

**Intervention of the Delegation of Lebanon on Universalization
4th Meeting of State Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions,
Lusaka, September 09-13, 2013**

Mme. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

As it is the first time that Lebanon takes the floor, I would like to congratulate you for your election as President of this important meeting.

I thank you Mme President and your Government, on behalf of the Lebanese delegation, for your organization and warm hospitality.

I would also like to praise the extraordinary work of the President of the 3MSP and his able team.

I use this opportunity to warmly welcome the work and leadership of Portugal and Ghana in their capacities as Coordinators on Universalization, and wish to highlight the importance of the May 2013 Lomé Regional Seminar in strengthening the international efforts towards Universalization of the CCM.

Lebanon, would like to congratulate the States that have joined the Convention since the 3MSP in Oslo, namely: Andorra, Australia, Bolivia, Chad, Liechtenstein, Nauru and Peru.

However, allow me Mr. President to address above all, our wholehearted congratulations to the Republic of Iraq, who despite all the challenges in the Middle East, has progressed on the ratification to consequently bolster the ranks of Arab States to the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Lebanon has severely been affected by Israeli attacks in 2006 where about 4 million cluster bombs contaminated 55 million square meters of land, generated hundreds of innocent victims, threatened the lives of citizens and hindered economic progress in the affected areas.

Remarkably, the Lebanese governmental efforts, the immense contributions of the Lebanon Mine Action Center and the civil society organizations as well as the supportive role of donating states, has positively transformed the sad experience of cluster munitions into success in the region.

Regardless of the achievement made so far, we believe the adherence of an increasing number of Arab States to the convention cannot be more rewarding to

the effortless Lebanese attention towards universalization and to our affected Arab Nations.

In this perspective, Lebanon calls again on all sisters Arab countries that are not parties yet to the convention, to follow the Iraqi path and to ensure to our nations the legacy of an internationally binding instrument.

Nonetheless, the biggest reward will be in a coordinated international effort leading to the adhesion of Israel to the Convention.

Mme. President,

112 Signatories and State Parties is a great achievement for a young convention, but as we all acknowledge, much work remains to be done.

In this area, Lebanon as active state party and president of the 2MSP, has been giving the utmost priority to the CCM Universalization whereas all appropriate bilateral opportunities are used to raise adherence among Arab countries.

In addition, efforts over the last 12 months have been directed towards national and regional counterparts.

In due context, a series of events were held, and these provided for excellent platforms to discuss the challenges hindering adherence to CCM in the Arab region.

Lebanon Mine action center launched a campaign at the Lebanese Parliament on the occasion of the international day of mine awareness and assistance in mine action, in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Civil Society Organizations, to support the Mine Action Strategy entitled “Comprehensive support to mine and ERW victims within broader responses to injury and Disability”.

In addition, to mark the Third Anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Emigrants hosted an Iftar in August 2013. Views and progress on the CCM were presented by Civil Society, UNDP and LMAC, while MOFAE along with LMAC condemned the use of cluster munitions in all parts of the world, in particular its illegitimate use by Israel against Lebanese civilians during the 2006 aggression against Lebanon which resulted in a big number of martyrs, injured and handicapped. Unfortunately, the last Lebanese victim of the Israeli launched cluster bombs fell 2 months ago.

Speakers at the Iftar, addressed warm congratulations to Iraq for the ratification of the Convention and recalled on all Arab states to attend the 4MSP and to join the convention. This occasion was honored by the presence of Ambassadors and diplomats from Arab countries and other states as well as victims of Cluster Munitions and members of civil society organizations.

Mme President,

I wish to salute and admire the Lebanese Army for all the outstanding efforts it made and is still making, particularly through the Lebanon Mine Action Center. We also like to thank UNDP and the donor states for the technical, material and logistic support they provide so generously and nobly. We would also like to thank the states participating in UNIFIL, which also contributed in the demining process. Lebanon recognizes the excellent universalization work undertaken by other partners such as the CMC and the ICRC as well as civil society organizations active in the programs of cluster munitions.

We also benefit from this honorable platform to thank the trust of our international counterparts and call for their support to help Lebanon achieving its 2011-2020 National Mine Action strategy

Finally,

Despite we all acknowledge the multiple challenges in the Middle East, Lebanon will still stand in the lead of those who thrive for the adherence of Middle Eastern Countries to this convention and will continue to emphasize its offer of exchanging expertise in this field with Arab Countries.

The achievement of ratifying this international convention must be exploited by the prompt follow-up of its enforcement to achieving the maximum humanitarian benefit of the Convention, as well as consolidating its international legal standards.

Lebanon welcomes the continued momentum on universalization and strongly encourages States not party to join the Convention as soon as possible.

Thank you