Grenada became the first country ever to accede to the Convention on Cluster Munitions after depositing its instrument of accession in New York on 29 June 2011.

“The first accession to the Convention is an important milestone, and hopefully a sign of many more to come”, said CMC Director Laura Cheeseman.

“It is all the more significant given that Grenada is one of the countries where cluster bombs have been used” she added.

Since the Convention entered into force on 1 August 2010 new countries must join the ban treaty through a one-step process of accession that combines signature and ratification, and often requires both government and parliamentary approval.

Grenada’s accession brings the total number of countries who have joined the lifesaving ban to 109. The Convention will become legally binding for Grenada on 1 December 2011.

Although Grenada has never used, stockpiled or produced cluster munitions, it is one of the 39 countries and territories where cluster bombs have been used. During the 1983 invasion of Grenada, the United States used twenty-one MK-20 Rockeye cluster bombs containing a total of 5,187 bomblets. It is not yet known whether the remnants of the bombs have all been cleared.

Of the fourteen independent CARICOM (Caribbean Community) member states, Grenada is the third to become a State Party to the Convention, alongside Antigua and Barbuda and St Vincent and the Grenadines. Two others - Haiti and Jamaica - have signed but not yet ratified.
Landmark conference on Convention on Cluster Munitions ends with hope for future progress

Delegates from at least 80 countries met to advance their commitments to a world free of cluster bombs at the first four-day “intersessional” meeting on the Convention on Cluster Munitions between 27 – 30 June.

Government officials from States Parties, signatory states and non-signatories held discussions on progress made so far in implementing the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and the challenges that remain.

There was also an update on the preparations for the Second Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (2MSP) that will take place in Beirut, Lebanon from 12-16 September 2011.

The main headlines from the week’s meeting were:

- Public condemnation of the use of cluster bombs by Libyan and Thai forces from Australia, Lao PDR, UK, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway and Spain, as well as the CMC and the ICRC;
- Spain’s official acknowledgement that it transferred cluster bombs to Libya before becoming a State Party;
- Announcement that Albania and Zambia have cleared their contaminated land;
- Austria, Belgium, Ecuador, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Portugal, and Spain have completed the destruction of all their stockpiled cluster bombs;
- Hungary, which has not yet ratified the Convention, announced it has also completed the destruction of its stockpiled cluster bombs.

In addition to government delegates 100 Cluster Munition Coalition campaigners from 40 countries participated in the meeting alongside international organizations including the UN and the ICRC.

This meeting took place almost one year since the Convention on Cluster Munitions entered into force and following the adoption of the Vientiane Action Plan at the First Meeting of States Parties in Lao PDR in November last year.

The CMC was actively involved in the meetings, delivering statements and calling on governments to report on concrete steps they have taken under the Vientiane Action Plan.

You can read the CMC’s statements and find out more information by clicking on the links below.

http://www.clusterconvention.org/work-programme/intersessional-meeting-2011/
http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/news/?id=3086
Take Action

1 August 2011: Celebrate the first anniversary of the Convention on Cluster Munitions’ entry into force

On 1 August 2011, the CMC will mark the first anniversary of the Convention’s entry into force with campaign actions worldwide and will call on all states to accede to, ratify and implement the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

This year the CMC will mark the 1 August with a sports theme and call on everyone to “Join the Team” in the fight for a world free of cluster bombs.

Campaigners are encouraged to organise or participate in sporting events – including sports events for people with disabilities - to celebrate the anniversary of the Convention’s entry into force and to urge governments to join and implement the Convention. To read more about the global day of action visit www.august1.org

Contact: Kimberly Brown, CMC staff: Kimberly@icblcmc.org

Campaign and Country Updates

Australia: The “Fix the Bill” campaign on Australia’s draft legislation will continue as the legislation still has not passed in the Senate. The current legislation in Australia allows Australian troops to directly and actively assist in the use of cluster bombs, when combating with allied non-state parties. It also allows non-state parties to stockpile cluster bombs on Australian soil and permits cluster bomb transit through Australian ports and airspace. CMC Australia campaigners sent an open letter on 6 July to the Defence Minister, Foreign Affairs Minister and the Attorney General which highlights the problems with the bill. The letter was signed by prominent Australians and other international representatives including lawyers, academics, NGO representatives, and a Nobel Laureate. Petitions are also being organized. To learn more about the Fix the Bill campaign visit http://sites.google.com/site/cmaustraliapublic/home and to view the open letter visit http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/news/?id=3295

Contact: Mette Eliseussen, CMC, Australia, mette@eliseussen.com

Austria: Judith Majlath, Director of CMC & ICBL-Austria received the “Bundesehren Zeichen” award of the Republic of Austria in May. The award was for her humanitarian work in disarmament over the past sixteen years and was presented by Vice Chancellor & Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger, followed by a reception at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Vienna. In his speech the Minister emphasized the importance of Majlath’s dedicated, mostly voluntary work nationally and internationally in banning cluster munitions and antipersonnel mines.

Contact: Judith Majlath, CMC, Austria, judith.majlath@aon.at
Canada: MAC’s Youth to Youth (Y2Y) Network are selling t-shirts as part of a global youth led fundraising campaign – the “In Our Lifetime Legacy” project. Proceeds from the sale will be used to make a sizeable contribution towards the further education for a Cambodian survivor. The final handover ceremony will take place in Cambodia, at the 11th Meeting of State Parties of the Mine Ban Treaty in November in Phnom Penh. It is hoped that this event will be a powerful advocacy tool, telling diplomats and donors in attendance to commit to funding the mine sector at an adequate and stable level to move forward.

Contact: Mines Action Canada, info@minesactioncanada.org

DRC: The Congolese Campaign to Ban Landmines and Cluster Munitions (CCBL) held a press conference following the intersessional meetings that took place in Geneva, and emphasising DRC’s participation at the meetings. Issues that were highlighted were the acknowledgement of the DRC Government for submitting a voluntary transparency report and for adopting the law authorising the ratification of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in the National Assembly. Mr. Francky Miantuala, Coordinator of the CCBL called on the DRC government to accelerate ratification and to participate at the highest level possible at the Second Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions that will be held from 12-16 September in Beirut, Lebanon.

Iraq: From 5-7 June, the Iraqi Alliance for Disability (IADO) attended a national conference hosted by the Ministry of Human Rights. The Iraqi Prime Minister, Mr. Almaliki, Iraqi Ministers, members of parliament, UN representatives, Embassy representatives, Civil Society and media were present.

At the conference IADO focused on rights for People with Disabilities (PWDs) in Iraq, including rights for jobs, housing and the founding of an independent disability council.

The following week, Moaffak Alkhafji attended a symposium for the protection of journalist law. The symposium was hosted by Iraqi Parliament member Mrs. Safia Alsuhail. IADO asked for an update on ratification of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Iraq and the members of parliament at the meeting responded that this would be done soon.

On 19 June 201 IADO met with the Human Rights Committee of the Iraqi Parliament to discuss the Convention Munitions. The meeting was well received, with a promise to work more closely on all issues dealing with the rights of people with disabilities. After the meeting finished, a press conference was held.

Contact: Moaffak Alkhafji, IADO, moaffak.62@yahoo.com

Mozambique: From 25 May to 2 June 2011, Mozambican Force for Crime Investigation and Social Reinsertion (FOMICRES) provided two training courses in peace and public security. More than 200 community members, of whom 62 were women, from the districts of Sussundenga and Gondola, in Manica province, took the course and learned skills and knowledge necessary to become focal points in their communities for security issues, including the surrender of weapons, reporting of areas affected by landmines and liaison with the police force regarding crime. The training courses were funded by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

Contact: Albino Forquilha, FOMICRES, aforquilha@yahoo.com

Franky Miantuala at the press conference with CMC materials from the first intersessional meeting. Photo credit: Franky Miantuala

Iraq: Panelists at the national conference hosted by the Ministry of Human Rights. Photo credit: Moaffak Alkhafji

Participants at the peace and public security training course. Photo credit: Albino Forquilha
Taiwan: Between 13-19 June more than 1,500 people visited an exhibition by the Eden Social Welfare Foundation (EDEN) in cooperation with the Center for the Study of Human Rights. Held at Soochow University, the photography exhibit presented the global problems cause by landmines and cluster munitions through images captured by survivors. EDEN built a simulated minefield in the exhibit and encouraged the public to take an active role by signing a petition and donating a shoe for a “shoe pile” activity.

Contact: Paul Chun, Eden Social Welfare Foundation, ieden.info@gmail.com

Tajikistan: Handicap International organized two regional workshops on victim assistance between 24-26 May in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. About 90 participants including civil society and governmental representatives, survivors and service providers from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, and Tajikistan participated in the workshops. Donor organizations interested in learning about victim assistance and possibly supporting inclusive development initiatives in the region also attended.

Contacts: Elke Hottentot / Camille Gosselin, Handicap International, ehottentot@handicap-international.org / cgosselin@handicap-international.org

USA: Proud Students Against Landmines (PSALM) students and West Virginia Campaign to Ban Landmines and Cluster Munitions (WVCBL) members met with Archbishop Pietro Sambi, Apostolic Nunciature of the Holy See at the Holy See Embassy in Washington D.C. The students expressed concern for children worldwide who are affected by the devastation caused by landmines and cluster munitions. PSALM students also met with West Virginia State Senators Jay Rockefeller and Joe Manchin at the Hart Senate Building and encouraged them to support the Cluster Munitions Civilian Protection Act and future legislation concerning bans on landmines and cluster munitions.

PSALM was chosen as one of 12 Catholic school programs nationwide for the “Catholic Schools of Tomorrow Award”. They have been featured in the “Today’s Catholic Teacher” magazine and a reception was hosted in their honour in Morgantown, West Virginia. Local and state leaders, elected officials, community dignitaries and WVCBL/PSALM alumni and supporters attended.

Contact: Nora Sheets, WVCBL/PSALM, noracat@yahoo.com

USA: Six former United States ambassadors or chiefs of mission to Laos wrote to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton asking her to visit Lao PDR during her upcoming trip to Southeast Asia and to commit to substantially increase U.S. funding for clearance of UXO left behind during the Vietnam War. Legacies of War, a US based NGO had made a recommendation for the United States to increase its funding to the UXO sector in Lao PDR to $10 million per year for the next 10 years, and all six former ambassadors endorsed this recommendation. To read the full Legacies of War press release visit:

Contact: Channapha Khamvongsa, Legacies of War, channapha@gmail.com
Disinvestment

Japan: The Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines (JCBL) organized an open seminar on disinvestment on 11 June that had 30 participants. A SEED Japan (ASJ), a Japanese NGO actively working on disinvestment, and JCBL gave an update on the current situation surrounding Japanese financial institutions. Both NGOs recently carried out a questionnaire to survey efforts being made by the Japanese financial institutions regarding disinvestment in cluster munition producing companies. The results of this survey were shared at the event. JCBL and ASJ reported that there has been small progress since the last year, and more things need to be done. Participants then discussed a number of issues including how the campaign can be improved, how it can have more impact, and next steps. JCBL will organise a symposium in November in order to reach out to a wider audience including financial institutions.

Contact: Junko Utsumi, JCBL, utsumi@jcbl-ngo.org

Motoko Mekata speaks at the disinvestment symposium. Photo credit: JCBL

Panelists at the disinvestment side event. Photo credit: IKV Pax Christi

The Netherlands: On 29 June, IKV Pax Christi hosted a side event on disinvestment during the First Intersessional Meeting of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Geneva. The event focused on the Stop Explosive Investments campaign and the latest findings from the 2011 IKV Pax Christi/Netwerk Vlaanderen report “Worldwide investments in cluster munitions; a shared responsibility”. The panel comprised of Kimberly Brown (Cluster Munition Coalition) who spoke about the evolvement of the international Stop Explosive Investments campaign, Roos Boer (IKV Pax Christi) who presented the finding of the new report and detailed information about existing legislation, legislative proposals and initiatives, and interpretive statements of various countries to prohibit these investments in cluster munition producers, and Paul Vermeulen (Handicap International Switzerland) who gave an in-depth update of the Swiss national campaign and recent developments. The panel was chaired by Paul Hannon (Mines Action Canada). The side event was well attended by both government delegations (including Switzerland, Canada, Germany, United Kingdom, France and Sweden) as well as interested campaigners.

Contact: Miriam Struyk, IKV Pax Christi, struyk@ikvpaxchristi.nl

The Netherlands: On 29 June, IKV Pax Christi hosted a side event on disinvestment during the First Intersessional Meeting of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Geneva. The event focused on the Stop Explosive Investments campaign and the latest findings from the 2011 IKV Pax Christi/Netwerk Vlaanderen report “Worldwide investments in cluster munitions; a shared responsibility”. The panel comprised of Kimberly Brown (Cluster Munition Coalition) who spoke about the evolvement of the international Stop Explosive Investments campaign, Roos Boer (IKV Pax Christi) who presented the finding of the new report and detailed information about existing legislation, legislative proposals and initiatives, and interpretive statements of various countries to prohibit these investments in cluster munition producers, and Paul Vermeulen (Handicap International Switzerland) who gave an in-depth update of the Swiss national campaign and recent developments. The panel was chaired by Paul Hannon (Mines Action Canada). The side event was well attended by both government delegations (including Switzerland, Canada, Germany, United Kingdom, France and Sweden) as well as interested campaigners.

Contact: Miriam Struyk, IKV Pax Christi, struyk@ikvpaxchristi.nl

Spain: On Friday 17 June, SETEM attended the Santander Bank’s General Assembly held in Spain; the third time that the organization has participated in Santander Bank’s General Assembly (2008, 2009 and 2011). Jordi Calvo, JM Delas and Annie Yumi Joh intervened in front of nearly 4,000 shareholders at the meeting. The objective of the intervention was to shed light on Santander’s investments in the production of controversial arms, including cluster munitions. Although Mr. Emilio Botin, President of the Santander Bank, denied accusations, he was unable to provide evidence to sustain his claims. SETEM will continue to campaign on this issue.

Contact: Annie Yumi Joh, SETEM, ayjoh@setem.org

SETEM activists at the Santander General Assembly. Photo credit: Annie Joh
Media

The first intersessional meeting of the Convention on Cluster Munitions got some media coverage in June. The focus of the coverage was on Thailand and Cambodia’s announcements during the meeting that they both plan to join the Convention on Cluster Munitions, despite Thailand’s use of cluster munitions in Cambodia earlier this year:

AFP, 1 July 2011
Thailand, Cambodia to join cluster bomb ban treaty
http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5g7Nb6Yr_E2Oq8bv9mG6r4vyXfInGvQ?docId=CNG.1944a16bd1a606916947fdc5b2762bf9.161
Grenada becoming the first country to accede to the Convention also received some media interest:

Radio Netherlands, 2 July 2011
Grenada: first state to accede to cluster bomb ban
http://www.rnw.nl/international-justice/article/grenada-first-state-accede-cluster-bomb-ban

In Laos, according to IRIN, casualty levels are dropping but there remains a huge amount of cluster bombs left to be cleared:


The Lebanese newspaper the Daily Star announced the joint initiative between the UNDP and the Foreign Ministry to support the Second Meeting of States Parties in Beirut this September:


http://english.aljazeera.net/indepth/features/2011/06/201162892022264206.html

Contact: Kate Wiggans, CMC staff, kate@icblcmc.org

Upcoming Events

2011 Global, regional and national dates

Aug 1: Convention on Cluster Munitions 1st anniversary of EIF
Aug 12: Remembrance action and one-month countdown to 2MSP
Sep 7-9: Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities 4th conference in New York
Sep 12-16: Convention on Cluster Munitions 2nd MSP in Beirut, Lebanon
Sep. 21: International Peace Day
Oct: First Committee (disarmament) of 66th UN General Assembly in NY
Nov. 16: Geneva, Cluster Munition Monitor global report launch. Contact monitor@icblcmc.org
Nov. 23: Bangkok, Landmine Monitor global report launch. Contact monitor@icblcmc.org
Nov. 28-Dec. 2: Mine Ban Treaty 11th MSP in Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Dec. 3: International Day of Persons with Disabilities
Dec. 3: Three-year anniversary of the Convention on Cluster Munitions Signing Conference
Dec. 10: Human Rights Day 2011