



**Statement by H.E. Dell Higgle
Ambassador for Disarmament**

**Convention on Cluster Munitions
6th Meeting of States Parties**

Universalisation

5 September 2016

Please allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Ambassador van der Kwast, for the dedicated way in which the Netherlands has led our Convention since our first Review Conference in Dubrovnik last year. That meeting set a high standard – and even higher expectations – for what our Convention is to achieve in the next five years. There can be no doubt that the Netherlands has given us the best possible start on that pathway, building of course on the exemplary work of the previous President, Croatia. We would like to take this opportunity to thank also our Coordinators for Universalisation – Zambia and Ecuador.

New Zealand remains fully committed to the universalisation of the CCM and we are very pleased that our Convention has now welcomed its 100th State Party: we are particularly delighted that this honour has gone to our Pacific neighbour, Palau. We welcome too the addition of Columbia, Cuba, Mauritius and Somalia, and congratulate them on joining this important humanitarian Convention.

It is clear, however, that we have much work ahead of us if we are to achieve our goal of 130 States Parties by 2020. New Zealand has been working assiduously to promote the Convention most notably in Africa – and also in the Pacific. Right now, we are very much looking forward to a Workshop, sponsored by NZ and hosted by Samoa, which is being held later this month (on the Arms Trade Treaty) but in which we have included a standalone session dedicated to the Cluster Munition Convention. We are taking the opportunity of this workshop to commend

again to our region the strong humanitarian merits of a treaty which prohibits a particularly horrendous and inhumane class of weapon – and are delighted that our Convention’s newest State Party, Palau, will be presenting at our workshop on its experience and motivation for ratification.

More generally, Mr President, in our capacity as the Convention’s Coordinator for National Implementation Measures, we continue to welcome any opportunity to support members of our region with ratification and implementation.

Further afield, Mr President, we are pleased to have contributed to the Sponsorship Programme this year in order to facilitate the participation by delegates from Africa – representing both States Parties and Signatories – in this meeting. We hope that their engagement in the work of the Convention, in particular the sharing of positive experiences as well as the means of overcoming challenges, will help accelerate our pathway toward treaty universalisation and implementation in the continent and beyond.

Africa was also the focus of a workshop that we co-hosted with Zambia and Ecuador in our respective capacities as Coordinators on Universalisation and on National Implementation Measures. Held in Addis Ababa just last month, and involving also the Africa Union; our Implementation Support Unit; and our valued partners, the Cluster Munition Coalition and the ICRC; the workshop brought together 17 States from the region including 6 States Parties, 8 signatories and 3 non-signatories.

A primary objective of the Addis Ababa workshop was to provide an opportunity for signatory and non-signatory States in Africa to discuss challenges and solutions for joining the CCM. We were very impressed with the free and frank exchange that took place on these issues and look forward to working alongside the Presidency, the Coordinators for Universalisation as well as the ISU and our civil society partners, to ensure that the enthusiasm and momentum that was so evident at the workshop can translate into significant progress over the coming year.

New Zealand is also pleased that, following the initiative of Croatia and the Netherlands, we now have a further opportunity to promote our Convention through the resolution at the UN General Assembly. It was very pleasing that last year's text was adopted with 139 votes in favour (including support by 32 non-signatories to the Convention) and we look forward to promoting the resolution again this year.

I would expect that even states that did not support last year's resolution would have been appalled at what they have since seen in the wake of cluster munitions usage. New Zealand joins many others in condemning the use of cluster munitions in Syria and in Yemen. Not only has such use compounded the agonies of those caught up in these heart-rending conflicts, but it will continue to hamper recovery efforts and undermine confidence long into the future. For these reasons, and reflecting as well our strong attachment to the objective and to the norms of International Humanitarian Law, New Zealand continues to unreservedly condemn any instance of the use of cluster munitions. In this regard, we reiterate our deep concern regarding recent allegations of cluster munitions usage in Libya, and regarding the documented evidence of such use in South Sudan and eastern Ukraine.

All such incidents are carefully and compellingly logged in the annual Cluster Munition Monitor and which will be available at today's side event. New Zealand was pleased to have been able to provide a modest contribution in support of the Monitor this year and would like again to thank the Cluster Munitions Coalition and its many partners for the 2016 report. It continues to provide an invaluable tool in our efforts to rid the world of these inhumane weapons and to underline the real urgency with which we must pursue universalisation of our Convention.

Thank you, Mr President.