

Second Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions
General Exchange of Views

Statement by Mr. Jordan Ryan, Assistant Administrator of UNDP and BCPR Director
13 September 2011

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, I am pleased to reaffirm UNDP's unwavering commitment in advancing the implementation and universalisation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. This includes our support for Ms. Sara Sekkenes as Executive Coordinator to this body.

Cluster munitions not only destroy the lives of people, but they also impede countries' development. When cluster sub munitions rob innocents from their limbs and dignity, when they obstruct roads and poison fields, they threaten productivity, basic social services and access to property and vital infrastructure. They also hinder the aspirations of those who long for a better life and a more prosperous future.

Removing these remnants of war is therefore about safety, but it is also about a return to economic and human development. And it is this fact, precisely, what resonates loudly and clearly with UNDP's prime occupation—empowering lives and helping to build resilient nations.

UNDP has, together with sister UN agencies and other partners, including NGOs has supported mine action programmes to eradicate the threat of cluster munitions contamination for several decades. We currently provide assistance in 21 of the 28 states and territories affected by cluster munitions, through direct coordination of clearance work and by supporting national governments to clear contaminated land and assist victims.

An important part of our work is to link clearance operations with longer-term development efforts. In northeast Albania, for example, UNDP worked in partnership with local authorities and NGOs to encourage operations to remove cluster munitions along with initiatives aimed at fostering local development. People in places heavily dependent on agriculture and forestry have now reclaimed their land for productive use. People living in formerly affected villages have now fewer barriers to break and with the nascent economic recovery, they stand more resilient. And today, after a decade of clearance and good governance practices, Albania has fulfilled its legal obligations under the Convention and is proudly and officially free from both cluster sub munitions and anti-personnel mines.

Here in Lebanon we are working closely with authorities to strengthen national demining capacity through the Lebanon Mine Action Authority (LMAC) which has resulted in a significant reduction of casualties.

With these examples in mind, I can't begin to emphasise the importance of the implementation process that lies ahead for States Parties to the Convention. As we know, the success of the treaty will be judged by its action on the ground. We will need to accelerate progress on clearance and stockpile destruction, expand the coverage of services for victims and survivors and increase the level of resources provided for these tasks so that all States Parties can fulfil their obligations within the deadlines provided under the Convention. These are not merely legal obligations; they are in fact commitments we have made to those affected. We therefore urge States to formally recognise the Convention on Cluster Munitions as the prohibitive norm.

It is clear that national leadership is critical on the one hand to take on the role as an active participant in the drive for universalisation of the Convention, but also to design national strategies to deal with the pervasive effects of cluster munitions at home. This year UNDP has sponsored 78 delegates representing 65 low income and affected states to ensure that their voices continue to be heard, providing the evidence base of the unacceptable harm of cluster munitions and sharing success stories of how these can be addressed.

UNDP has very much appreciated the opportunity to have worked alongside Lao PDR in their capacity as the first President of the Convention, and eagerly awaits to continue this crucial work with the Republic of Lebanon, during the period of their Presidency.

We look forward to the year ahead, and our involvement in the work of States Parties and are committed to continue to support implementation and the executive coordination of this important treaty until we have a more permanent structure. We also stand ready to provide assistance to the Implementation Support Unit once established to ensure that the effects of this Convention are felt by those most affected for them to benefit from the dividends of peace: improved physical security and sustainable development.

Thank you.