

CCM Statement by South Africa at the Lome Regional Conference

Thank you very much Mr Chair

At the outset, my delegation would like to thank the Togolese Government for the invitation and for your warm hospitality extended to my delegation. I would also like to thank those who have contributed towards the organisation of this seminar including Ghana, Zambia, Togo, Norway, UNDP and CMC.

Mr Chair

South Africa is one of the countries that actively participated in the Oslo process until the adoption of the Convention on CCM. Since then my country has participated in all the meetings of the CCM. This decision has been driven by my government's conviction that that these weapons have not only become obsolete as weapons of modern warfare, but that their recent use in conflicts have shown them to cause unacceptable harm to civilians, even long after the cessation of active hostilities

Mr Chair

With regard to ratification, I would like to inform this seminar that my country has completed the legal process, now we are awaiting an approval of a memorandum by the cabinet's security cluster. The next step will be the consideration of this matter by the international relations Parliamentary portfolio committee. After the ratification has been approved, it will be sent to the President's office for signature. This process should be completed, the latest, towards the end of the year or beginning of 2014.

In this connection, we welcome the steady progress that has been made regarding an increase in the number of ratifications. We should redouble our efforts to convince and bring those that have not yet acceded to the Convention in particular the big users and producers of cluster munitions; and all African countries. African suffering has often been caused by weapons that are manufactured elsewhere in world.

Mr Chair

In our efforts to implement the Convention, there are serious challenges that lie ahead of us. We need to continue to stigmatise the use of cluster munitions as a weapon of war. Therefore, we deplore any use of cluster munitions by any State including the alleged recent use of cluster munitions in Syria, which has led to a number of casualties including women and children.

Finally Mr Chair, allow me to quote our former President Nelson Mandela, when he said in his 1996 State of the Nation address, "We have started to play a role in contributing to peace and other efforts of the international community. This we shall always do, within the limits of our capacity". It is in this context that South Africa will continue to play its modest role by working with others towards the establishment of a truly cluster munitions free world.

I thank you