

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates

Firstly, Mr. President, the delegation of the Kingdom of Lesotho congratulates you on your election to the presidency of this important Meeting. We look forward to a successful Fifth Meeting of States Parties under your able leadership and pledge our full support and cooperation to you. The Lesotho delegation equally wishes to thank the outgoing President, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Zambia for his skillful chairmanship. We would also like to convey our appreciation to the government of Costa Rica for its efforts and organization in hosting the Fifth Meeting of States Parties and its generous and warm hospitality.

Mr. President

Lesotho is particularly aware of an unacceptable danger posed by cluster munitions. Furthermore, it is civilians who bear the burden of these deadly weapons, which injure and kill indiscriminately, damage infrastructure, hinder humanitarian access and cause additional suffering, long after conflict has ended. Therefore, the domestication and full implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) remains one of the key priorities on the agenda of the Government of Lesotho.

In very few years since its entry into force, the Convention on Cluster Munitions has proven to be an integral part of the humanitarian framework for the protection of civilians. This is an issue to which Lesotho attaches great importance. In particular, the Convention's emphasis on the indiscriminate and excessive effects of cluster munitions – both at the time of use and their long-term humanitarian impact – has reinforced and further entrenched the fundamental principles of distinction and proportionality which are essential elements of international humanitarian law.

In recognition of the tragic impact of cluster munitions, there is no doubt that the Convention has made the great strides in reducing the harm that is caused on civilian populations. In this regard, Lesotho notes with satisfaction, the achievements recorded in the number of ratifications and the steady progress made towards the universalisation of the Convention. In this connection, we congratulate and welcome new States Parties to the Convention.

Lesotho further calls on State Parties to the Convention to fully discharge their obligations under the Treaty. We recognize that the universalization of the CCM is a shared responsibility, and we, therefore appeal to states not party to the Treaty, to consider joining it as soon as possible.

Mr. President

Finally, I would like to emphasise that no obstacles can beat the power of the joint efforts. We must continue to cherish the purposes that have brought us together. The responsibility to save our peoples' lives lies on our collective approach to resolving the ills of the world. We cannot ignore our responsibility to build a better and more united world, for the future generations.

In conclusion, **Mr. President**, Lesotho remains fully committed to the universalisation of the Convention and the realization of a cluster munition free world.

I thank you