

CMC Opening Statement
Third Meeting of States Parties, Convention on Cluster Munitions
Oslo, Norway



Delivered By Branislav Kapetanovic, CMC Spokesperson

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear fellow Campaigners,

First, I would like to say how happy I am to see so many State representatives here in Oslo at this 3rd meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster munitions.

It is fitting that the conference takes place in Oslo, given the leadership Norway continues to show on this issue, not only in terms of the process that led to the signing of this Convention, but also as one of the biggest promoters of its implementation.

As we all know, cluster munitions are indiscriminate weapons, whose victims all too often are mainly civilians, both during and after use. Moreover, numerous men and women clearing cluster munitions have been maimed or killed while trying to make the land safe for use by the civilian population.

On 1 August 2012, when the world was celebrating the second anniversary of the entry into force of this Convention, Serbia was saddened by the death of 2 deminers who were killed while clearing cluster bombs from the NATO strikes in Serbia. I regret every death from this horrible weapon, but this accident was so much harder for me as I personally knew one of them.

The fact that Serbia, my native country, and an important player in the Oslo process all the way until Dublin when it withdrew, is at this conference today, makes me hopeful. I really want to see my country join the treaty as soon as possible, along with all of the other States that have not yet joined.

Let us not forget that the nature of this treaty is largely a preventive one. We want to ensure that no other countries suffer from attacks and contamination like Laos or Lebanon, the two countries that hosted the last two meetings of States Parties.

This treaty has without a doubt created a stigma on use of these abhorrent

weapons. The few recent instances of use were strongly condemned by the international community. The credible allegations of use in 2012 in Syria and Sudan are a reminder to us all that we must stay vigilant and work to ensure that no actor ever uses these horrible weapons again. It is important to remember that discouraging use by others is a formal treaty obligation.

But of course to prevent further use, the best guarantee is the destruction of all the stockpiles of this weapon, as required by this treaty. The fact that more than 85 million submunitions have already been destroyed, representing more than 60% of all the stockpiles of States Parties, is impressive.

Another way of preventing any future use is to prevent any assistance with acts prohibited under the Convention. The Convention bans not only use, but also bans any assistance with use, transfer, transit, or stockpiling-- prohibitions which clearly apply during joint military operations. It also bans investment in the production of these weapons. I am encouraging more States Parties to make these prohibitions explicit in their implementation laws and am applauding all those that have already done so.

As the CMC we ask a lot from governments. But we will also make a promise. We will work harder than ever, for as long as it takes, to promote the full universalization and implementation of the treaty. I personally will continue to lobby governments until I achieve what I see as my life's goal: a world without cluster munitions.

I am having a difficult operation next month, which will be one of the dozens of operations since I was injured. Being injured and its consequences are also one of the reasons why I dedicated my life to preventing any future casualties. I am sure that by the next meeting we will be even closer to that goal and I am hopeful that by then my home country will also be a State Party.

Thank you.