

On 16 February 2010 Burkina Faso and the Republic of Moldova ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), thereby bringing the total number of ratifications to 30 and thus triggering the six-month count-down to entry into force. The Convention will enter into force on 1 August 2010, and the First Meeting of States Parties will be held in Lao PDR in November. At the time of writing, over 100 countries have already signed this humanitarian disarmament treaty, negotiated in May 2008. While encouraging additional states to ratify is critical to the ultimate success of the treaty, international attention will be shifting to the nuts and bolts issues of implementation of the Convention's provisions.

The CCM comprehensively bans the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions. In addition, the treaty obliges its member states to assist victims of cluster munitions, clear cluster munition affected areas, destroy their stockpiles of the weapon, and cooperate and assist each other toward these ends. These are formidable tasks. How can states party to the Convention, in partnership with international organizations and civil society, ensure the treaty's practical goals are achieved? This issue of *Disarmament Forum* will examine what will be required to implement some of these humanitarian and development commitments.

Our next issue will focus on maritime security—a multifaceted and complex topic that touches on some of the most critical security challenges of the moment. There is rising concern about illicit transfers of weapons or WMD-related materials by sea. Armed non-state actors are exploiting busy shipping lanes for piracy and, some fear, for terrorist purposes. Container and port security are often depicted as the “weak link” in domestic security debates.

This year we are celebrating two important milestones: the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the Institute, and the first ten years of *Disarmament Forum*. Throughout 2010, UNIDIR will host various anniversary-related events—check our web site or Facebook page for the latest updates.

With this issue of *Disarmament Forum*, we've made a few changes to make the journal more attractive and agreeable to read. We hope that you'll agree that what hasn't changed is our commitment to producing readable, accurate and thought-provoking analysis on a wide range of security, arms control and disarmament issues. Each issue will continue to serve as an entry point to a topic, where respected experts and analysts outline key aspects of the current debate or “over the horizon” thinking about what might lie ahead.

UNIDIR relies entirely on voluntary contributions from Member States to undertake its research and outreach activities—and this includes the production of *Disarmament Forum*. On behalf

of the Institute and the *Disarmament Forum* team, I would like to extend my gratitude to the Governments of Finland, France, Ireland, Israel, Luxembourg, Mexico, Norway, the Russian Federation, Switzerland and Turkey, as well as the Holy See, whose financial support makes the production and free distribution of *Disarmament Forum* possible—either through direct support for *Disarmament Forum* or through their contribution of core funding to the Institute.