

Madame President

I wish at the outset to express Ireland's thanks to the coordinators on Universalisation, Ghana and Portugal, for the work which they have undertaken on this most important issue. I also wish again to thank the Zambian government for its paper on universalisation which Ireland welcomes.

Universalisation remains a central challenge for the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The establishment of a new and universally accepted norm prohibiting a type of weapon is a difficult process, but the success of our Convention in gathering 83 States Parties and an additional 29 signatories is an excellent start.

Of course, our task remains that of persuading others, and particularly those who stockpile or produce cluster munitions, of the benefits of adhering to the Convention.

Nonetheless, the presence in Lusaka this week of non-signatory states and states which have not yet ratified the Convention is a welcome indication of the growing relevance and impact of the Convention.

I particularly welcome the information provided by several states on the progress they have made to ratifying or acceding to the Convention; I hope that others will follow their example.

Nationally, Ireland uses our bilateral contacts with non-states parties as well as the opportunities provided by multi-lateral occasions to advocate for greater adherence to the Convention. We will continue to do this; even when not successful, it is useful to maintain open channels of communication.

The ongoing use of cluster munitions, most recently in Syria, and the trade in cluster munitions which opens the door to future use demonstrates the continuing importance of achieving universalisation.

Thank you.