



MINISTÉRIO DOS NEGÓCIOS ESTRANGEIROS

- Check against Delivery -

Statement by
Mr André Sobral Cordeiro,
Head of Disarmament and Non Proliferation Division at the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

Head of Delegation of Portugal to the
Fourth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on
Cluster Munitions
Lusaka, 9 September 2013

Mr President,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your appointment as President of the Fourth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). I am sure that under your able leadership, we will be promoting the goals of the Convention with decisions that can gather an enduring consensus. I also would like to extend my wishes of good cooperation to all participants in the Conference

I would also like to address a word of appreciation to the Government of Zambia for hosting this meeting, especially at a moment when almost whole of the African continent has ratified the Convention. This is a clear sign of its major importance and of its remarkable outcomes.

Portugal fully shares the views expressed by Ambassador Gilles Hervio, Head of the EU Delegation in Zambia, in the statement made on behalf of the EU.

Mr President,

Portugal has been intensely dedicated to the universalisation of the CCM for the last two years and would like to express its recognition to Japan, as the former co-coordinator, and Ghana, as the current co-coordinator. We notice the relevance of the Accra Universalisation Action Plan which deserves the appreciation of us all.



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Reinforcing the cooperation among all actors, including States and non-State actors, is key to a better understanding of the remaining obstacles to universalisation and their removal. In this regard, the collaborative environment of the universalisation team is a model to be copied. At this stage, we would recall in particular action 51 of Vientiane Action Plan and the need to promptly accomplish it.

Regional cooperation may help to move forward on the universalisation of the CCM. The consequences of the use of cluster munitions go beyond national borders and a deeper and common work between parties and non-Parties of the CCM may help to get the world get rid of cluster munitions and the suffering they cause.

We share the UN Vision in the Strategy of Mine Action 2013-2018, which clearly states that “a world free of the threat of mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW), including cluster munitions, where individuals and communities live in a safe environment conducive to development and where the human rights and the needs of mine and ERW victims are met and survivors are fully integrated as equal members of their societies”.

Mr President,

Already one hundred twelve countries have declared their consent to be bound by this Convention. As we meet, eighty-three of those countries have already ratified it and many others are in the process of doing so. These encouraging results, when so little time has elapsed since the Convention was opened for signature, are a reflection of the priority that States-Parties have accorded to the CCM. It must inspire us to continue to take further steps in the direction of full universalisation.

Mr President,

Two years ago, Portugal was honoured to be appointed co-coordinator for the matters pertaining to the universalisation of this Convention. Later this week, along with Ghana, we'll be giving an account of our endeavours to globally outlaw the serious and troubling consequences that cluster munitions bring about. My Government will continue to do its utmost to



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promote the CCM and we welcome new Partners in this capacity. Still, Mr President, I would like to outline some lessons from our experience, hoping they can contribute to our future work:

Portugal believes that it is essential to continue to draw the attention of the major producers and users of clusters munitions for the indiscriminately lethal character of those weapons and to persuade them to find different means for their legitimate concerns.

In addition, efforts regarding the universalisation of the Convention could tackle both ratification of the CCM and the promotion of a *de facto* situation that can eventually lead to the adherence to the CCM, such as a moratorium on the use or production of cluster munitions.

In the same vein, we have noticed that the strict rules of the CCM have been sometimes cited as reasons for a more cautious approach to ratification by some Countries, despite their support for the Convention and what it stands for. While Portugal strongly feels that the strength of the provisions is a commendable feature of the CCM, States-Parties should be aware of the burden and consequences, as perceived by States that are yet to become Parties. These obstacles naturally include concerns over future financial burdens associated with the CCM, especially at this early stage of the Convention and considering the current budgetary constraints.

On the other hand, technical cooperation targeting the legislative and administrative processes regarding both ratification and implementation of the CCM are equally important elements to universalisation. Moreover, technical cooperation that may help States Parties and non-Parties to put into practice the different goals of the Convention, in particular regarding storage and destruction of stockpiles (article 3) and clearance and destruction of cluster munitions remnants (article 4), are principles to be followed closely.

Mr President,

Portugal is appalled by recent reports of the use of cluster munitions. The reported use by the Syrian authorities in the ongoing conflict, which is



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bound to prolong the humanitarian consequences in years to come, is of special concern. We therefore reiterate once more our call on Syria to refrain to deepen the suffering of its civilian population and not to use such weapons.

Mr President,

Portugal takes this opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to the Disarmament efforts, in general, and to the CCM in particular. Through steps that are both fair and deep-rooted in reality, steady progress towards a safer world is being made.

I thank you, Mr President.