

Check against delivery

Sixth Meeting of States Parties (6MSP) to the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Statement of the Kingdom of Belgium Geneva, 5 – 7 September 2016

Mr. President,

Let me first thank the Netherlands, and you personally Mr. President, for your commitment and all efforts in the preparation of the Sixth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and express the support of my delegation during this Meeting.

I would like also to commend the work accomplished by Croatia in its capacity as President of the First Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and all the coordinators since the First Review Conference in Dubrovnik last year. The **Geneva Progress Report**-monitoring progress in implementing the Dubrovnik Action Plan and identifying issues to be addressed is a key roadmap for reflection and action to all of us.

May I also thank our host for this Meeting.

I wish to align Belgium with the statement that will be made by the Representative of the European Union and would like to add the following considerations in a national capacity.

Mr. President,

Ten years ago, Belgium was the 1st country in the world to adopt a legislation banning cluster munitions even before the Oslo Convention was negotiated. In 2007, Belgium passed a law prohibiting the financing of the production, the use or the possession of antipersonnel mines and submunitions.

Since then Belgium has contributed to the efforts of governments and civil society that led to the signature of the Convention and continued to **invest actively in the fight against cluster munitions**.

Mr. President,

Belgium strongly **condemns** any use of cluster munitions by anyone.

(universalization)

We would like to welcome **Mauritius, Somalia, Cuba and Palau** as new States Parties since the first Review Conference. With a total of 119 States having joined the Convention, (100 States parties and 19 Signatories), we are on the right track. Nevertheless, **universalization** remains a challenge and a priority.

The key question is probably not so much how to increase the number of outreach activities but rather **how to better focus our actions**. All State Parties have to act to promote the universalization of the Convention. In this regard we would like to commend the work done by the Coordinator on National Implementation Measures (New Zealand) and the Coordinators on

Universalization (Zambia and Ecuador) for the organization of last month's workshop which led to the adoption of the Addis Ababa Commitment on universalization and implementation of the CCM. Such efforts are very valuable and we hope that similar initiatives will be taken.

Mr. President,

We welcome the announcement made by the last remaining manufacturer of cluster munitions in the USA to stop the production of cluster munitions.

(stockpile destruction)

We welcome the announcements made by **Italy, Germany and France** regarding the destruction of their entire stockpiles of cluster munitions ahead of the schedule.

(victim assistance) (international cooperation and assistance)

Contributing to clearance and destruction of cluster munitions and to projects on victim assistance are also two guidelines of Belgium's action.

In 2015, my country disbursed more than €500.000 to **international cooperation and assistance** related to mine-action and other unexploded ordnance like cluster-munitions. Belgium funded mine clearance projects in Afghanistan and Mozambique and a victim assistance project in Colombia. Belgium was also very active in a project aimed at preparing cost-effective tools for the clearing of larger areas affected by anti-personal landmines, cluster munitions, explosive remnants of war (ERW) and unexploded ordnance (UXO).

In 2016, Belgium will allocate more than €600.000 to support projects in the sector of mine clearance and victim assistance.

Mr. President,

During the 14th Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention of Ottawa, on November 30th 2015, the Belgian Presidency organized a **High Level Seminar on Victim Assistance** chaired by HRH Princess Astrid with the participation of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs M. Reynders. The purpose of this seminar was to raise awareness about this very relevant topic, building on the momentum created during the 3rd Review Conference in Maputo and particularly on the commitment to the full, equal and effective participation of mine victims in society. The focus was also put on the importance of embedding assistance in a broader context of human rights and the rights of persons with disabilities.

Last year, the **Dubrovnik Declaration *Spectemur agendo*** "*Judged by our actions*" reaffirmed the commitments of the States Parties *to victims and survivors, including all persons directly impacted by cluster munitions as well as their families and communities through comprehensive assistance adapted to their specific needs, particularly through strengthening international cooperation and assistance under the provision of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.*

In term of victim assistance, **synergy remains a key word**. More than ever there is a need for cooperation and coordination between all forms of assistance from States, international

organizations and NGO's to increase the synergies between all types of projects. Synergies need also to be maximized at the service of the victim assistance in the broader policy framework of other Conventions, such as the ones on landmines and of explosives remnants of war. Synergies should also be created between policies providing assistance to victims of cluster munitions or landmines and policies providing assistance to people disabled through other causes.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

(reporting)

We would like also to stress that **reporting** in accordance with Article 7 is an obligation that is relevant for all States Parties. But it is also a tool for achieving the full implementation of the Convention and an opportunity for States Parties to mobilize resources needed for achieving their obligations.

Reporting is not always an easy obligation and some States Parties encounter difficulties in submitting their national reports. That is why we should continue to provide assistance and deliver tools to help them with fulfilling this important obligation.

We believe that the exchange of information is crucial for the success of the Convention and we therefore invite all States Parties to fulfill, without delay, their Article 7 obligations.

Mr. President,

Allow me finally to warmly salute the victim representatives and the associations accompanying, for their courage and commitment and the members of the civil society here present for the essential role they play.

I would like to conclude in wishing you a full success for this 6th Meeting of States Parties.

Thank you, Mr. President.