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**STATEMENT FOR POSSIBLE USE BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT AT
THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO
THE CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS ON 9TH SEPTEMBER, 2013.**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

LUSAKA

AUGUST, 2013

The President of the Convention, Ambassador Kongstad

*The Minister of Foreign Affairs **and incoming chair of the 4MSP**, Hon. Wylbur Simuusa, MP*

Your Excellences the Ministers of Foreign Affairs here present and all Heads of delegations

The United Nations High Representative

The United Nations Resident Representative

All Minister and Deputy Ministers here present

Your Excellences the Ambassadors and High Commissioners accredited to Zambia

Honourable Members of Parliament

Distinguished delegates to the 4MSP

Ladies and gentlemen

Allow me on behalf of the government and the people of Zambia and indeed on my own behalf to welcome you to Lusaka and to the Fourth Meeting of States Parties (4MSP). I extend a special welcome all our foreign guests, particularly to those visiting Lusaka for the first time.

Today marks the official beginning of your four-day meeting to deliberate on the important subject of Cluster Munitions and explore how we can work together to ensure that the world is saved from these indiscriminate weapons.

We are appreciative that Zambia has been bestowed the honour of being the first country on the continent to host the states parties meeting of the

convention. As we focus on the theme of **Universalisation**, this conference should create a real milestone in the quest to eradicate all indiscriminate weapons.

The attendance at this conference is a demonstration of the importance which all your countries or organisations attach to the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

The Fourth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster is coming at the backdrop of another successfully hosted conference, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) conference which was co-hosted by Zambia and Zimbabwe from 24th to 29th August 2013. I am confident that the 4MSP will record the same success.

Your Excellences, Distinguished delegates,

Let me mention that the Cluster Munitions convention is indeed of practical importance for Zambia, given her geopolitical location. It may be recalled that the first and second meetings of States Parties held in Cambodia and Lebanon, both highly affected countries and the third meeting was held in Norway which is not affected by the problem of Cluster Munitions. Zambia itself is an in-between case,

As you may be aware, it is surrounded by eight (08) neighbours some of which had fought liberation or civil wars in the not-too distant past. Given the desire for mutual development, Zambia has been instrumental in brokering peace initiatives in and around the sub-region.

During an era of protracted conflicts, we witnessed firsthand, the effects of such weapons. We have since taken a keen interest in the quest to end the human suffering created in the aftermath of their use. Cluster munitions thus have no place in the modern era. Many of the Cluster Munitions are indiscriminate in nature and have long life spans. For a long time, they act as de-facto death

traps once they are fired and fail to explode. This poses a continued threat to communities and their livelihoods.

It is also true that this efforts is for every Zambian that continues to suffer the effects of cluster bombs and for those in contaminated areas and those whose lives have been characterized by fear of these explosive remnants. We hope you will one day undertake your social, economic and other developmental activities without the spectre of long-forgotten wars.

Despite the extent of the cluster munitions in Zambia, my Government views the solutions to this problem as being through concerted international action.

Your Excellences, Distinguished delegates

In terms of our local action, you may be aware that Zambia has been actively involved in the work of the Convention from the inception having signed the Convention on 3rd December, 2008. It was among the first thirty (30) signatories and the 15th country to ratify the convention on 12th August, 2009. Zambia participated actively in all the negotiations that culminated in the Dublin Conference on Cluster Munitions which was convened to conclude an international treaty to ban the use, development, manufacture, stockpile and transfer of cluster munitions that cause harm to civilians.

Zambia played a leading role in Africa's work by hosting an All African Regional Conference on Universalisation from 31st March to 1st April, 2008 in Livingstone prior to the Dublin conference on Cluster Munitions held in May, 2008 and had continued to work with other African countries such as Ghana and Togo to drive the agenda of the Convention in the African region.

The importance we attach to the Cluster Munitions Convention can further be demonstrated by our heightened resolve to domesticate the Convention. As I speak, Parliament is in the process of deliberating on this important issue meaning, that Zambia has reached an advanced stage in domesticating the Convention,

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen

I also note with satisfaction, the many achievements that have been scored during the short life of the Convention. These successes are a result of the commitment of all members of the Convention. Today, even some countries that are not yet party to the Convention have pledged not to use Cluster munitions. This demonstrates that everyone is becoming increasingly aware of the fact that the Cluster Munition is no longer a weapon of choice. I, therefore, want to take this opportunity to applaud all States Parties , Signatory States, concerned Organisations and Civil Society for their efforts towards a cluster munitions-free world.

We in Africa are struggling to meet the economic development challenges which our people are constantly facing. The current international focus on the post 2015 development agenda will be compromised as long as issues of individual security are not met. This means that for the peasant farmer to look after his family through bringing up healthy children, educating them and ensuring the mutually beneficial relation with the natural environment. The notion of banning the production of those weapons which remain a threat to these innocent civilian populations is therefore one I will always ascribe to.

We, therefore recognise the fact that Cluster Munitions are still a threat to communities' wellbeing and urge that more should be done to achieve the objectives of the Convention. We are hopeful that everyone will continue with

the same spirit and condemn in the strongest terms the continued production, manufacture, use and stockpiling of Cluster Munitions by any country.

Your Excellences, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

In ending let me say that, In the face of the serious deliberations before you, I will still urge that your visit will not be complete if you do not sample our many tourist attractions. Zambia is endowed with many natural attractions such as water falls, fauna and flora as well as an immensely friendly people. It is my hope that you will make your visit to Zambia memorable by experiencing some of these many attractions.

I wish you all fruitful deliberations and hope that the outcome of this conference will impact strongly on efforts of ridding the world of cluster munitions.

I thank you.