

## **Third Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions**

**Oslo 11-14 September 2012**

### **General Statement by Ireland**

#### **Draft General Statement to CCM 3MSP**

Mr. President,

Let me begin by thanking you and the Government of Norway for hosting this important event. As a delegate coming from the country which hosted the Diplomatic Conference where this Convention was agreed, may I say how much of a pleasure it is for me to come to Oslo, the city in which the Convention was signed and whose name is associated with a process which has made a significant difference on the ground. On 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2008 when the signature ceremony took place it would have been hard to believe that less than four years later this Convention would already have 75 States Parties. This is a remarkable achievement which we can rightly attribute to the close and valued relationship between States and our partners in civil society.

Ireland fully associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the EU earlier today.

Mr. President, I would also like to take this opportunity to express my delegation's appreciation for the skilful, open and transparent way in which our outgoing President, Lebanon, guided us through the last year. For Ireland, it has also been a particular honour to work with our first President, Lao PDR as joint Coordinators on Clearance and Risk Reduction. The leadership shown by both these countries which have seen and suffered the scourge of cluster munitions and are making significant strides in clearing the remnants to improve the lives of their citizens is remarkable. My delegation looks forward to hearing from Norwegian People's Aid during the thematic session on clearance and risk reduction and would like to acknowledge the tremendous contribution that NPA makes around the world in the clearance of cluster munition remnants.

During the First and Second Meetings of States Parties, delegations had the opportunity to see first-hand the effects of cluster munitions remnants on communities, the livelihoods severely impacted by the pernicious effects of cluster munitions. However, those trips also

provided us with a sense of hope that the problem of cluster munitions remnants can be addressed and that the lives of those injured can be improved. It served to remind us why the Oslo Process started and why we must continue to strive to ensure that there are no new victims of cluster munitions.

Mr President, Ireland continues to place a high priority on the maintenance and development of clearance and detection capabilities in affected countries. Irish Defence Forces personnel have been dealing with cluster munitions remnants since the 1970s in many affected areas in South East Asia, Eastern Europe and Africa and they continue to work with local staff in an effort to build capacity in affected States. Ireland has consistently funded mine action activities, including cluster munition clearance programmes, for more than two decades. In 2011, Ireland contributed over €2.5 million towards landmine and cluster munition clearance. In December 2011 a team comprising two experts from the Irish Defence Forces and an independent consultant worked with Government and local staff to conduct a review of Irish aid funded clearance programmes in Cambodia, Lao and Vietnam. The recommendations from this report are currently being implemented by our partners in the region.

Mr. President, when States Parties gathered in Lao PDR in 2010 we agreed the Vientiane Action Plan which contains practical guidance for translating the shared vision developed from the Oslo Process into concrete action. During this meeting, my delegation looks forward to hearing of the progress that has been made since 2010. The draft Oslo Progress Report provides an encouraging picture of progress made to date but also reminds us of the challenges ahead.

Mr. President, this third Meeting of States Parties, under the leadership of Norway comes at an important time in the life of this Convention; this meeting provides us with the opportunity to renew our commitment and show our determination, in the words of the Convention, to put an end for all time to the suffering and casualties caused by cluster munitions.

We look forward to contributing further to the work of this meeting throughout the days to come.

Thank you Mr. President

