



Kingdom of the Netherlands

**Statement of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
8th Meeting of States Parties of the Convention on Cluster
Munitions, agenda item 7(a) Universalization
Geneva, 3 September 2018**

**By H.E. Mr Robbert Gabriëlse
Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the
Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and Disarmament
Ambassador at large**

Mr. President,

Please allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of this meeting. You can be assured of my delegation's full support.

The Netherlands aligns itself with the statement delivered by the EU, and we would like to make some remarks in our national capacity.

Mr. President,

This year marks the 10th anniversary of our Convention; a fitting moment to look back on what we have accomplished so far. There is much to be proud of. Every day we get a step closer to our common goal of reaching a world free of cluster munitions by 2030. And year by year our community continues to grow.

It is good to remind ourselves that we are not here for a paper exercise only. Disarmament saves lives; a fact that was once again confirmed by the UN Secretary General in his Agenda for Disarmament. Indeed, as we work to implement the provisions of our Convention we contribute to this common effort.

The continued use of cluster munitions highlights the urgency and relevance of our efforts. This year, again, these indiscriminate weapons have made hundreds of victims around the world, killing civilians, wrecking communities and destroying livelihoods; reminding us that our work is far from done.

Let me be clear: we condemn any use of cluster munitions by any actor. We have done so, collectively, in the Dubrovnik Declaration and in the Political

Declaration which was adopted at the 6th Meeting of States Parties. We should, collectively, continue to do so.

Mr. President,

We would like to welcome and congratulate Sri Lanka, Benin and most recently Namibia on acceding to the Convention, bringing the total number of States Parties to 104, with 16 Signatories.

Two years ago, we set an ambitious goal to have 130 States Parties to the Convention by 2020. With two more years to go to 2020, we need an additional 26 States to ratify or accede to the Convention to reach our goal. We ask that all States who have already signed the Convention to prioritize their national ratification processes and encourage those who need assistance in doing so to actively seek it out.

Oftentimes, we hear that a State cannot accede to the Convention as long as a neighbouring State has not acceded, and vice versa. This Catch-22 situation can and should be solved, for example via simultaneous accession procedures, supervised by an independent party, or by encouraging military/military dialogue.

This eighth Meeting of States Parties offers us the opportunity to renew our commitments, to work together and to strengthen our efforts. These efforts require us to form partnerships across the sector, including with civil society whose invaluable role in implementing our commitments cannot be understated. Let us continue to work jointly towards our common goal: a world free from cluster munitions by 2030.

Thank you Mr. President.