



## **6TH MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS**

Geneva, 5-7 September 2016

### **Statement at the Storage and Stockpile Destruction Segment by Germany**

Madame President,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In its initial report in accordance with Article 7, paragraph (1) of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Germany declared in early 2011 that upon entry into force of the Convention, its aggregate stockpiles of cluster munitions included 14 different types and amounted to a total of 238,046 items, or 39,348,605 explosive submunitions.

On 25 November 2015, the Federal Republic of Germany declared that it had destroyed all its cluster munition and explosive submunition stockpiles, except for a limited number of items retained in accordance with Article 3, paragraph (6), and had thus fulfilled its obligations in accordance with Article 3 of the Convention approximately two and a half years ahead of the deadline stipulated by the Convention.

Germany's initial report in 2011 also mentioned that another 281,772 items, or 23,948,928 explosive submunitions, had already been destroyed before the Convention's entry into force, as Germany had unilaterally decided in 2001 to eliminate its cluster munition stockpiles.

Thus, a total of more than half a million items containing more than 62 million explosive submunitions - or in round terms, 50,000 tons – were destroyed over a period of roughly 14 years at a total cost of approximately 44 million euros. The destruction activities were carried out by four privately owned destruction companies in Germany.

The operations constituted a significant challenge for them as well as for the Bundeswehr, especially since another 173,000 tons of surplus or outdated munitions held by the Bundeswehr and 300,000 tons from former East German Army stocks had to be destroyed at the same time.

The process of disposing of cluster munitions and explosive submunitions is in general similar to that applicable to conventional ammunition. Moreover, the procedures for the various types of cluster munitions and explosive submunitions did not differ greatly.

The specific disposal steps were more or less automated, depending on the number of items of the individual munition types. Dangerous disposal steps, such as mechanical operations on initiating devices, were generally performed with safety precautions in place and in specially protected buildings.

The cluster munitions and explosive submunitions were destroyed in an environmentally responsible manner by way of a detailed multistage procedure including disassembly, recycling and combustion, with the following individual disposal steps:

- Removing the igniters or initiating devices (i.e. rocket fuses, fuses, ejection charges);
- Separating (in a fully automated manner) the individual munition components;
- Recycling or thermal destruction of munition components containing explosives; and

- Recycling residual metal parts which were left over in large amounts because of metal casing and packaging.

Given that the explosive submunitions were not designed for industrial-level disassembly, there were numerous possible flaws that had to be taken into account when the disposal technology was devised. Safety analyses had to focus particularly on the mechanical stresses which occur when the fuses are separated from the shell bodies.

The high number of about 62 million items constituted a special challenge. As the fuses had a general constructional safety of 1:1 million, unforeseen events were bound to occur.

Furthermore, bomblets vary considerably in terms of manufacturing quality. The variations in material properties, such as hardness and resistance of steel, led to additional problems during the demilitarization process.

As a result, it turned out to be best to group the items to be destroyed according to the stock-keeping units and the production lot numbers to avoid a temporary overflow of the facilities' limited storage capacity during the demilitarization process.

Madame President,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Dubrovnic Action Plan (DAP), contained in Annex III of the Final Report of 13 October 2015, encourages States Parties that have fulfilled obligations under Article 3 to increase the exchange of information amongst themselves and expert organizations on good and cost-effective stockpile destruction practices, including safety, environmental impact and efficiency (Action 2.2), and to make an official

declaration of compliance with Article 3 obligations to Meetings of States Parties or Review Conferences of the Convention (Action 2.4).

As a template for compliance reports under Article 3 as stipulated in Action 2.2 of the DAP is not yet available, Germany stands ready to cooperate with States Parties and the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) to elaborate such a template.

Germany will also continue its assistance of states parties who are working towards fulfilling their obligations under the Convention. Last year Germany contributed around 13 million Euros for that purpose.

Thank you Madame President