

**CLUSTER MUNITIONS: DUBLIN CONFERENCE**

**CLOSING STATEMENT BY THE UNITED KINGDOM, 30 MAY 2008**

Mr President,

I'd like to open by aligning this Delegation with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Slovenia as Presidency of the European Union.

The United Kingdom Delegation would like to join with others in offering you our sincere thanks and heartfelt congratulations on the accomplishment of your task. What you and all the members of your hardworking, dedicated team have brought about today is a humanitarian result of which you can be truly proud. Through you, we would also like to congratulate and thank the Secretary General and his highly professional staff for the administrative arrangements for the conference, which have been superb.

The United Kingdom was one of the original signatories of the Oslo Declaration back in February 2007. We have been part of the Oslo Process ever since. Throughout it we have played a full part in working towards its humanitarian objectives. We are proud to be associated with its conclusion and, as the Prime Minister announced earlier this week, on a national basis we have already taken significant steps towards implementing its norms by withdrawing from service all the UK's cluster munitions. The United Kingdom would therefore like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the tremendous efforts of those States which have worked tirelessly to guide this process from the beginning and which have seen it through to the end: Norway, Peru, Austria, New Zealand, Mexico, The Holy See and, of course, Ireland.

On behalf of the United Kingdom Delegation I offer our gratitude to those representatives from states I've not already mentioned who have also helped you guide this conference to its successful conclusion: Switzerland, South Africa, Australia, Belgium, Germany and Canada.

Mr President, you're clearly a man with many Friends.

This Delegation would also like to join with others in offering our warm appreciation for the enormous contribution to this outcome made by the International Committee of the Red Cross, the UN agencies and other International Organisations, and by civil society. In particular I would like to thank the Cluster Munition Coalition. We have had many vigorous discussions about how to get here; and this is entirely normal and right in open and democratic societies. What matters, I believe, is that our humanitarian objective has always been, and remains, a shared one. The outcome of this conference shows that, where the will exists among all parties to reach a common objective, a way forward can be found.

Finally, and most importantly of all, this delegation would like to pay tribute to the victims of cluster munitions; both those who have come here to Dublin and those around the world whom they represent.

What each and every one of them has done: to raise awareness; to make us all think; and now, together, to act, represents an outstanding service to the citizens of the world. Their extraordinary courage, cheerfulness and sheer human dignity can never be forgotten by any here who have had the privilege to witness it. It is they who have been our inspiration. It is they who have made this happen.

Mr President,

In closing, I would like to take us back to the first day of this conference. In his opening address, the President of the ICRC exactly captured the spirit of our collective endeavour when he quoted from the authors of the St Petersburg Declaration. Our task has indeed been shaped by the need to “fix the technical limits at which the necessities of war ought to yield to the requirements of humanity.” It will be for history to judge how far we have together succeeded in living up to that spirit. But this Delegation believes the draft convention we have just adopted represents a major contribution towards redefining some of those limits, for the benefit of humanity.

Thank you Mr President.