

Press Release

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UN SALUTES THE NEW CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS

Max Kerley, Director of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), expressed his satisfaction about the new Convention on Cluster Munitions in New York. "This is a major step for the global disarmament agenda. Cluster munitions cause considerable humanitarian and socio-economic damage, as witnessed by UNMAS in numerous countries and territories."

The United Nations announced the entry into force of the new Convention on Cluster Munitions on 1 August 2010. The new convention prohibits the use, production, and trade in cluster munitions, requires assistance to victims of the weapons and provides a framework for assistance and cooperation to affected countries. It was adopted by 107 States at a conference in Dublin, Ireland in May 2008 and opened for signature in Oslo in December 2008.

"I am particularly delighted that this convention, which prohibits the use, as well as the development, production, stockpiling, and transfer of such weapons, entered into force in little more than two years since the Dublin Diplomatic Conference on Cluster Munitions that negotiated the treaty in May 2008. This truly exemplifies the strong determination of States to consign these abhorrent weapons to the pages of history," noted UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Tremendous efforts by national authorities, NGOs, civil society, and United Nations departments, agencies, funds and programmes have contributed to achieving significant successes in addressing the impact of cluster munitions, among other explosive ordnance. For example, the UNMAS coordinated mine action programmes in Afghanistan and in Lebanon deal not only with landmines but also with unexploded submunitions used during past conflicts. The formidable work done by UNMAS in addressing the damage caused by cluster munitions in Lebanon in 2006 earned the prestigious UNHCR Nansen Award.

Cluster munitions were also used in Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Western Sahara, all places where UNMAS is helping to protect civilians from the dangers caused by these terrible weapons through clearance, mine risk education and other mine action activities.

“In light of the success of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty,” says Mr. Kerley, “we can only hope that this Convention will gather an equal amount of support by both affected countries and donors in order to reduce the requirements for mine action activities and end the needless loss of innocent lives.”

UNMAS, a Division within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions, was established in 1997 to coordinate UN efforts towards a world free of the humanitarian, socio-economic and environmental impact posed by the presence of landmines and explosive remnants of war, including cluster munitions.

Visit mineaction.org to learn more.