

Honourable Ministers  
Excellencies  
Distinguished delegates  
Ladies and gentlemen

From the outset, I would like, on behalf of the people and Government of the Republic of Zambia, to express our deep appreciation for the distinct honour and privilege that has been given to our country to assume the presidency of the 4MSP for the period 2013-2014.

As the incoming President of the 4MSP, allow me also to express my personal gratitude for the confidence that has been shown in electing Zambia to preside over the affairs of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Although, I am new to the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, having been appointed two weeks ago, I can assure you that my Ministry will exert every effort to ensure that the agenda of our presidency is achieved. We are cognisant of the responsibility that lies ahead of us and the Zambian leadership is fully committed to and shares in the ideals that form the basis of this Convention. It is precisely these principles of humanity, peace, security and development for all that underlies our resolve and fortitude to work with others to succeed in our joint efforts to create a safer world.

In this regard, I wish to pay special tribute to the outgoing President the Kingdom of Norway and in particular Ambassador Steffen Kongstad, for the outstanding work and excellent leadership shown during your presidency. Norway, a founding member, spearheaded the process that led to the adoption of the Convention and has since worked tirelessly to ensure that the Convention is implemented. It is worth noting that during your presidency, seven (7) countries ratified and two (2) acceded to the Convention. That was a great achievement and it should be recognised as such.

Further, the adopted theme of Norway's presidency which focused on enhancing the role of International Humanitarian Law has significantly raised the profile of the Convention and reignited the debate on the key issues.

Zambia has been truly inspired by your commitment and will spare no effort to maintain the thrust and energy that has been exerted during your presidency.

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The need to ban the production, stockpile and use all Cluster Munitions due to the indiscriminate and inhumane harm they inflict on innocent civilians mostly women and children as well as their negative impact on development cannot be overstated. In order to bring effect to this Convention, it is vital for all countries to come on board as we strive for a world free of Cluster Munitions.

It is our firm belief that the strength and success of this Convention lies in being able to bring all nations to adopt it universally and implement the provisions. It is for this reason that Zambia has chosen **Universalization** as its theme. Zambia will endeavour to register positive results in the adoption and ratification of the Convention.

During her Presidency, Zambia will pay particular attention to the African continent in order to increase the number of countries that have adopted the Convention. This is primarily because Africa remains the worst affected by this abhorrent weapon even though most of the continent does not produce or stockpile Cluster Munitions.

Furthermore, the presence of these weapons in our countries, long after the wars, detracts our people from the much needed social, economic and other developmental activities at all levels.

Currently, forty-three (43) out of the fifty-four (54) African countries have signed the Convention while a large number of these countries have yet to ratify the instrument. Zambia's presidency will, therefore, seek strategies to bring the remaining countries on board while exerting influence on the signatories to ratify the Convention. Our experience has shown that there is need to increase the level of awareness of the Convention among African countries and in many cases to give impetus to the bureaucratic processes surrounding ratification in these countries.

For instance, in the Southern African Development Community, SADC, a regional body to which my country belongs, fourteen (14) countries have joined the Convention with six (6) pending ratification. More can be done to ensure that the region is completely joined to the Convention and implementation is achieved.

As an African country, it is an honour to be the first country to hold the 4MSP presidency on the continent. I can assure that Zambia will fully utilise this position and is well placed to share her experience and raise the profile of these matters using every available platform at national, regional and continental levels in order to advance this noble cause. Our strategy for the continent and beyond will, therefore, involve intensive consultations at the bilateral level as well as enhanced propagation at the regional and continental levels utilising all the multilateral fora. With this approach, we believe that the Convention could see a significant increase in the number of States Parties.

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It is Zambia's sincere hope that Africa will become the first region to be cluster munitions free. But beyond that, it is all our hope as States Parties to have the Convention universalized and for Zambia our vision is that the process should intensify during her Presidency.

We are aware that the implementation of the Convention comes with obligations and challenges. We, therefore, call upon the international community and in particular those countries that are in a position to do so, to render assistance to the countries that have challenges to meet their obligations.

We have to ensure that the world is free of Cluster Munitions. We need to realise a world in which women will be free to go and cultivate their land and children play freely. We need to see countries maximise their development potential without having to contend with the negative effects of Cluster Munitions. Together we can achieve what we have set ourselves out to do and make a positive contribution to humanity.

In closing, I wish to reiterate Zambia's unwavering commitment to realising the total ban on Cluster Munitions and the full implementation of the Convention. We remain confident that with the support which you so ably rendered to our predecessors, we can attain Universalization.

I wish you all a very successful meeting and hope that through your deliberations we can make a difference in lives of people around the world that are looking up to us.

May God Bless You All.