



Statement by Iceland

First Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Dubrovnik, 7 September 2015

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen,

I have the honour to convey to Croatia and to your Excellency, the Prime Minister, the deep gratitude and best wishes from Iceland's Prime Minister, Mr. Sigmundur Davíð Gunnlaugsson, and Iceland's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson, for holding this First Review Conference on the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

From the start, Iceland has been a strong supporter and active participant in the negotiations for this landmark Convention on Cluster Munitions, concluded in Dublin and signed in Oslo in 2008, including by Iceland. We welcomed its entry into force in 2010 and look forward to our discussions this week on its review, to reaffirm our commitments and agree on action for the next five years.

We appreciate that, at last count, 117 countries have signed the Convention and 95 countries have ratified it, including Iceland. Iceland's ratification of the Convention was made possible after the recent adoption by Iceland's parliament, the Althingi, of implementing legislation. I would also like to mention that Iceland supports prohibiting investments in producers of cluster munitions.

This strong acceptance of the Convention bears witness to its importance for humanitarian law, but also reminds us that more work needs to be done in attaining the goal of its universal application.

Iceland is committed to implementing all commitments under the Cluster Munitions Convention, including on assistance to other countries and victim assistance. It has conducted mine-clearing operations in affected countries and given assistance to persons with mine-related disabilities.

Iceland wishes to express its deep concern about recent reports on the use of cluster munitions affecting civilian populations including by the Islamic State (ISIS), Syrian government forces, in Eastern Ukraine, Yemen, South-Sudan and Libya. We note that in past years the largest casualties have been recorded in Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon and Laos. We urge all countries to stop using cluster munitions affecting civilian populations and to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law. We fully agree that we need to strengthen humanitarian law and must resist any proposals which might undermine our achievements.

As this point I would like to recall our previously stated position on Article 21 dealing with relations with States not party to the convention. Specifically, the language of this Article was drafted to deal with particular concerns on the operability of the Convention in cases where a State Party engages in military cooperation with a State not a party to the Convention. While the Article sets out an appeal to States which are not parties to join the regime of the Convention, it recognizes the need for continuing cooperation. This intention is captured clearly in paragraph 3 of the Article which should not be read as entitling States Parties to avoid their specific obligations under the Convention for this limited purpose.

Mr. President,

Iceland stresses the importance of gender mainstreaming in addressing the challenges of cluster munitions and welcomes the inclusion of this aspect in the draft Dubrovnik Action Plan.

Finally Iceland would like to acknowledge the important contribution of the ICRC and NGOs in our goal of completely eliminating cluster munitions.

Iceland will do its utmost to contribute to a successful outcome of this review conference and we look forward to working with all participants to secure better commitments to further the goals of the Convention, to work on its universalization and its full implementation by all Member States. We are looking forward to the day when all cluster munitions have been destroyed.

Thank you, Mr. President.