



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CCM COORDINATION COMMITTEE
held on Friday, 14 June 2024
in Conference Room 6A, Tower 3, Maison de la Paix
from 14:00 to 17:00 hours

1. Present:

Mexico – 12MSP President

H.E. Mrs. Francisca E. Méndez Escobar

Mr. Alonso Martínez

Ms. Mariana Roa

Austria

Ms. Lioba Bammer

Australia

Mr. Gordon Burns

Belgium

Mr. Vincent Bodson

Germany

Ms. Irmgard Adam

Iraq

Ms. Suha Gharrawi

Italy

Ms. Elena Gai

Netherlands

Ms. Henriëtte van Gulik

Peru

Mr. Angel Horna

Switzerland

Ms. Silvia Greve

CMC

Ms. Kasia Derlicka-Rosenbauer

ICRC

Ms. Sahar Haroon

UNODA

Mr. Peter Kolarov

ISU

Ms. Pamela Moraga

Mr. Emad Al-Juhaishi

Ms. Elaine Weiss

Apologies received:

Norway

Zambia

Absent:

Lebanon

Malawi

Panama

Philippines

2. Opening Remarks and Adoption of the Agenda

Mr. Alonso Martínez Ruiz, Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations, and representative of the President of the 12th Meeting of States Parties (12MSP) to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), Ambassador Francisca Méndez Escobar, warmly welcomed the Coordination Committee to its fifth meeting under the Mexican Presidency. He informed the Committee that the President would be arriving shortly. Mr. Martínez noted the challenges in scheduling a regular Coordination Committee Meeting amidst a busy disarmament calendar. However, he emphasized the importance of the Committee meeting to provide updates on the latest developments in preparation for the upcoming 12MSP.

The Committee then approved the provisional agenda of the meeting as presented by the Presidency.

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Coordination Committee Meeting

The Presidency highlighted that the ISU had circulated the minutes of the Coordination Committee Meeting held on 24 April 2024 in advance to encourage Committee members to submit written corrections prior to the meeting that day. As there were no further comments, the minutes of the previous meeting were approved by the Committee.

4. Update on Activities Undertaken by the Mexican Presidency up to the 12MSP

4.1 Engagement with the Russian Federation, China, and the United States

The Presidency reported having met with representatives of the Russian Federation, China, and the United States at their respective Permanent Missions in Geneva. While the Presidency did not expect to convince these States to join the Convention, its aim was to build constructive dialogue with these countries. The Presidency clarified that these were States with interests in cluster munitions, and Mexico's goal was to change the narrative and convey how the CCM community perceived the issue of cluster munitions.

Mexico explained that these three States had a tendency not to participate in negotiations related to the CCM due to the historical context of how the Convention was negotiated. The Presidency intended to highlight the implementation of the treaty since its entry into force, clarifying that no State Party had used cluster munitions, that States Parties had destroyed all their stockpiles, cleared more than 700 square kilometres, advanced guidelines on victim assistance and risk education, established an international cooperation scheme, and, in general, adhered stringently to the Convention.

The Presidency reported that, during the discussion with the Russian representative, the latter pointed out that several states with strong militaries had not joined the Convention. Mexico countered this argument by asking if the Russian Federation devalued the rest of the international community. Engaging in dialogue with the Russian Federation was seen as valuable for encouraging more constructive engagement.

The Russian Federation raised the issue of the use of cluster munitions by Ukraine in the ongoing conflict. Mexico invited the Russian Federation to participate in the Convention's formal meetings as an observer and requested that Russia consider abstaining from voting on the CCM Resolution at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), as it had done when Switzerland presided over the Convention. The Russian representative assured that notes had been taken and that they would inform their capital of the meeting's discussions.

Mexico underscored that the meeting with China had been more positive, noting that China had regularly participated in the Convention's meetings as an observer. However, financial constraints stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic had impeded its participation. Consequently, China requested the Presidency to amend the financing system for participation in these formal meetings. While this was a significant request, Mexico encouraged China to resume its participation as an observer and to maintain its voting pattern of not voting against the CCM UNGA Resolution. The Chinese representative assured that they would follow up on this with their capital.

The Presidency reported that the engagement with the United States was positive. Mexico had explained that the initial negotiations on cluster munitions had taken place within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), but later proceeded independently. Mexico also informed the United States about the achievements of the Convention and its interrelatedness with the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC). The United States, a dedicated mine action partner, participated as an observer in the formal meetings of the APMBC.

The Presidency promoted the non-use of cluster munitions to both the United States and the Russian Federation, specifically addressing the context of the conflict in Ukraine. Mexico had highlighted the increased use and transfer of cluster munitions in recent times and shared its deep concerns over this. Mexico emphasized that these weapons were indiscriminate and encouraged these States to reconsider their positions on them. Mexico assured that its views transcended the current political divisions.

4.2 Engagement with Lithuania

Mexico reported that the Presidency had continued its engagement with Lithuania. The Lithuanian presidential election took place on the 12th and 26th of May, resulting in the re-election of the incumbent President. Mexico highlighted this as a positive development since the Lithuanian representative had previously informed Mexico that the President was against withdrawing from the Convention, as such a move would be viewed negatively by the international community.

The Presidency pointed out that Lithuania was the only CCM State Party in Northeastern Europe to identify national security threats as a particular concern. The Presidency noted that it would organize a meeting with European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member states to engage with Lithuania. This would emphasize Lithuania's commitment as a serious State Party complying with the obligations of the Convention and its importance as a member of the international community. Mexico underscored the need for Lithuania to receive support from parties beyond the CCM Presidency.

4.3 Universalization of the Convention

Mexico reported that due to Ambassador Méndez's busy schedule, the universalization workshop for Caribbean and African countries in New York had been postponed to the 1st and 2nd of July. The meeting would be a hybrid format, allowing for both in-person and virtual participation from key stakeholders within the CCM, including the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) and the Universalization Coordinators. Additionally, Mexico reiterated its intention to meet bilaterally with States not represented in Geneva as well as those considered more strategic to target in New York. The Presidency acknowledged that while the first week of July often coincides with holidays or competing events, it was a necessary compromise due to the Ambassador's prior commitments.

The Presidency then opened the floor for questions or comments to its update.

Peru commended the Presidency for reaching out to States not Party to engage with them on their view regarding the CCM. In that vein, Peru requested information on whether the Russian authorities had mentioned if its national system was carrying out investigations on the alleged use of cluster munitions by its armed forces.

In response, Mexico informed that the Russian Federation was not interested in discussing its own use of the weapons but had raised the issue of Ukraine's use of cluster munitions since 2014. The Russian Federation communicated its concern regarding perceived double standards within the CCM community. Mexico addressed these concerns by informing the Russian Federation that the CCM community, including its presidencies and ISU, had issued statements expressing concern over the transfer of cluster munitions to Ukraine. Mexico explained that the CCM community is committed to speaking against any use or transfer of cluster munitions by any actor. The Presidency clearly conveyed that there was no discussion on internal investigations in Russia, Ukraine, or any other conflicts.

Mexico pointed out that another aspect raised by China and the Russian Federation was the need to balance the military necessity of cluster munitions with humanitarian protection. The Presidency acknowledged the complexities of warfare but made it clear that International Humanitarian Law (IHL) must be assessed in conflict situations. As cluster munitions are indiscriminate in their use, causing undue civilian harm, they cannot be permitted in any conflict.

5. Preparation of 12MSP Documentation

The Presidency reminded the Coordination Committee that with the 12MSP just three months away, the ISU was actively preparing for the Meeting.

5.1 12MSP Provisional Agenda and ISU 2025 Work Plan and Budget

The ISU Director reminded that the ISU 2025 work plan and budget and 12MSP provisional agenda were circulated on 10 June to all Committee members. To meet the UN's established deadline for document processing, both documents were submitted to the United Nations

Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) on 12 June. The Director asked if there were any comments to these documents. As there were none, these documents were considered endorsed by the Committee and to be operationalized.

5.2 12MSP Progress Report

The ISU Director informed the Committee that, as per the MSP agenda, the Coordinators would need to present a report to State Parties on the progress made in implementing the Lausanne Action Plan (LAP). The ISU was tasked with drafting the 12MSP Progress Report based on the LAP. To facilitate the work of the Coordinators and provide guidance, the ISU had prepared a template for each working group. Under each section, there would be a table with LAP action numbers and indicator results. This would be followed by a few questions or challenges under each thematic area, aimed to guide the States Parties' discussions at 12MSP.

The Director requested the Coordinators to review the questions or challenges and feel free to update them as they saw fit. Furthermore, she informed them that they needed to list points to highlight in their respective thematic areas as well as report on activities carried out in the past year until 30 June 2024.

The ISU intended to send the templates to the Coordinators by the end of the following week, along with the 11MSP Progress Report as a reference. The Director highlighted that the deadline for Coordinators to get back to the ISU was 3 July, to give the ISU sufficient time to analyze the responses and activities undertaken in light of the LAP implementation and consolidate the final document. The ISU requested collaboration in this regard as the final document needed to be submitted to the UN by 14 July.

The Director informed the Committee that the ISU normally provided easy-to-read summaries of each thematic area that are usually included in the MSP participants' "welcome pack" distributed at the start of the MSP.

The Mexican Presidency commended the ISU for preparing the documentation and encouraged the thematic group Coordinators to submit their reports to the ISU in a timely manner to allow for the progress report to be provided on time.

6. Update on the Work Plan Implementation by Thematic Coordinators up to the 12MSP

6.1 Universalization (Malawi and Peru)

Peru reported that the Universalization Coordinators had met with a representative of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)'s Committee on Peace and International Security to strategize on engaging parliamentarians in prioritizing the ratification or accession to the CCM. The IPU convenes an Assembly every six months, with the upcoming Assembly scheduled to be held in Geneva in October 2024. The Coordinators had initiated discussions with the Committee to include CCM universalization in deliberations at the Assembly, although that would still need to wait for a subsequent meeting due to the fact that the focus of the next one will include the APMBC.

Peru also highlighted the success of the Universalization Workshop for East African States, organized on 29 April, giving particular credit to Malawi and the ISU for their contributions. The Coordinators had decided to focus on the African region and target East African States not yet party to the Convention.

Furthermore, Peru reported on its participation to share Peru's experience regarding reporting on gender and diversity mainstreaming. This took place at the workshop on gender and diversity in reporting held on 30 May, organized by Australia, Belgium, Germany, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), and the ISU.

Peru noted the universalization workshop organized by the 12MSP President, scheduled for 1-2 July 2024, and assured that the Universalization Coordinators were ready to support the event virtually.

The Presidency commended the Coordinators for their initiative to promote CCM ratification through the IPU, noting that the IPU's interest was typically with new treaties, and there was a need to renew its focus on the CCM. The Presidency emphasized the importance of leveraging the opportunity to establish contacts with key stakeholders for universalization at the IPU's Assembly in October that year.

Regarding the workshop for East African States, the Presidency highlighted that the upcoming workshop in New York in July also focused on the African region. Mexico planned to engage with representatives of targeted States in both Geneva and New York, with the hope that this concerted approach would result in more African States ratifying the Convention.

6.2 Stockpile Destruction (Netherlands and Zambia)

The Netherlands conveyed the apologies of Zambia for its absence from the Coordination Committee meeting.

The Netherlands reported that the Stockpile Destruction Coordinators were experiencing difficulties in finding a convenient date to schedule a meeting with the Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC)'s stockpile destruction expert. They aimed to provide an update on this matter at the next meeting.

The Presidency acknowledged the Coordinators' challenges in identifying an appropriate meeting time, noting the current congestion in the disarmament calendar.

6.3 Clearance and Risk Education (Italy and Norway)

Italy informed that the Clearance and Risk Education Coordinators had successfully fulfilled their duties as members of the Article 4 Analysis Group, reviewing extension requests from Chad, Germany, and Lao PDR for consideration at the 12MSP. Italy noted that the Analysis Group was pleased with the final documents from all requesting states and that the ISU was in the process of drafting the analysis reports to be submitted as official meeting documents for the MSP.

Regarding the two working papers of the Coordinators, Italy mentioned that there were no major updates since the previous meeting. It reiterated that the paper on risk education was nearing completion, while the one on the environment still required additional work.

The Presidency expressed satisfaction that all three States that submitted extension requests had done so well in advance of the 12MSP, adhering to the approved timeline for CCM Article 4 extension requests. Italy further reported that the submissions from Germany and Lao PDR were complete, detailed and accurate, while Chad's submission was initially less thorough. However, after engaging with organizations working on the ground in Chad, such as the Mines Advisory Group (MAG), the Analysis Group was satisfied with the additional information provided.

The Presidency reminded the Coordinators that Mexico was ready to support the work of the Analysis Group if necessary and expressed confidence in the ISU's support for the Group. The Presidency acknowledged that all affected States Parties faced unique challenges in their Article 4 implementation.

Mexico conveyed its appreciation for the Coordinators' working document on risk education, highlighting risk education as a priority area for the Presidency.

The Presidency also reminded all thematic working groups that the deadline to submit working documents to UNODA was 26 June to ensure they were translated ahead of the 12MSP. Mexico pointed out that documents submitted after the deadline might only be available in English or the original language of the document. In support of multilingualism, Mexico encouraged all Coordinators to submit their working documents on time.

6.4 Victim Assistance (Austria and Panama)

The Austrian representative announced that this meeting would be her last, as her successor was scheduled to take over in early August. She assured the Committee that proper handover procedures were in place to ensure a smooth transition and adequate preparation for the 12MSP.

Austria reported that the Victim Assistance (VA) Coordinators had not yet completed the updated VA guidance document as initially planned. Efforts were ongoing to finish the draft and obtain expert feedback for improvements. Austria expressed gratitude to the Presidency for reminding Coordinators of the submission deadline and encouraging adherence.

Additionally, Austria shared information about having supported a survivor-to-survivor project, which it considered presenting at the 12MSP due to its potential relevance and interest to the CCM community. Austria also enquired if other CCM-related events were scheduled to be held during the APMBC Intersessional Meetings, aside from the forthcoming "Meet the Makers" event.

The 12MSP President expressed deep appreciation for the outgoing Austrian representative's contributions and assured full cooperation with her successor. Mexico noted the plan to

consult experts for input on the draft guidance document and requested further details on Austria's project.

In response, Austria explained that it had partnered with the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) in Uganda for the project. The VA Coordinators had recently learned about this initiative and believed that the topic of empowering survivors to support each other was valuable and worth sharing with the CCM community. Although no formal plan for presenting the project at the upcoming MSP existed yet, Austria was considering the possibility.

Mexico indicated that this project could serve as an example of best practice in another context, which could be adapted for the CCM community. Emphasizing the value of this information, Mexico encouraged the VA Coordinators allow this idea to develop and decide on the most appropriate way forward, whether that be an informal or formal approach.

6.5 International Cooperation and Assistance (Lebanon and Switzerland)

Switzerland reported that the Article 6 Coordinators were still in the process of implementing their work plan activities. Switzerland informed the committee that the contact person from the Swiss Army's Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Demining Command (KAMIR) was currently unavailable due to overseas travel and would return in July. The Coordinators intended to engage with the representative upon their return to further discuss the workshop. KAMIR had initially agreed to host this workshop, so the next step was to finalize the details and proceed with the organization.

6.6 Transparency Measures (Australia)

Australia joined Mexico in bidding farewell to the Austrian representative and confirmed its commitment to ongoing collaboration with her successor. Australia expressed gratitude to the committee and the ISU for the successful 30 May CCM workshop on gender and diversity in populations reporting. Special thanks were extended to Belgium and Germany for co-hosting the event, as well as to UNIDIR and the ISU for their support. Australia also acknowledged Peru for making a valuable contribution as a speaker at the workshop. Australia highlighted that the workshop focused on CCM transparency reporting and addressed both opportunities and challenges in gender and diversity reporting. The event also marked the 16th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention.

Australia reported its ongoing efforts in preparing documentation on the thematic area for the 12MSP. Additionally, Australia planned to engage with representatives of States Parties that had not yet submitted initial transparency reports through its Permanent Mission in New York.

Australia announced its intention to resume the role of Transparency Measures Coordinator after the 12MSP. This opportunity would allow Australia to gain deeper insight into the thematic area and refine its strategy for supporting States in fulfilling their obligations under Article 7 of the Convention.

6.7 National Implementation Measures (Iraq)

Iraq committed to presenting its progress on its work plan at the following meeting.

6.8 General Status and Operation (Belgium and Germany)

Germany reported that the General Status and Operation Coordinators/CCM Gender Focal Points had jointly organized a working lunch on 28 May, inviting APMBC Gender Focal Points to participate in a productive discussion and exchange of ideas between both Conventions. During the meeting, UNIDIR encouraged the exploration of synergies between the Conventions, which the CCM Gender Focal Points aimed to enhance.

Germany also informed about the workshop held on 30 May, co-organized by the CCM Gender Focal Points and Australia, with collaboration from UNIDIR. The workshop on gender and diversity reporting took place in a hybrid format.

Additionally, Germany reported that the CCM Gender Focal Points were planning to organize a side event in the margins of the 12MSP.

Belgium expressed gratitude to Australia and UNIDIR for their collaboration in organizing the 30 May workshop. Belgium emphasized that both the working lunch on 28 May and the workshop on 30 May had provided valuable opportunities to explore areas of convergence and synergy between the CCM and the APMBC. These events provided the opportunity to establish common ground and enhance gender mainstreaming across both Conventions, facilitating mutual learning through the exchange of best practices.

Ambassador Méndez thanked the Coordinators for their updates and hard work. She reported that she had been in touch with the APMBC Cambodian Presidency to explore formal ways to increase cooperation. She was planning to meet with the APMBC President in the near future and would report on developments in this area in the following Coordination Committee Meeting.

The Netherlands contributed to the discussion by informing that it had participated in both the working lunch and the workshop. Additionally, the Netherlands announced a side event on gender and diversity, to be held on the margins of the Intersessional Meetings of the APMBC on Thursday, 20 June 2024, and invited interested parties to participate. The Netherlands further reported that it, along with Peru, would be delivering a joint cross-regional statement on gender and diversity during the plenary session of the Intersessionals. They planned to share the statement with all regional groups for sponsorship. The Netherlands expressed its hope that many States would support the statement.

7. Update of UNODA on CCM Financing in Accordance with Article 14 of the Convention

UNODA reported that collections for the 12MSP remained at 65%, as previously stated. Approximately USD 261,000 had been made available, leaving a shortfall of USD 141,000. With only three months remaining until the Meeting, cost-saving measures would be implemented. Despite reminders sent to States Parties that had not yet contributed, there

had been little success in securing additional funds. UNODA clarified that the document management department would proceed with cost-saving measures even in the absence of a formal decision by the Presidency. It was noted that conference documents typically need to be submitted eight to ten weeks prior to the Meeting.

Ambassador Méndez pointed out that there was a general financial crisis affecting not just the CCM community. Nevertheless, the Presidency recognized that this was a crucial issue to ensure that the work of the Convention would not be compromised. The President enquired about the measures the Presidency and States Parties could undertake to address this issue and urged States Parties to pay attention to this matter, opening the floor for thoughts and comments.

Germany enquired if invoices would be paid only if the funds were made available, cautioning that States Parties might think contributions were irrelevant as UN meetings continued to take place.

In response, UNODA explained that this policy was not new but had always existed, though it was not strictly enforced until the introduction of the Umoja software. Following the submission of documents, translation was only carried out when funds were available.

Germany stated that States Parties should be made aware that translation would not be carried out until the funds were available.

The Presidency informed that démarches with States Parties needed to be delivered as these funds were necessary. Mexico enquired if it was possible to hold an informal day of the four-day Meeting to cut costs. Mexico also pointed out that it would approach targeted States to make their payments, as there was not much time left until the MSP.

Australia enquired if the APMBC was facing similar financing challenges and wondered how the status of contributions in 2024 compared to previous years at the same time. Australia also asked what measures had been taken in the past to address similar issues.

UNODA explained that the status of contributions was similar for both the CCM and the APMBC. However, (i) the APMBC's formal meeting takes place later in the year, and (ii) 15% contingency is also included in the APMBC budget, which makes it more flexible. This is a measure that UNODA planned to introduce to the CCM system as well. Like the CCM, the APMBC had faced in the past a financial crises and undergone cost-saving measures, such as the non-translation of certain documents and reducing the number of meeting days. Reducing one meeting day would save around USD 20,000. Therefore, to reduce costs, multilingualism often suffered, and documents were not translated. However, the challenge would be for States that did not have English as their official language, as their participation would be limited in such a meeting.

The Presidency noted that the translation of documents into Russian could be delayed as a cost saving measure.

UNODA highlighted that the majority of countries would have fulfilled their assessed contributions by the end of the year. However, the challenge was that the CCM Meeting of States Parties would be held well before the end of the year.

8. Update of the ISU

8.1 ISU Finances

Ambassador Méndez informed the committee that the ISU was also facing financial challenges and that the Presidency had been made aware of one State Party contributing 90% less than its assessed amount. The President had engaged with the Permanent Representative of that country during a reception with the disarmament fellows, and learned that the decision had been made at a high government level. The President had clarified that such a practice would not be sustainable for the ISU's functioning. The Presidency team concluded that if States Parties perceived their contributions to the ISU as voluntary, it would lead to a non-functioning ISU. Ambassador Méndez suggested conducting a diagnosis of how the ISU could operate with available financial resources and proposed a formal review of the financing procedure. The President then requested the ISU to comment on the issue.

The ISU Director commented that while the financing procedure worked well on paper, it could be interpreted that funding to UNODA was mandatory, whereas maintaining the ISU was voluntary. This ambiguity affected the predictability of ISU funding and its ability to hold workshops and implement its work plan. The Director agreed with the President that the financial procedure needed review to prevent different interpretations by States Parties.

The Director noted that contributions to the APMBC were higher and made through an annual pledging conference and considered 100% voluntary. She was analyzing which system worked better to either propose an amendment to the financing model or to clarify it in order to avoid counterproductive interpretations.

The President reported a formal conversation with the Permanent Representative of another State Party, explaining that the ISU needed predictable funds. She assured her commitment to elevate this systemic problem to a higher level, emphasizing that the CCM community would suffer if the ISU lacked predictable funding. She committed herself to leave the ISU on a stronger standing in this regard.

Italy highlighted that a significant reduction in a major contributing State Party's assessed contribution was a serious issue. The Presidency concurred that a 90% reduction posed a risk to the ISU's operation. While committed to engaging with States Parties to resolve this, Mexico stressed the need for a profound solution.

Italy noted the difference between the financing systems of the APMBC and CCM ISUs, pointing out that the CCM issues invoices based on its annual budget. However, some States Parties viewed these contributions as voluntary and did not honour the invoiced amount.

The Presidency explained that the 2015 financing structure decision led to different interpretations of its legal status. The financial procedure contained legally binding language

across several paragraphs which included a provision for voluntary contributions. If States Parties perceived their contributions to the ISU as voluntary and discretionary, the financing system would be unviable, and the ISU's work plan could not be implemented. This interpretation would weaken the Convention's work, as the ISU might lack funds for its activities. Without certainty of sufficient funds, planning activities would be impossible, with liquidity only known at year-end when all contributions were received. The Presidency suggested either interpreting the 2015 financial procedure to mean assessed contributions were mandatory or changing the CCM ISU's financing model to resemble the APMBC ISU's. The Presidency highlighted that the ISU's 2025 budget, circulated to the Coordination Committee, showed a significant portion for staff salaries and the rest for implementation activities. Insufficient contributions could lead to unpaid staff, which would be problematic.

The ISU Director explained that the annual budget was approved by States Parties at the Second Review Conference (2RC), so assessed contribution invoices should not surprise States Parties. She reported that the ISU had not been able to organize workshops abroad due to a lack of funds, a task previously supported by dedicated funds from certain States Parties.

The Director emphasized the importance of informing the Coordination Committee about the ISU's financial situation for transparency. This would enable the Committee to find a viable solution to strengthen the ISU, enhancing the Convention's work and the national ownership of humanitarian disarmament Conventions in general.

8.2 12MSP Sponsorship Programme

The ISU Director informed the Committee that a list of potential beneficiary States for sponsorship to participate in the 12MSP had been prepared for their review. She mentioned that the ISU had discussed amending the previous "first come, first served" policy to ensure more targeted sponsorship and support for relevant States, particularly those with upcoming deadlines and reporting requirements related to declarations of completion and/or extension requests under Article 4. This would also include actions under other possible focus areas. In line with the LAP, the ISU would prioritize applicants who nominate women and persons with disabilities.

The Director expressed gratitude to Australia, Canada, and Switzerland for their contributions to the CCM Sponsorship Programme for the year. While the programme was currently financially healthy, it was important to note that a significant portion of these funds had been carried over from the COVID-19 pandemic when travel was suspended. To ensure the continued health and predictability of the CCM Sponsorship Programme, the 12MSP President had sent out an appeal to States Parties for additional contributions. This was crucial in the lead up to the 3rd Review Conference (3RC) in 2026.

The Director then asked if there were any comments on the list of potential beneficiary States. She informed the Committee that invitations would be sent out the following week to those States on the list to allow sufficient time for nominations, visa applications, and travel arrangements. She added that depending on the rate of response, the ISU might update the list of 12MSP sponsorship beneficiaries to ensure that contributions were optimized for diverse, meaningful and regionally balanced participation.

8.3 ISU engagement with States to Promote CCM Implementation and Universalization

The ISU Director reported that the ISU had engaged with several delegates at the 27th International Meeting of Mine Action National Directors and United Nations Advisers (NDM-UN27) from 29 April to 1 May to discuss the implementation and universalization of the CCM. The discussions involved the following countries:

- **Article 3:** Cameroon
- **Article 4:** Afghanistan, Chad, Lao PDR, Lebanon, and Somalia
- **Article 7:** South Sudan
- **Universalization:** Angola, Central African Republic, Thailand, and Zimbabwe

The Director highlighted the sensitivity of Afghanistan’s situation, noting that the APMBC Article 5 Committee was addressing the legal and political issues associated with the Taliban government’s submission of its extension request. She reported that the CCM ISU was closely monitoring the discussions and potential solutions in the APMBC, as the CCM would face a similar situation when Afghanistan submitted its CCM Article 4 extension request in December 2024. She emphasized that developments in the APMBC often influenced the work of the CCM. From the CCM perspective, the focus in Afghanistan remained on the humanitarian situation, aiming to protect civilians regardless of the country’s political context.

The Director also mentioned several key events:

- On 29 April, the ISU, along with Malawi, Peru, the CMC, and the ICRC, hosted the workshop “Universalization of the CCM – Challenges Ahead and Lessons Learnt: An African Perspective”. She noted that the meeting was held in the same venue as the Coordination Committee Meeting that day, which was a cost-saving approach.
- On 30 May, the ISU, Australia, Belgium, Germany, and UNIDIR co-hosted the workshop “Gender and Diversity Reporting under the Convention on Cluster Munitions”.
- On 31 May, the ISU Director presented and discussed the work of the Convention with the UN Disarmament Fellows.

The Director underlined the importance of timely support in the lead-up to the 12MSP, requesting that CCM States Parties and stakeholders allow a minimum of 24 hours for processing any requests. She explained that the ISU was currently focused on preparing documentation for the 12MSP, and with its limited capacity, it would be challenging to respond to urgent requests with tight deadlines. This would ensure that the ISU could continue to provide the highest quality support.

8.4 Hiring of Communications and Advocacy Consultant

The ISU Director informed the Coordination Committee that towards the end of the previous year, discussions with the Mexican Presidency highlighted the necessity of appointing a Communications Consultant. Subsequently, after a call for contractors, Mr. Jared Bloch was chosen by both the Mexican Presidency and the ISU to fulfil the role of Communications and Strategic advocacy Consultant. Mr. Bloch's responsibilities encompassed auditing current communication strategies, providing expert advice to enhance visibility and tackle implementation challenges, developing communication tools and strategies, and fostering stakeholder engagement. The Director underscored the pivotal role of the Communications and Strategic advocacy Consultant in bolstering the ISU's communication effectiveness, stakeholder engagement, and advancement of the Convention's objectives.

Furthermore, the Director announced the successful launch of the new ISU newsletter, which was being strategically monitored for its readership. Additionally, the ISU had recently inaugurated its YouTube channel and Instagram account and released its first podcast. These initiatives aimed to expand the ISU's audience reach and amplify key messaging. The Consultant had also adopted a holistic approach to promote the Youth for Disarmament Contest, integrating themes of peace, development, and human rights.

Moreover, the Consultant was tasked with establishing clear, actionable, and sustainable processes to enhance the ISU's communication outreach, with measurable impact. This included broadening and strengthening communication partnerships to promote State Party implementation objectives through a diverse stakeholder lens, inclusive of voices from affected communities and other key stakeholders.

8.5 Issues to Highlight Stemming from the Hosting of the ISU

The ISU Director provided an overview of several ongoing challenges related to the hosting of the ISU, which required attention from States Parties. These issues either did not align with the spirit of the hosting agreement, potentially hindering the effective operation of the ISU, or were not fully compatible with the ISU's mandate in supporting States.

Firstly, concerning the "new" Type R Legitimation Card for GICHD staff, it was noted that the Hosting Agreement for the CCM ISU was signed in 2014, predating the institutionalization of the Type R Legitimation Card for "quasi-governmental organizations" in January 2016. Currently, all ISU staff held this card, which differed significantly from those issued to staff members of UN agencies and other intergovernmental organizations, such as the ISUs of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The R Legitimation Card offered limited privileges and no immunities under international law, reflecting a lower status, function and protection that contradicted the ISU's functional autonomy from the GICHD. Furthermore, holders of this type of legitimation card often faced challenges when travelling, as it was not well-recognized by border authorities. To mitigate that, the GICHD had issued a letter for staff to carry when travelling.

Regarding travel restrictions, it was highlighted that GICHD travel policies, if applicable to ISU staff, might not be the most suitable for the ISU's operational needs. Unlike staff of UN entities, ISU personnel did not possess UN Laissez-Passer or a work passport, which posed challenges when travelling to countries under sanctions or specific travel advisories, which

might be relevant to the ISU in the future. Additionally, ISU staff did not fall under the protection of the United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) but instead came under the purview of the Swiss government, similar to all GICHD staff. Moreover, ISU staff needed to satisfy GICHD's travel requirements, which could be cumbersome, especially for travel to certain countries.

Regarding UN ground passes, the ISU Director informed that due to changes in UNOG security policies during the COVID-19 pandemic, GICHD staff, and consequently ISU staff, no longer received UN ground passes. As of the meeting date, none of the ISU staff had valid UN passes to access the UN premises.

Regarding GICHD's working-from-home policies, the Director noted that following the COVID-19 pandemic, teleworking had become a widespread practice. However, the GICHD applied specific restrictions in accordance with Swiss Law, which varied based on the staff's residency status. Staff residing in Switzerland were permitted to work remotely up to 40% of their work hours. In contrast, staff residing in France, particularly those who were EU/EFTA citizens, were allowed to work from home up to 49.9% of their work hours. This distinction arose from recent amendments introduced on 27 May 2024, which had further differentiated between EU/EFTA citizens and non-EU/EFTA citizens who were cross-border workers. Notably, staff residing in France who were non-EU/EFTA citizens were not allowed to work from home at all, a policy that directly impacted one of the ISU staff members.

The Director emphasized the importance of ensuring that the ISU had the autonomy to adopt policies that best supported its operational efficiency and accommodated the diverse needs of its staff, irrespective of their nationality or residency status. She explained that it was challenging for the ISU to advocate for changes within the GICHD framework, as the ISU was required to abide by Swiss law and adhere to the regulations of the host country. Therefore, she stressed the necessity for a broader discussion on this issue.

The Director also addressed the Timmi timesheets, introduced by the GICHD on 1 December 2023, which required staff to meticulously track work hours, locations and breaks to comply with Swiss labour laws. This practice, implemented without prior consultation with the ISU, had proven cumbersome, particularly for ISU staff engaged in frequent external meetings.

On the matter of public holidays, it was noted that while GICHD staff followed Geneva public holidays, which aligned with Geneva school holidays, they differed from UN holidays. This misalignment posed challenges for ISU staff, particularly those with international backgrounds or obligations to attend UN meetings that did not coincide with Geneva holidays. The Director provided an example where a UN holiday was not recognized by the GICHD, requiring the ISU staff to request leave to observe it.

Finally, concerning GICHD in-kind support, as discussed during the 11 March Coordination Committee meeting, the ISU encountered challenges related to the knowledge transfer of the hosting agreement to new GICHD staff. Specifically, it was noted that the ISU no longer received website management support, contrary to what was stipulated in the hosting agreement. Furthermore, despite the agreement stating that the GICHD would cover audit

costs, the ISU was unexpectedly charged for an audit related to the contribution of one State Party. These discrepancies led to additional costs for the ISU, which were not budgeted for.

In conclusion, the Director emphasized that these issues had arisen from the hosting arrangements of the ISU and stressed the necessity for a broader discussion among members of the CC, the Presidency and the ISU to effectively address and resolve these challenges.

8.6 More on ISU Finances

The ISU Director reported that the ISU received the auditor reports for its 2023 accounts from the GICHD on 4 June, one month later than originally expected. This delay hindered the ISU from meeting reporting deadlines to some of its donors. However, there were discrepancies where auditors made changes to the ISU Trust Fund account that did not align with the budget approved by States Parties. Given that ISU annual budgets undergo double approval processes by States Parties, these discrepancies were not acceptable. This issue had occurred previously, prompting compromise from the ISU in the past. The Director emphasized the need to prevent this pattern from recurring and reported ongoing negotiations with finance and auditors while awaiting corrections.

Additionally, the ISU intended to request amendments to the GICHD's report on the implementation of the hosting agreement, submitted along with the audit reports, to align with the language in the agreement. The current report included the following:

This support included the expenditures for the office space, human resources management, financial management, monitoring and controlling (including management of contribution agreements and service contracts), internal information management, IT network maintenance, travel services, general logistics (office supplies, software acquisition, etc.), mailing, telecommunications and audit costs, and the administration of the sponsorship programme on behalf of the ISU-CCM.

The ISU intended to request that to be amended to:

This support included the expenditures for human resource management, financial management including auditing, contract and document management, provision of office space and supplies, information and communications technology (up-to-date hardware and software, maintenance and telecommunication costs), travel services, and the administration of the sponsorship programme on behalf of the ISU-CCM.

Once finalized, these documents would be promptly circulated to all States Parties.

As of the latest update, 54 States Parties had contributed to the 2024 ISU budget, totalling CHF 245'251, approximately 51% of the 2024 budget of CHF 477'724. The funding model for the CCM ISU, established at the First Review Conference, emphasized sustainability, predictability and ownership, distributing the annual budget across all CCM States Parties according to the UN scale of assessments. Notably, failure by a State Party to fulfil its invoice obligation could significantly impact the ISU budget, as exemplified by one State Party's shortfall where a CHF 85'060 contribution was reduced to less than CHF 5'000.

The Director expressed concern over a trend of reduced contributions, highlighting its implications for the ISU's operational capacity in the medium to long term. The reduction in funding had placed considerable constraints on the ISU's ability to effectively implement the Convention, impacting essential activities such as organizing informal meetings, travelling to support States in joining and implementing the Convention, and producing and distributing promotional materials and publications.

8.7 Upcoming "Meet the Makers" Event

Addressing Austria's query about whether CCM-related events were organized in the sidelines of the APMBC Intersessional Meetings, the ISU Director confirmed that there would be only the "Meet the Makers" event on Wednesday 19 June. She explained that these events were designed to give delegates an opportunity to learn more about the practical work of the Convention in the field. The Director noted that Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) had specifically requested the timing of this meeting to coincide with the APMBC Intersessionals. Since 17 June was a UN holiday, the ISU had chosen 19 June as the least disruptive date for the APMBC's meeting schedule.

In response to Austria's information on its support for a survivor-to-survivor project, the Director shared that the ISU had identified a CCM focal point in Uganda who was committed to advocating for the country's ratification of the Convention. She also took the opportunity to extend her thanks and best wishes to the departing Austrian representative.

Ambassador Méndez expressed gratitude to the ISU Director for the detailed update, highlighting that numerous issues were arising from the hosting of the ISU. She noted that these issues required resolution, suggesting a review of the hosting agreement to strengthen the work of the Convention.

The ISU Director commented that the solution necessitated a long-term perspective, in light of the requirement for the ISU to comply with Swiss law, which limited its independence and constrained its ability to request for exceptions as originally established in the hosting Agreement. She urged States Parties to reconsider their intentions for the ISU when the hosting agreement was signed and assess if the current arrangement was still fit for purpose. While the ISU had been discussing the issues with the GICHD's legal advisor in good faith, the ISU would expect States Parties should proactively suggest solutions.

Germany acknowledged the issues brought to the Committee's attention, noting that the GICHD's rapid expansion and adaptation of internal rules and regulations could create additional problems and limitations for the ISUs. Germany emphasized the importance of States Parties providing input and ideas to resolve these issues quickly and expressed its support for the ISU.

The Presidency emphasized the need for more clarity in identifying how some issues stemmed from the hosting agreement and others from the institutionalization of the ISU within the GICHD. Mexico noted the need for a thorough reflection on these details and suggested that States Parties consider the institutionalization of the ISU in the lead-up to the 12MSP,

followed by a more in-depth assessment of the legal and practical aspects afterward. The Presidency would also conduct follow up meeting on this specific issue, with the intention of strengthening the ISU during their tenure.

The ISU Director reiterated her concerns, noting that the GICHD Director- in line with what was previously informed by the GICHD legal Adviser- noted that exceptions were no longer possible due to the legal argument that the ISU had no legal standing and would only be compliant with Swiss law through the GICHD's procedures. She urged States Parties to consider how they wanted the ISU to function, possibly exploring the potential costs and benefits of providing the ISU with legal standing. The bottom line was that States Parties needed to strategically assess and develop concrete solutions for the ISU. Referring to Germany's point, she noted that the GICHD's growth and increasing stringency in applying Swiss Law requirements made it imperative to ensure that the ISUs were not seen as mere appendages to the GICHD. This was not the vision of States Parties when setting up the ISU, which remained accountable to States Parties, not the GICHD. The Director highlighted urgent issues, such as website backup support, and reported her discussions with the GICHD Director, who assured her that these issues could be resolved amicably and in good faith. She reminded the Committee that the GICHD Director would be leaving his position on 31 July and reiterated the need for deeper scrutiny and discussion of the ISU's challenges within the GICHD administration and framework.

UNODA pointed out that each ISU faced its own set of problems, noting that the issues here were political, legal, and financial. The CCM ISU was expected to "carry out international work without international status". The UNODA representative, having participated in the establishment of several ISUs, suggested that different ways of solving the problems faced by the CCM ISU could be considered, and encouraged the Committee to continue these discussions with a wider analysis and long-term perspective. He emphasized that the solution needed to go beyond a simple review of the hosting agreement and that concrete measures were required and suggested that the presidency may initiate informal consultations with interested parties to identify solutions by the Third Review Conference.

Ambassador Méndez drew from her own experience to stress the importance of resolving administrative issues. She warned that failure to address these issues would lead to further complications.

9. Conclusion of the Meeting

The President thanked the Coordination Committee for the productive discussions and concluded the meeting. She informed that the next meeting would be in August and wished the Committee a good summer break.
