



ICRC

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Sixth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions

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Geneva, Switzerland

Address by Christine Beerli,

Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you know, the Convention on Cluster Munitions has been a remarkable success in the short time that it has been in force. Tens of millions of cluster munitions have been destroyed. Hundreds of square kilometres of land have been cleared. And States Parties with cluster munition victims are providing assistance services in accordance with the Convention's requirements. The progress made in each of these areas, and the international cooperation and support that has facilitated it, is clear evidence that the Convention is having a definitive impact. Through this treaty, the world is moving closer to bringing about an end to the suffering and casualties caused by cluster munitions.

An additional and critical feature of the work related to the Convention are the efforts to reinforce and strengthen the stigmatization of cluster munitions. Many States Parties and organizations have already taken strong positions against the ongoing use of these weapons. Like others, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is concerned about reports of recent cluster munition use, particularly in Syria and Yemen. In our view, any use of cluster munitions by anyone is unacceptable and it is clear that if we are to put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by these weapons, the stigmatization of cluster munitions must continue to be reinforced.

This morning the ICRC would like to draw attention to several less prominent issues that, in our view, are also important to ensure the success of the Convention. The first is national implementation, specifically the requirement for each State Party to adopt the legal and administrative measures necessary at the domestic level to ensure the Convention's full implementation. This includes legislation to prevent and suppress violations and allow the application of penal sanctions.

There has been steady progress in the adoption of national legislation to implement the Convention. In this regard, we would like to commend New Zealand for its tireless efforts as the

Convention's Coordinator on National Implementation Measures. To date, 27 of the 100 States Parties have adopted specific legislation to implement the Convention at the national level. An additional 31 States Parties have indicated that their existing legislation is sufficient. Since the First Review Conference in September 2015, three States – Bulgaria, Mauritius and Togo have enacted implementing legislation for the Convention and we congratulate them for taking this important step.

Still, more progress is needed. The Dubrovnik Action Plan, which was adopted by the First Review Conference in September 2015, committed States Parties to prioritizing the development and adoption of legislation and other measures to implement the Convention. We urge States Parties to give particular attention to this action point. States Parties that have not already done so must prepare and approve such measures as a matter of urgency in accordance with the action plan. In particular, we call upon those States that have not taken action nor provided any information on their national implementation measures to do so as soon as possible, including any assistance needs in this area.

The second issue that the ICRC would like to highlight is the submission of national transparency reports. As many of you know, such reports are required by the Convention and are meant to be filed on an annual basis. Reporting allows a State Party to highlight the progress in the country's implementation. It can also signal gaps that a State Party may be facing in meeting the Convention's requirements. Reporting also reinforces confidence among all States Parties by showing that each is fully respecting its treaty obligations. Finally, comprehensive annual reporting helps ensure that monitoring efforts – such as the progress reports prepared for the annual Meeting of States Parties and NGO initiatives like Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor – are current and accurate.

The ICRC would like commend Belgium for its efforts and long commitment on this issue and Costa Rica for its work since becoming the Coordinator on Reporting. Progress is being made, thanks, in many respects, to their efforts. The ICRC urges all States Parties to be diligent about their reporting obligations and to annually meet the Convention's requirements in this area.

In closing, important progress continues to be made in the efforts to address the impact of cluster munitions. Results are being seen concretely in affected countries. They are also being seen in the implementation of the Convention's requirements by all States Parties at the national level. Yet, we must ensure that all aspects of the Convention are being thoroughly realized. This will reinforce and help further our efforts to bring about the end of cluster munitions once and for all time.

Thank you