

THE SECOND MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS

Beirut, Lebanon, 15 September 2011

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Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Dear friends of the Convention on Cluster Munitions,

Allow me to express my warm appreciation to Lebanon for your generous hospitality in hosting this important event. That we are meeting here – in Beirut – is significant for at least two reasons.

Firstly, it demonstrates and confirms Lebanon's leading role in the process leading up to the ban on cluster munitions.

I was in Dublin myself in May 2008.

And President, there I witnessed Lebanon's dedicated participation. Your team was instrumental in ensuring the adoption of the text in the final hours of the negotiations.

Secondly, merely being here is a stark reminder of what underpins our efforts. Field-based facts were pivotal in achieving the ban. I have just arrived from South-Lebanon where I have seen the damage cluster munitions create, but also the fantastic work that is being done. So thank you to Lebanon for your leadership.

Friends,
the CCM establishes once and for all the norm that the use of cluster munitions is unacceptable. It is a practical illustration of the assumption that humanitarian consequences should matter more than perceived military advantages.

Our efforts are important for several reasons. I would like to focus my intervention here today on three of them in particular:

First: The importance of focusing on facts on the ground in affected areas and on the realities of the lives of the survivors. The very rationale underlying the CCM is to protect people and their communities from cluster munitions, and to ensure the rights of the victims.

Facts from the field made it clear that existing regulations were not sufficient from a humanitarian perspective. These facts, combined with recognised humanitarian rules and principles, guided the strong focus of the convention on victims and their rights.

The *rights-based approach* to victims, which is at the core of the convention, was not so obvious when we started to address these weapons causing unacceptable harm. There was a time not so long ago when victims of mines and other explosives were not seen, not counted and not recognised.

Today, not least due to the success of both the Mine Ban Convention and the CCM, these victims' struggles, rights and needs are now recognised. This change has been made possible because survivors and victims were able to make their voices heard – at all stages in the process.

Their right to decide and participate in decisions regarding their own lives was key to progress. In the same vein, the views of states and communities that have been affected by cluster munitions have shaped the convention and its obligations. We must still have focus on the facts on the ground and the victims. The convention established an international norm against the use of cluster munitions.

Second: This norm is currently recognised by 109 States Parties and signatories, which means more than half of the UN member states. It and has become a new benchmark for assessing how states conduct warfare.

Regrettably, we have seen two instances of use by states not party to the convention during the past year. While this was discouraging, the massive reactions from states, media and civil society throughout the world demonstrate that no one can use these weapons without facing global public outrage and widespread condemnation.

Cluster munitions have shifted from being a perceived military asset to being a political liability.

It is useful to look at the two instances a bit more closely.

In one of them, a desperate and increasingly illegitimate regime used cluster munitions against its own citizens as one of its last acts. The ousted regime's choice of weapons will not inspire others to follow suit; on the contrary, it has already increased the stigmatisation of cluster munitions.

The second instance has had an encouraging aftermath. Here, a state outside the convention became aware of some of the highly problematic aspects of their use of cluster munitions, and has chosen constructive dialogue over a public retraction in the face of international condemnation.

President, in the course of this week, many States Parties have expressed their grave concern over the use of cluster munitions, referring to the humanitarian consequences of these weapons. In light of this, it is more than a paradox that ongoing diplomatic efforts in Geneva are aiming at allowing for, and re-legitimizing, use of cluster munitions. I urge you all to let the conclusions from this conference also be reflected in Geneva.

President, Norway has offered to host and preside over the Third Meeting of States Parties, to take place in Oslo in September next year. We are pleased that this has received broad

support. If this is agreed by the States Parties, we look forward to working together with Lebanon in the time to come.

And this brings me to my third point, the way ahead;

The CCM is a young convention, as it entered in to force just over a year ago. However, it is already a robust instrument, with its full implementation well under way.

The practical implementation of the obligations will be guided by the experience and expertise gained through years of mine action and victim assistance, ensuring that we get a head start on the operative obligations. We have hit the ground running!

The other important aspect of the CCM is something that fills me with gratitude. I think we are justified in believing that the CCM has prevented the loss of thousands of lives and futures. It is a rare and valuable example of a preventive measure.

It is an international instrument designed to prevent any use of cluster munitions, anywhere. Implementing the convention involves destroying stockpiles, clearing affected areas and assisting victims, but it is also about strengthening core principles of international humanitarian law and protection of civilians.

We must bear this in mind as we design the architecture that will ensure the implementation of the convention in the years to come. We must never forget why the convention was established, whom it is meant to protect and what its primary aim is – to end the suffering caused by cluster munitions.

This must guide us all. Thank you.