

First Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Dubrovnik, 6-7 September 2015

Statement by Mr. Rayko Raytchev, Director General for Global Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria

Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria, first of all, I would like to congratulate H.E. Zoran Milanovich, Prime Minister of The Republic of Croatia, on assuming the role as President of the First Review Conference. I would like to assure him of my delegation's full support.

I would also like to join other speakers in congratulating Croatia, an EU Member State, for hosting this milestone event. Today, we witness a symbolic fact – the First Review Conference is taking place in a city that was a target of cluster munitions and where civilian population suffered from these weapons. At the same time, today Dubrovnik is a clear example how people can and should deal with the legacies of the usage of Cluster Munitions and how they help, care and assist the survivors.

My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union to be delivered later in the debate. I would like to highlight some elements of particular importance to my country.

The Republic of Bulgaria was among the first to sign the CCM in 2008. Being actively engaged in the whole process and to the ultimate

humanitarian goal of the Convention, we would like to share our deep concern about the use of cluster munitions in different regions of the world, which causes suffering and harm to civilians. We call for maximum possible restraint from using cluster munitions and for respect to the principles of the International Law.

We consider the First Review Conference as an important forum where States-Parties not only review the operation and status of the Convention but get together to reaffirm their engagement to put an end to the suffering and casualties, caused by cluster munitions, thus paving the way for more secure and peaceful world. The State-parties should that way hold on to their obligations to implement the Convention in a good faith and to promote the principles of International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law.

Given the international efforts to prevent the use of cluster munitions, we believe that the universalization of the Convention would be of great importance to the global action to protect civilians against the spread of these indiscriminate types of weapons.

Under the guidance of the Vientiane Action Plan a sensitive progress has been made towards the achievement of the main goals of the Convention. At national level, all of the cluster munitions possessed by the Bulgarian Armed Forces have been decommissioned and separated from other types of munitions retained for operational use. The entire Bulgarian stock of cluster munitions is marked for destruction.

At this point a new internal legislation is considered necessary for further strengthening the implementation of the Convention at national level in accordance with Article 9. The draft bill is to be adopted by the Bulgarian Parliament in the coming months. The bill tends to regulate the implementation of both the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Anti-Personnel Land- mine Convention, including the assistance to victims and their families.

The physical destruction has not started yet, pending the adoption of the necessary legislation. We plan to destroy the entire stockpile of Cluster munitions before the deadline. The destruction process will be conducted in observation of all safety and environmental standards. Bulgaria has no intention to retain cluster munitions or explosive submunitions for training purposes, permitted under article 3 of the Convention.

In compliance with Article 7 Bulgaria submits annually Transparency Reports and we encourage all States Parties to do so.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, let me wish every success to this First Review Conference and encourage all States Parties, observers and civil society to work co-operatively for the successful conclusion of this important event.

Thank you for your attention.