

## **Official Statement**

Delivered in the “Second Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions”, Beirut, Liban, September 13, 2011

by

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Honored Madamme Chair,

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me, first of all, to express my pleasure of being here in Beirut these days to represent the Government of Albania in this important Second Meeting of the State Parties of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and take the opportunity to address this esteemed audience. I would like to express my gratitude also to the organizers of this event and especially to the host country for their excellent arrangements and warm hospitality.

My country, Albania, has since the beginning attached a special importance to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, not only because it experienced not many years ago the dreadful consequences of the cluster munitions as a direct consequence of the war conflict in Kosova, but also because of its determined official stand on cluster munitions as multi-dangerous weapons to be totally banned. Albania will always strongly condemn the use of cluster munitions as a question of principle. We do believe that the larger the number of signatory countries to the Convention on Cluster Munitions the smaller is the probability of the use of cluster munitions in the future.

That is why Albania has been among the first signatory countries to this Convention followed by the respective ratification. That's why Albania made very serious efforts supported by important international actors and declared the country to be free of contaminated areas with mines and cluster munitions about two years ago.

For the same reasons, Albania is recently very seriously engaged in the rapid implementation of a large country's program of destruction and demilitarization of surplus ammunition and the complete clearance of some hotspot areas of unexploded ordnances to be completed by the end of the year 2013 or five year earlier than it was previously planned.

Today, it is an opportunity for me to greet, on behalf of the Albanian Government, all the recent signatory countries which joined the Convention in the past ten months and also call upon the other non-signatory countries to sign or ratify the Convention the soonest possible.

Albania will remain committed to all the efforts made to end the use of cluster munitions and it will always commend and encourage all the other states which will tirelessly work to achieving that noble goal. Considering the long term serious harm of cluster munitions in terms of individual human lives and their social life conditions I would like to commend all the governmental and non-governmental actors for their enormous work in the clearance process and the victim's assistance area.

This Second Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions taking place these days in Beirut, it is our conviction, will be another big step forward in the international efforts to totally ban cluster munitions following a very successful period of time on the way to a world free of cluster munitions since the First Meeting of Vientiane.

Albania will endorse all the shared proposals to be placed in the final draft documents and the Declaration of this Second Meeting and will be engaged in observing all the obligations deriving from them and the Convention in general.

Thank you!