



United Nations
Z A M B I A

Fourth Meeting of States parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Statement by *Ms. Kanni Wignaraja, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Zambia*
Lusaka, 10 September 2013, Opening Session

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Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman,

It is a great privilege for me to address this 4th Meeting of State parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. As UN Resident Coordinator in Zambia, I wish to extend a warm welcome to you all. At the outset, I would also like to thank the Government of Zambia for hosting this important meeting and to congratulate Zambia for its election as President of the 4MSP.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions constitutes a remarkable tool to put an end to the unacceptable harm caused by cluster munitions. As the Human Rights Council noted earlier this year: *“cluster munitions pose an immediate threat to civilians by randomly scattering thousands of sub-munitions or “bomblets”. The danger posed by these sub-munitions can last long after a conflict, as hundreds may fail to explode upon impact.¹ Thousands of people are often prevented from returning to their homes, livelihoods are ruined, as lands are unusable, and incomes are lost”*. The Convention on Cluster Munitions has firmly established a categorical ban of these weapons and requires the elimination of stockpiles, the clearance of contaminated areas and the provision of assistance to victims. It provides the framework for cooperation among states and other partners to address the challenges faced by affected communities.

To this end, I would like to echo the message of the UN Secretary General delivered yesterday, congratulating the eight new States parties to this Convention since the last MSP, now signed by 112 countries (of which 83 have ratified).² This includes most of the affected countries and many former users, producers and stockpilers. Let us extend

¹ A/HRC/22/59

² Peru, Australia, Nauru, Lichtenstein, Chad, Andorra, The Plurinational State of Bolivia and Iraq

gratitude to all States parties for the efforts made every day working on the implementation of the provisions of the CCM. It is these efforts that in the end will make a difference on the ground.

These achievements are also the result of the invaluable partnership between states, international organizations such as my own, the UN and UNDP, the ICRC and the IFRC and not least the civil society working hand in hand to rid the world of cluster munitions. These achievements should also be attributed to the significant engagement of non-affected states committed to promote the universalization of the CCM. For the first time, a Meeting of States parties takes place in Africa and in a country which has never used, produced, transferred or stockpiled cluster munitions.

A continent where cluster bombs have been used in 14 countries,³ Africa, is one of the most affected. On repeated occasions, during regional and international meetings, the key role played by African states in the creation of the Convention as well as their commitment to the humanitarian imperative and the importance of strengthening international humanitarian law has been highlighted. The continuous efforts of Zambia, leading to its election for Presidency of the 4MSP, is indeed the result of its conviction of the preventive nature of this treaty for the benefit of future generations.

Yesterday, once again, we witnessed this commitment. The statements delivered by the President of the Republic of Zambia, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs who now has been elected President of the 4MSP as well as high level delegates from a number of neighbouring African states, and more of which we will hear from today, affirming their support and commitment to attain universal adherence to the universalization to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and calling on countries that have not done so to join the Convention as soon as possible is encouraging. As of today, 42 of African's 54 states have joined the Convention, 23 of them are States parties, and 19 are working on the submission of their instruments of ratification. We hope that, in the coming months during Zambia's Presidency, we will be able to count on their ratifications, indeed creating the first continent with full adherence to the Treaty.

Mr. President,

³ Angola, Chad, Congo DR, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Libya, Mauritania, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda and Zambia

The United Nations would like to reiterate its full support to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We take pride in the interim implementation support UNDP has provided to the Convention and its presidencies throughout this process. UN high level representatives, country offices and agencies advocate for the universalization of the Convention and assist states to address any challenges to accession. Currently we work with fifteen States parties⁴ to the CCM to clear land, provide support and risk reduction education to communities affected by these weapons, and destroy stockpiles of cluster munitions to ensure these can never be used again. Combined with the United Nations 2013-2018 Strategy on Mine Action, this provides important steps towards a safer world where individuals and communities can pursue socio-economic development and where survivors of explosive remnants of war are treated as equal members of their societies.

At the same time, we must be vigilant to any action that can counter this progress. We deplore the use of cluster munitions in Syria and condemn the use by any actor, anywhere. We call for universal adherence to this Convention. Indeed, the safety and security of civilians is paramount and we are profoundly disturbed by recent events in Syria, the very reason why the Secretary General's High Representative of Disarmament Affairs could not be here with us today. To this end I also take the opportunity to encourage an active engagement against the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

In closing, I take this opportunity to welcome new States and call on all signatories to ratify and urge States not yet party, to join the Convention without delay. Our work does not end here. In the words of President Mandela "... I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill one only finds there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back at the distance I have come. But I can rest only for a moment, for with freedom comes responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not yet ended." And so, we must persevere to rid the world of cluster munitions and make it a more peaceful one for all.

I thank you all for your attention and wish you a successful meeting.

Thank you.

⁴ Afghanistan, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Iraq, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Senegal and Zambia.