

Openingspeech CCM Meeting of States Parties, 5 september

PlvDGPZ Pieter Jan Kleiweg de Zwaan

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by extending a warm welcome to all participants, States Parties, observers, international organisations and civil society at this sixth meeting of States Parties of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We deeply appreciate your presence.

I would like to thank the Swiss government for generously hosting this conference in the city of Geneva, and to thank Ambassador Dallafior for her speech.

Only last week, we were reminded of the urgency of our work in this Convention. 2016 Cluster Munitions Monitor documented 400 victims due to cluster munitions in the last year alone; the vast majority of these died in cluster munitions attacks in Syria and Yemen. Cluster munitions do not discriminate between civilians and soldiers: 97 percent of these victims were civilians.

Moreover, to this very day, civilians around the globe also fall victim to unexploded cluster munitions from wars long forgotten. Communities cannot be expected to rebuild their countries when they are under constant, latent threat.

The Netherlands is proud to have served as the President of this Treaty over the past year. We signed the Treaty in 2008 and became a full State Party in 2011 after ratification. All of our land bound cluster munition was already destroyed before the Netherlands became a State Party. After becoming a State Party, we destroyed the remaining air bound cluster munitions in 2011.

Ever since we joined the Treaty, we have been very active in its promotion.

In 2013 we forbade by law investments in companies that produce, sell or distribute cluster munitions or crucial parts thereof. Financial institutions are required to take active measures to ensure they do not engage in transactions with these companies.

Currently we are the fifth largest donor in humanitarian demining and clearance of cluster munitions. In the last four years we made 45 million Euros available to NGOs via a tender procedure in multi-annual funding. This way of allocating funds multi-annually proved successful and earlier this year we decided to make another 45 million Euros available for the coming four years. The Mines Advisory Group, the HALO Trust and Dan Church Aid were selected as our partners in this tender. We strongly believe humanitarian demining and cluster munitions clearance projects benefit greatly from multi-annual financing and we therefore strongly recommend to other donors to also consider multi-annual contributions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When we took over the Presidency from Croatia we had just concluded the successful Review Conference in Dubrovnik. In Dubrovnik we all agreed to the Dubrovnik Action Plan as our common roadmap for the next five years.

The main aim of our Presidency therefore was to make a strong start with the implementation of this ambitious Action Plan.

[Universalisation]

An important target we have set for ourselves in the Action Plan is to reach 130 States Parties by the time of the next Review Conference. Let me use this opportunity to warmly welcome Somalia, Mauritius, Cuba and Palau to the Convention, as they were the last States to join, bringing the total number of States

Parties now to 100. This is a solid achievement, and together with the 19 Signatory States, that makes a total of 119, almost two out of every three States worldwide. This shows we are on the right path. Still, there is clearly more work to do to reach our goal for the next Review Conference in 2020.

The coordinators Ecuador and Zambia have done a lot of excellent work over the last year on universalisation. I would like to thank them for their extensive efforts and will ask them to report later today under the appropriate agenda item in more detail on the actions they have taken.

In June the Secretary-General of the United Nations addressed a letter to the Heads of State of all countries that are not yet Party with the request to join the Convention.

The Netherlands, in its capacity as CCM President, followed up on this I by sending letters to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of over fifty of those states. Moreover, Dutch diplomatic missions have carried out demarches in the capitals of these states. Although the proof of the pudding is in the eating, many of these demarches showed that States are seriously considering acceding to the Treaty or even are already in the process of accession. We warmly welcome this positive development.

[Strengthening of the norm]

Another important target we agreed to in Dubrovnik is to further strengthen the norm of non-use of cluster munitions and condemn instances of use. Over the past year, the Netherlands Presidency has expressed its grave concern and condemned the use of cluster munitions in Yemen and Syria respectively. The Netherlands will continue to condemn any use of these weapons by any actor.

Together with the Cluster Munition Coalition we organised a workshop in May on universalisation and strengthening the norm of non-use. The final report of this meeting will soon be available.

In its capacity as the President, The Netherlands also submitted a pledge in which the use of cluster munitions was condemned to the World Humanitarian Summit, which was held in Istanbul on 23 and 24 May.

[Implementation]

We have also witnessed a swift implementation of the Action Plan in other areas.

In the last year, Germany, Italy and France announced the destruction of their stockpiles of cluster munitions. Each of them has done so years in advance of their respective deadlines set by the Convention. We thank our German, Italian and French colleagues for their commitment to the implementation of the Treaty. We hope they will share the knowledge they gained with states that still have obligations under Article 3.

The Netherlands Presidency has met with clearance NGO's and the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining, GICHD, to discuss the current status of clearance operations under this Treaty. These conversations demonstrated that by using new technologies and methodologies, survey techniques, both technical and non-technical, clearance operations can advance faster and in a more cost effective way. To underline the importance of these new approaches, we have asked GICHD to make a presentation on these technologies and methodologies at this Meeting of States Parties.

We thank the coordinator for national implementation measures, New Zealand, for its efforts to promote national implementation of the Treaty. It has devised model legislation so that States can

incorporate the provisions of the CCM into their national legislation. It is a highly effective tool that can further contribute to strengthening the Convention. Moreover, we applaud the combined initiative of New Zealand with the ISU and the coordinators for universalisation to prepare a regional workshop which was held in Addis Ababa in August 2016. We hope to see many African states ratifying the Treaty in the next few years.

As in previous years, the NGO community has worked tirelessly to bring the Treaty further ahead. Representatives from the Cluster Munition Coalition have worked together with the coordinators for universalisation, both here in Geneva and in capitals around the world. NGOs have been actively involved in efforts of clearance and victim assistance. They have undertaken extensive educational programmes to raise awareness of the risk of cluster munitions, and to improve the safety of civilians in contaminated areas.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We can be proud of our collective achievements so far. With each additional year that the Convention is in force, fewer people are at risk and more lives are saved. This Meeting of States Parties we will witness further progress. We believe more can be done now. The sooner we reach our common objective of a world without cluster munitions the better. It is for that reason that the Netherlands Presidency proposes to set a final date for completion, just as we did in the Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention. As the last State Party should have fulfilled its outstanding obligations in 2026, we believe it should be possible to finalize our implementation by 2030. We can and we will achieve our common goal of a world free from cluster munitions. A common goal that is not a distant dream but a reality lying within our reach.

