



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

MESSAGE TO THE SECOND MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO THE
CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONSBeirut, 13 September 2011

*Delivered by Mr. Sergio Duarte,
High Representative for Disarmament Affairs*

I am pleased to send greetings to all participants at this important meeting.

As disarmament experts, you well understand the dangers of cluster munitions. These weapons are unreliable, inaccurate and indiscriminate. During armed conflict and long after hostilities have ended, cluster munitions kill, maim and terrorize civilians while denying communities the means to rebuild their lives and livelihoods. They are particularly difficult to remove safely and have been responsible for a high number of casualties among the brave individuals who carry out the painstaking, lifesaving work of clearing them.

The adoption of this critical humanitarian and disarmament international legal instrument was in large part a result of your strong commitment. I commend you for having contributed to its early entry into force and its rapidly increasing membership. I congratulate the 62 States that have so far joined the Convention, and I call upon all others to sign or accede to it as a matter of urgency.

We have already seen undeniable progress. Last year, the First Meeting of States Parties in Vientiane adopted a far-reaching and encouraging Action Plan committing States to undertake a range of concrete actions to give effect to the Convention. I especially appreciate that Plan's emphasis on partnership, victim assistance and international cooperation.

Your meeting provides an opportunity to take stock and shape the treaty's architecture in a way that will foster cooperation and assistance to achieve a world free of cluster munitions.

Beyond that critical work, I hope you also address related threats posed by other weapons. We must respond to the dangers of anti-vehicle mines, which continue to cause casualties, restrict the movement of people, and render land unsuitable for productive use. And we must take action against the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

The United Nations fully supports your efforts to diminish the burden of conflict on civilians, and I wish you great success in realizing your important goals.