 Jul 2009), Lao PDR (18 Mar 2009), Lesotho (28 May 2010), Luxembourg (10 Jul 2009), Macedonia (8 Oct 2009), Malawi (7 Oct 2009), Mali (30 June 2010), Malta (24 Sep 2009), Mexico (6 May 2009), Moldova (16 February 2010), Montenegro (25 January 2010), New Zealand (22 Dec 2009), Nicaragua (6 Nov 2009), Niger (2 Jun 2009), Norway (3 Dec 2008), Samoa (28 April 2010), San Marino (10 Jul 2009), Seychelles (20 May 2010), Sierra Leone (3 Dec 2008), Slovenia (19 Aug 2009), Spain (17 Jun 2009), United Kingdom (4 May 2010), Uruguay (24 Sep 2009), Zambia (12 Aug 2009).

Events are planned in the following countries to celebrate the Convention's entry into force:

Africa: Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Mali, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Togo and Uganda; **Americas:** Argentina, Canada, Colombia, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, United States, Uruguay and Venezuela; **Asia and the Pacific:** Australia, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam; **Europe:** Albania, Arctic Ocean, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Luxembourg, Macedonia FYR, Moldova, the Netherlands, Norway, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey and United Kingdom; and **Middle East and North Africa:** Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait and Syria.

See complete information on CMC events worldwide at: <http://www.august1.org/events>