

5 MSP Cluster Munitions Convention, 2 - 5 September San Jose, Costa Rica

Statement by the Netherlands

Universalisation

Mr President,

As this is the first time I take the floor, please allow me first to congratulate you on your election for the Presidency. As fellow co-chair for General Status, I had the privilege and absolute pleasure to work closely with my Costa Rican colleagues over the past year and I am absolutely confident that we will have a successful meeting under your able leadership. You can therefore count on the full cooperation of this delegation.

Mr President,

One of the biggest challenges for this convention remains its universalisation. In this regard we congratulate Belize for joining the convention and the Democratic Republic Congo for ratifying it.

As is reflected in the San Jose progress report the rapid rate of ratifications in the first years of the Convention now has reached a plateau, bringing the number of new States Parties to slow down in the last year. Although about half of the UN member states are now party to the Convention, we think more can and should be done.

We therefore fully agree with the Cluster Munitions Coalition that we must do more to get new members.

The Netherlands wants to contribute to this goal by more systematically addressing universalisation issues in bilateral meetings with states that are not yet party to this treaty. We are also prepared to engage in common demarches to this effect.

Mr President,

We also agree that we should do more to reinvigorate the norm of the non use of cluster munitions.

Compliance with the convention is of utter importance for the Netherlands.

We are appalled by the continued use of cluster munition and barrel bombs in populated areas by the Syrian regime. Their indiscriminate attacks against civilians are contrary to international humanitarian law and the norms set by this convention.

We call upon the Syrian regime to immediately stop the further use of cluster munitions, and to comply strictly with all its obligations under international humanitarian law.

The Syrian regime should understand that its continuous violations of international humanitarian law will lead to a situation in which it will be fully held accountable for these horrific acts against its own population.

We are also deeply concerned about the alleged use of cluster munitions in South Sudan and in Ukraine. We call upon both governments to react to these allegations in an open and transparent manner. In the meantime we call upon the governments and non-state actors to take any necessary measure to protect its citizens from cluster munitions.

In addition we are deeply concerned by recent reports about the use of cluster munitions by ISIS. This is the first report of the use of cluster munitions by a non-state actor. The possession and use of cluster munition by a non-state actor sets a dangerous precedent and must be prevented at all costs.

Thank you Mr President.