

Holy See

Mr. President!

This Conference is another concrete step to translate our common resolve into action, to tackle a huge humanitarian problem and to make sure that, in the future, the cluster munitions will never be a cause of human suffering. My delegation thanks you, Mr. President, for your commitment and your achievements from the very beginning of this common effort. I would like to thank Norway as well for hosting this meeting. This is another sign of a long and generous commitment in the field of IHL. The Holy See is proud to be your partner and is determined to continue, with you and all our friends: States Parties, Signatories, International organizations, ICRC, and the civil society, until we succeed to definitively solve the problem of cluster munitions.

The best way to solve this problem is to prevent new victims and new contaminated areas. Prevention is easier than remedy and more cost effective. The Holy See appeals to all States outside the Convention to consider joining the global effort and our common determination. Valid arguments for such a cooperation have been on the table for many years. The most convincing one is the fact of the big numbers of victims with names and faces, and the reality of many families and communities affected by their suffering. All of them still bear unspeakable consequences years after the end of conflicts.

Allow me, Mr. President, to mention very briefly three other areas:

1. Our Convention is still young but it has vigor and moral resources. The determination of all actors should remain strong. After showing strong resolve in Dublin when we adopted this Treaty, all of us, we should continue to show domestically the same will to implement all our obligations in good faith.
2. After a few years of reflection and debate, it is the time to put together the means necessary for the life of the Convention. An implementation Support Unit (ISU), with secured and predictable finances, should be the next step to help all of us to make the Convention more effective and universal. All States parties need to share the burdens in a just and equitable manner.

3. Mr. President! IHL is not a cold body of rules written for the past. IHL has to evolve and to become more protective of the civilian populations. In time of crisis and conflicts, IHL should never be weakened or a bargaining chip among States or within a State in the public debate.

In conclusion, let me thank you again, Mr. President, and reiterate the readiness of the Holy See to work with all partners and friends to make the promising start a full success for all affected and non affected persons, communities and countries.

Thank you, Mr. President!