

Opening Statement of
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to the Conference on Disarmament and
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President of the International Convention on Cluster Munition

CCM/RACVIAC Joint Seminar on 12./13. June 2017 in Zagreb
The country coalition concept as a possible tool to enhance implementation of the CCM

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, let me welcome you wholeheartedly at this Regional Seminar "Cooperating to Implement the Convention on Cluster Munition: The Country Coalition Concept".

I am grateful and honored that so many delegations and invitees have positively responded to our call.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all those who have contributed to the excellent organization so far and who have thus paved the way for an enriching debate and a successful and productive outcome. I would like to mention in particular the RACVIAC center for security cooperation and Ambassador Berk for its generous support which has made this event possible.

Furthermore, in this context I would highlight the non-governmental and civil society community whose input has been of critical importance in the conceptualization of the country coalition concept and in the preparatory phase of this seminar, particularly the ICBL-CMC.

When Germany took over the Presidency of the Convention on Cluster Munition in September 2016 we were pondering how to add value to the implementation of the convention in terms of lasting initiatives and concrete support. If we speak about the Convention on Cluster Munition and its impact we have to keep in mind that this convention is still a very young one and one with a rather specific and well defined approach and purview. So besides universalization – the convention has now 101 states parties and 18 signatories and we will have to continue our efforts to make it a universal norm and an integral part of universally accepted International Humanitarian Law, - we decided to focus on efforts to enhance the humanitarian impact of the convention. Before this backdrop we as the Presidency have undertaken the effort to establish a structured dialogue with countries, which for one reason or another have not become states parties, an effort which has resulted in both raising awareness on some humanitarian issues and paved the way for future universalization.

The first such seminar was held with the generous financial support of the EU in Bangkok, South East Asia, the most CCM affected region in the world. Due to the excellent turnout we were able to gather an impressive college of experts to structure the discussion around the very questions which are most relevant to the affected countries. In order to also contribute to the universalization of the CCM we had also invited non-CCM members. This helped us also to discuss some of the issues around land release and victims' assistance in a broader context as CM contamination often comes together with other contaminations of explosive remnants of war such as land mines or unexploded ordinance.

For us representing the Presidency it was rewarding to see that the interaction between states, international and national institutions and actors can actually lead to new initiatives to the benefit of affected people. With this we also set positive precedents which help us to enhance the humanitarian purview of our convention.

To summarize: We are glad to be here today in order to promote a more tangible and individualized cooperation between donors, affected countries and other actors involved in the process of CCM-implementation. We need your initiative and ownership as the driving force for a more problem oriented and comprehensive cooperation. We, as the Presidency but also in our national capacity, the CCM-ISU, the ICBL/CMC stand ready to support in this effort. But in the end, the very job on the ground needs to be done by you. In this sense I look forward to having a fruitful discussion with you.

Thank you for your attention!