

Convention on Cluster Munitions
Intersessional meetings, April 16 – 19, 2012, Geneva
Norwegian statement on stockpile destruction, 18 April

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Thank you chair

It has been encouraging to hear today's presentations by a number of States of their progress in destruction of stockpiles and implementation of Article 3. Let me first congratulate Bosnia Herzegovina on their completion of stockpile destruction, and not least, their decision not to retain any live cluster munitions.

In addition I would like to thank all states that have given presentations today for sharing the concrete challenges that they face, their experiences and lessons learned and for sharing details on new developments and progress with us.

A key element in achieving early completion of stockpile destruction is to make use of all the opportunities for international cooperation and assistance in the Convention, and in particular to explore the gains of technical cooperation both at the international and at regional levels. We have heard some interesting examples this morning. It is essential that projects and plans are concrete and tailored to meet the specific challenges that individual states face whether they are limited in scale or of more substantial size. From Norway's side we are interested in working with partners to ensure completion of a state's Article 3 obligations, and we welcome proposals to this effect.

The destruction of stockpiled cluster munitions does of course represent significant technological, logistical and financial challenges for States Parties with large stockpiles. However, as we have heard today, it is not impossible to complete this task within the set eight-year deadline. Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that most of these weapons would in any case have to be destroyed at one point or another when their shelf-life expires. It is therefore mostly a matter of timing of costs, and less a matter of incurring new or additional costs.

Article 3 of the Convention, together with the prohibition on use, is our safeguard against future use of cluster munitions. Completion of our obligations under this article is therefore key to the fulfillment of the humanitarian objectives of the Convention, and we need to focus on our obligation to destroy stocks as soon as possible in order to ensure an early start and early completion.

Madame Chair,

Article 3.6 provides for the retention of live cluster munitions and explosive submunitions for purposes of training and research. It should not surprise anyone that, in our view, this is not necessary as the needs for training and research can be met through other means in a similar manner as for anti-personnel mines. We are concerned that the possibility to retain live cluster munitions can lead to an undermining of the stockpile destruction obligations.

We expect that those states that have chosen to retain cluster munitions report

on the purpose of retaining cluster munitions and how they are actually used.

We encourage all States Parties with stockpiles to destroy all their cluster munitions as part of their Article 3 implementation.

Thank you.