



CCM Statement by South Africa at the 4th Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions; Lusaka, Zambia 2013

Thank you very much Mr President

At the outset, my delegation would like to thank the Zambian Government for the invitation and for the warm hospitality extended to my delegation.

Mr President

South Africa is concerned about the threat posed by cluster munitions. As a Signatory to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), South Africa is fully committed to the implementation of all its provisions.

My country was among those that actively participated in the Oslo process which led to the adoption of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Since then my country has participated in almost all the meetings of the CCM. This decision has been driven by my Government's conviction that these weapons have not only become obsolete as weapons of modern warfare, but that their recent use in conflicts have shown them to cause unacceptable harm to civilians, even long after the cessation of active hostilities.

Mr President

With regard to ratification, we are pleased to announce that during its meeting last week, on 4th September the Cabinet approved that the CCM be sent to Parliament for ratification. Cabinet also supported the destruction of cluster munitions stocks in compliance with the Convention. The Cabinet further emphasised that the ratification of the Convention is in line with South Africa's commitments to upholding human rights and humanitarian law when engaging in warfare. We hope that, now that this crucial step has been completed, the ratification by Parliament will be finalised as soon as possible.

In this connection, we welcome the steady progress that has been made regarding an increase in the number of ratifications. We should redouble our efforts to convince and bring into the fold those that have not yet acceded to the Convention, in particular the users and producers of cluster munitions. It is a sad reality that suffering on the African Continent has often been caused by weapons that are manufactured elsewhere in the world.

Mr President

In our efforts to implement the Convention, there are serious challenges that lie ahead of us. We need to ensure that the existing stockpiles of cluster munitions are destroyed

way before the deadlines set by the Convention. A number of areas are still contaminated by unexploded sub-munitions and other explosive remnants of war. This contamination hampers development as these areas cannot be used for developmental purposes such as agriculture, manufacturing and housing. In this connection, it is prudent that the affected States draw up their plans as soon as possible. These should include among others maps, surveys, budgets and timeframes. This will ensure that no extension requests will be required by the States to implement their clearance obligations.

Moreover, we need to continue to stigmatise the use of cluster munitions as a weapon of war. Therefore, we are concerned about the alleged use of cluster munitions in recent conflicts since this Convention entered into force. We call upon all States to condemn any use of cluster munitions as this has negative effects on the livelihoods of the people particularly those who live in affected areas, even long after the cessation of conflict.

Finally, Mr President, I wish to quote from a statement by former President Mandela when he said in his 1998 State of the Nation address to a joint sitting of the South African Parliament: "We shall continue to make our humble contribution to the search for peace and the humane conduct of international relations. Our contribution on these issues...derives from our own experience about what humanity should not do to itself." It is in this context that South Africa will continue to play its modest role by working with others towards the establishment of a truly cluster munitions free world.

I thank you