

Accra Regional Conference on the Universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Session I – Overview and Current Status of the CCM

Introduction and Closing Speaking notes for the Chair, Mr. Jones Applerh, Ghana National Commission on Small Arms

28 May 2012

Excellencies, Ladies, Gentleman,

- On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Ghana, I would first like to reiterate our gratitude to all of you here today...
- Your participation here will spur on the dialogue between Sub-Saharan States in order to establish an African solution to the problem of cluster munition use, production, stockpiling and transfer, as a region that has already experienced the unacceptable harm that these weapons have on their direct victims, as well as the communities that suffer from the lasting legacy that they leave behind long after their use...
- This session has been convened primarily to:
 - provide an update where we currently stand in relation to the CCM, both on the global level and in the regional level;
 - remind States of their obligations under the Convention, so as to identify and address any challenges that may arise in efforts to comply with these provisions;
 - to recall the key role that Africa has to play in promoting the universalization and implementation of the Treaty.
- We will start today's session with the screening of the movie "The Convention on Cluster Munitions: Time to Act", which should provide you all with a useful explanation of the humanitarian impact of these weapons, and essentially, the very reason why we are sitting here today. With no further ado, I would like to hand the floor to Ms Julie Tenenbaum of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), who will provide some introductory words before the viewing...

[Session proceeds from this point onwards. The session will begin with three presentations that should take up around one half of the session (approx. 45 mins) – ICRC, Lebanon and Zambia]

[Once Zambia has finished their presentation “Purpose of the Accra Meeting”, the Chair could open the floor for statements of a general nature; it would be good to have interventions of gratitude etc. during this time slot rather than the later sessions where more technical discussions are anticipated]

- If we have no further comments from the floor, I would like to thank you all for your attention. We have heard a series of highly informative presentations and commentary this morning, and I am confident that you all leave here with a good knowledge base to carry forward into the rest of the meeting. I would like to urge all of you to bear what we have heard in mind over the next days, as there were some very clear messages that can be taken from the words of our colleagues representing the ICRC, Lebanon and Zambia:
 - This Treaty represents a crucial precedent in International Humanitarian Law. The time to act to ensure the global integrity of the CCM’s provisions is now;
 - We therefore encourage all of you to speak openly at this meeting, as a free exchange on experiences and challenges is what will help us to establish the means of achieving our universalization and implementation goals;
 - Sub-Saharan Africa has been a fundamental regional group throughout the CCM process, during its formative stages, in addition to the period following the 30th ratification of the Treaty and its subsequent entry into force; over the coming years we now look forward to what really matters: implementation. We must capitalise on this meeting to ensure that our knowledge and experiences are felt and heard throughout these crucial years in the life of the Convention. At this stage too, our regional group has much to offer on areas such as clearance, stockpile destruction and victim assistance;
 - This collaboration between Sub-Saharan States does not end here: indeed, the outcome document of this conference will provide a roadmap for our collective endeavours along the path ahead. In this vein, we anticipate similar initiatives in the future that will continue to foster our working relationship rooted in the humanitarian principles of the CCM.

- Thanks to participants, Governments of Zambia, Togo and Norway, etc...