

Monday 28 May 2012, 11:00 - 12:15

Session I - Overview and current status of the CCM

Purpose of the Accra meeting (10 – 15 mins)

1. *Recall the role of African states in Oslo Process/negotiations:* I

believe it would be fitting to start this conference by reminding States present as to why this conference is important, and that it serves as an excellent opportunity to continue and strengthen engagement from a regional group that has been vital in protecting the integrity of the CCM.

- At the heart of this process, African States have been instrumental in guiding the development and future work of the Convention, and over one third of all States Parties are located in Sub-Saharan Africa. For example, both at the 2008 Livingstone regional conference (attended by a total of 39 African States) and the Dublin negotiations, many African nations were vocal in advocating an all-encompassing ban on cluster munitions.
- Through a declaration endorsed at the Livingstone Conference in March 2008, 29 of the 35 Sub-Saharan African States here today made a firm commitment to effectively respond to the humanitarian consequences caused by the use of cluster munitions. The declaration expressed the strong will of these States for the conclusion of a legally binding international convention by the end of 2008. Particularly notable within this declaration was the emphasis placed on the need for strong victim assistance provisions, demonstrating a collective focus that African States have shown towards addressing the concerns of victims and their families, partly through including these same individuals in the decision-making process since the beginning of negotiations on the Treaty.
- This political will demonstrated by Africans for a strong and comprehensive prohibition on cluster munitions was certainly felt at the Dublin Diplomatic Conference in May 2008, where we saw the

negotiation and conclusion of a text. Even at the dying moments of this event, the dissatisfaction of African States with weak provisions...

- Again in November 2011, Sub-Saharan Africa was crucial in protecting the standard set by the CCM at the CCW Fourth Review Conference, as one of the most vociferous groups in attendance that had expressed concern regarding deliberations over the draft protocol VI on cluster munitions.
- Here, in Accra, we aim to move a step forward with regards to our commitment and formulate a strategy to ensure that all States in our region actively support this initiative and our common position. United, Africa will be a decisive and influential voice that will continue to play a key role in promoting the universalization and implementation of the CCM.
- African States are all too familiar with the cost of war, as well as the costs of clearing up after a war. It is this very experience that is the reason why our continent has played a leading role in the Oslo Process.

2. need for more states to join/Africa's role in the future:

- For these very same reasons we are gathered here today to further promote the Convention amongst our distinguished colleagues on the continent, to ensure that we continue to steer the CCM in the right direction, in the same spirit of partnership that has brought us this far. With 9 States still suffering from cluster munitions contamination in Sub-Saharan Africa, this number makes up almost one third of the total number of affected States globally. However, at this moment in time, only 3 of those 9 States have ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions. This number needs to grow.
- Whilst Zambia has the floor, I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to all States here who have yet to ratify or accede to the

Convention to do so as soon as possible. This meeting presents an ideal opportunity to address any challenges that you may face in this regard, and as such Zambia calls on these States to speak openly and frankly, and to take advantage of the varied and extensive experience of existing member States that will be together in this room over the course of the meeting;

- I would like to put forward an idea to you all the following idea; the idea that Sub-Saharan Africa become the first region to achieve full universalization of the CCM. Zambia sees this as a wholly feasible objective. Given the impressive participation and argumentation put forward by African States meetings of the Convention thus far, it is clear that State Party or not, Sub-Saharan African States share the same humanitarian principles. It is clear that they wish to see an end to the suffering caused by these weapons, and that the long-term effects that their use has on developmental goals cannot be considered acceptable.
- Over the next few days it is also evident that we will hear from many considering ratification or accession that it is a lack of priority or inertia within the review process that is preventing their States from becoming a full State Party to Treaty. For those who are facing such difficulties, I encourage you to speak with those in the room that have already passed through this process, and who may well have already overcome the same problems that you currently encounter. It is also important to underline that the expertise provided by the CMC and the ICRC will be of great value to you in this regard, and it is imperative that we take full advantage of this opportunity to share that technical and legal knowledge whilst it is so readily available.
- I now turn to States Parties to say the following: we currently find ourselves in the crucial formative stages in the life of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. It is logical that the first few years following entry into force are where we should observe the greatest momentum in terms of expanding the membership of the CCM. I call on you all to capitalize on this moment, and to look beyond this meeting to all other possible opportunities to promote the cluster munition ban in the lead up to the Third Meeting of States Parties in Oslo.

- It is highly encouraging to see that Sub-Saharan Africa is so well represented here, and for the reasons just outlined, Zambia eagerly anticipates the discussions that are about to unfold.
- I would like to finish with a quote from the Zambian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Kabinga J Pande, during the opening ceremony of the 2008 Livingstone Conference on cluster munitions: “we do not have the technical and financial capacity to deal with cluster munitions when they are left in our back yards long after war. Rather than direct our resources to the acquisition of these weapons. We should be spending our own resources on making our people’s lives better.”