

Opening Statement
8th Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions
3 September 2018



Mr. President, your excellencies, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

The Convention on Cluster Munitions has become one of the cornerstones of humanitarian disarmament, as a legally-binding instrument to ban weapons with indiscriminate, disproportionate, and long-term effects; as a community for the construction and defence of the rule of law at the international level, and as a model for transparency, cooperation and assistance, and confidence-building.

CCM is a way of saying “enough!” to suffering, death and destruction, through decisive and immediate multilateral action.

The negotiations leading to it, infused with this sense of urgency, prioritized timing and robust substance, even bypassing—as did the Ottawa Process and the Mine Ban Treaty—traditional avenues that had failed to take heed of the principles of humanity and the public conscience.

Thus, the Oslo Process was launched right after the infamous large-scale bombardment with cluster munitions of Lebanon, in mid-2006. The process anticipated the need for prevention and foresaw that only adherence to a ban will counter the impact of this weapon, a fact that has been made appallingly clear with use in recent years in Ukraine, Yemen, and especially, in Syria.

Undoubtedly, the convention set the bar high for other areas of disarmament to cope with old threats, like nuclear weapons, or new ones, such as fully autonomous weapons.

Above all, the Oslo Process and its resulting convention have placed survivors at the forefront, building on the achievements of the Mine Ban Treaty, and positively influenced to take a right-based approach by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Survivors have taken a key role in the process, including CMC Ambassador Branislav Kapetanovic, who is with us here today.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions has shown in its own unique way, yet again, that disarmament concerns—or should concern—every nation, even those states that have not embarked on military actions internally or against other states, or been invaded; and those that are not producing and exporting weapons.

We have seen, over these more than ten years, a wide array of those states getting involved and even taking a leading role in constructing the global norm against cluster munitions.

Mr. President,

Still early in its life, this legally-binding instrument has undoubtedly achieved a lot. Yet, this is not enough in these challenging times for multilateralism and international law, including humanitarian disarmament efforts.

As long as there are victims of cluster munitions out there, if countries are still producing and selling cluster munitions, and while contaminated areas remain to be cleared and stockpiles to be destroyed -- we need this Convention to exist and thrive.

In the work of the international community for a cluster-munition-free world, we the civil society, will stay engaged and will act hand in hand with States Parties, ICRC, the UN and other fundamental actors.

In the Cluster Munition Coalition, we have done and will continue to do this, through our engagement with you by means of our advocacy outreach, in Geneva and New York; through research initiatives like the Cluster Munition Monitor or Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants; through the work of clearance operators, but above all, thanks to the relentless efforts, wisdom, commitment and selflessness of our national campaigns and member organizations working throughout the world.

Dear Friends,

We would like to express our mourning over the recent passing away of former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and convey our sympathies to his family and collaborators who over the years stood by him in the causes he led to make the world a better place.

Finally, I would like to share with you a quote by Mr. Annan from the end of the 20th century, which seems pertinent to consider today:

“Indeed, we have no excuses anymore. We have no excuses for inaction and no alibis for ignorance. Often we know even before the very victims of conflict that will be victimized. We know because our world now is one—in pain and prosperity. No longer must the promise of prevention be a promise deferred. Too much is at stake; too much is possible; too much is needed.”

Thank you.