



Republic of Ghana

WELCOMING STATEMENT

BY

**HONOURABLE WILLIAM K. ABOAH
MINISTER FOR THE INTERIOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA
AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF ACCRA REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE
UNIVERSALIZATION OF THE CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS (CCM)
MONDAY 28TH MAY, 2012, LA PALM ROYAL BEACH HOTEL, ACCRA, GHANA**

Mr. Chairman;

**The Representative of His Excellency the Vice President of the Republic of
Ghana,**

Special Invited Guests;

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen!

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to His Excellency Dr. John Dramani Mahama, Vice President of the Republic of Ghana, for kindly accepting our invitation to open this Conference. Though out of the country he has sent an able representative in the person of Ambassador Chris Kpodo to deliver his official opening statement. I am also pleased and honoured to warmly welcome all distinguished delegates from the Sub-Sahara African countries, the UNDP, International and Regional Organizations to Accra the capital of the Republic of Ghana. I hope your trip was a pleasant one and you might have tasted a bit of the true Ghanaian hospitality already.

It is truly an honour and privilege for the Republic of Ghana to host the 4th Africa Regional Conference on the Universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). It is the political commitment at the highest level of the Ghana Government and our genuine commitment to the Convention that shaped our decision to host this Conference.

This Conference is not merely symbolic in its kind, but significant for the people of Ghana, especially as the world would be focusing once again on Ghana this year as the country prepares for general elections in December. This Conference would afford us the opportunity as a country to demonstrate our commitment to conducting free, fair and credible elections devoid of violence and the use of weapons of war.

I am also grateful for the high level representation and generous consideration that Sub-Saharan States Parties, Non-States Parties, international and regional organizations, NGOs and Civil Society Organizations have given to this landmark Regional Conference.

Ghana has always been at the fore front of the commitment to ban Cluster Munitions. This we have demonstrated by drafting a legislation to prohibit the use, manufacturing, stockpiling, and transfer of cluster munitions including penal sanctions. What we shall be doing in the coming months would be to engage all stakeholders to deliberate on Ghana's legislation in order for us to review and harmonize our municipal laws to conform to the Convention and other best practices.

I am particularly pleased to note that our joint universalization effort at regional and global levels continues to improve, with Australia, Canada, Chad, Hungary, Peru, Sweden and Switzerland indicating that they will become States Parties to the Convention in the coming months. It is also refreshing and worth mentioning, that

650,000 cluster munitions stockpiled by States Parties', containing 68.2 million explosive sub munitions, have been destroyed so far.

Mr. Chairman,

It is still worrying, that while promising progress has been announced, particularly on stockpile destruction, some States have still shown less willingness to implement national legislation to penalize violations of the treaty, submit information on their national situation, or agree on how to interpret certain vital areas of the ban.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to take this opportunity to express once again our profound gratitude to all of our Development Partners especially Norway and the UNDP for their sustained commitment and support to the ban of Cluster Munitions. For distinguished delegates who are first timers in Accra and Ghana, I hope you will find time to enjoy the true Ghanaian hospitality and our beautiful city so as to have several memories of Ghana on your return.

I am hopeful that the decision that will come out of your deliberations will be accepted and adopted by all and be in a position to stand the test of time.

May I welcome you all in the traditional way by saying **AKWABA**.