



Republic of Botswana

STATEMENT BY

**H.E. MR. BOOMETSWE MOKGOTHU
AMBASSADOR & PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA TO THE
UNITED NATIONS OFFICE IN GENEVA**

**AT THE
DUBLIN DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE
ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS**

**19 May 2008
Dublin, Ireland**

**Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished State Representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your election to the Presidency of this very important Conference. We are confident that, under your able stewardship, we shall have a positive outcome at the end of these two weeks. I assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation in the discharge of your onerous duties and responsibilities.

I also wish to thank the Government of Ireland for convening this meeting. We trust that Irish diplomacy will effectively guide our two-week negotiations to overcome any differences that we may be having, and achieve the necessary consensus for an acceptable outcome.

It is also fitting to pay special tribute to the Norwegian Government for having initiated and maintained its devotion towards a humanitarian campaign now receiving due attention for an international ban on cluster munitions.

Botswana aligns herself to the Statement already made by the distinguished delegate of Zambia, on behalf of Africa, which enunciates our shared commitment, as a continent, to the Oslo Process, particularly the need for adopting a legally binding international instrument banning the production, use and transfer of cluster munitions. We trust that such an international instrument will be negotiated from today on, in full transparency, and in an open and inclusive manner.

Mr. President,

We are gathered here today, fifteen months after the Government of Norway launched what was to become the Oslo Process, geared at addressing the humanitarian problem brought upon humanity by the use of cluster bombs.

Our presence here is to reaffirm Botswana's commitment to collectively address the horrendous humanitarian, development and human rights impact of cluster munitions by agreeing on an international legally binding treaty.

Mr. President,

To demonstrate our commitment to humanitarian processes, my Government worked assiduously and closely with other committed members of the international community, including States and non-governmental organizations, to address the humanitarian crisis posed by the use of landmines more than a decade ago.

We fully supported the Ottawa process to its logical conclusion in 1997. In this regard, we believe that the Oslo Process mirrors that successful international humanitarian response, and therefore deserves full and undivided support from all of us.

While Botswana is not directly affected by this menace of cluster munitions, we have a serious concern regarding the possible proliferation of this type of weapon. We are concerned about proliferation and transfer, particularly coming from a continent prone to conflict.

We note that, with billions of sub-munitions believed to be stockpiled in more than 70 countries, there is a need to avoid incidences of their transfer to other places, such as our own.

Non-proliferation could, therefore, only be meaningfully achieved through the adoption of an international covenant which will be binding on all.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, my delegation is confident that through constructive engagement during the next two weeks, we should be able to find common ground relating to the important task before us.

The time for action is now. We cannot afford to squander this opportune moment. Let us build onto the momentum and spirit of Wellington, and give the world populations some hope for the future.

I thank you.