



UK Mission
Geneva

**CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS
SECOND REVIEW CONFERENCE**

AGENDA ITEM 8(A) UNIVERSALIZATION

STATEMENT BY THE UNITED KINGDOM

H.E. Aidan Liddle, Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament
Geneva, 25 November 2020

As this is the first time my delegation has taken the floor, please allow me to thank you and your team for your steadfast commitment and hard work this year. It is important that we have been able to continue with the conference this week, albeit in virtual format, which will leave us much better prepared when we reconvene in February to take the important decisions before us. Allow me also to extend our deep appreciation for the efforts of the Implementation Support Unit, UN Secretariat, interpreters and conference and technical support staff for their hard work in difficult circumstances.

Action 1 of the Dubrovnik Action Plan states that one of our most pressing objectives is the universalisation of this Convention and the corresponding norm against the use, stockpile, manufacturing and trade of cluster munitions.

Despite the fact that we have not reached our common objective of 130 States Parties, we have made progress over the past decade. We now have 110 States Parties; since the last Review Conference in 2015, we are pleased that an additional 15 States have acceded to or ratified the Convention. This progress would not have been possible without the commendable universalisation efforts made under each Presidency. The UK would like to extend a warm welcome to the four new States Parties who have joined since the Ninth Meeting of States Parties: Maldives, Sao Tome and Principe, Niue, and St Lucia.

Despite the unforeseen impact of Covid-19 on work across the Convention, the UK commends the valuable efforts of the Presidency, the Coordinators on Universalisation and others to continue to universalise the Convention. The UK looks forward to joining and supporting that work as the incoming Presidency of the 10th Meeting of States Parties, with a view to achieving universal adherence to the Convention.

Despite this progress, however, it is clear that we have some way to go before the Convention's norms are truly universally accepted. Mindful of the suffering and casualties caused by cluster munitions both at the time of their use, and sometimes for decades thereafter, the UK expresses deep concern about reports of the use of cluster munitions over the past five years, in particular in Syria, and most recently in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The UK urges parties to any conflict to fully respect the rules of international humanitarian law. We call on states and non-state actors to cease using these weapons, which can have a devastating humanitarian impact on civilian populations. The UK encourages all States not party to this Convention to accede without delay.

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