

**UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN  
IRELAND**

**STATEMENT: GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS**

Mr President,

Firstly, thank you greatly to Costa Rica for the very warm welcome to all those who have travelled to San Jose. Please allow me also to congratulate Costa Rica on the excellent organisation of this event, and for having been elected to the presidency of the Convention. I would like also to thank the outgoing Zambian presidency for their excellent efforts over the past year.

The United Kingdom attaches great importance to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We continue to be mindful of the suffering and casualties caused by cluster munitions both at the time of their use, and sometimes for decades thereafter. Since coming into force, the Convention has been a vital focal point in tackling this issue in two ways. Firstly, through prevention, in prohibiting the use, production and transfer of cluster munitions. Secondly, the convention has also tackled the consequences of cluster munitions use via clearance operations and victim assistance.

There are however several challenges to the work of the convention which I will touch upon. Firstly, we are concerned that since we met in Lusaka last year there have been several reports of the use of cluster munitions. We call on those states involved to cease the use of these weapons. Secondly, the pace of ratifications and accessions to the treaty has slowed in recent times. We would however like to congratulate St Kitts and Nevis, and the Republic of Congo on their accession to the Convention. We congratulate Belize also on the news that they will shortly accede. We call upon all non-States Parties to take the step of acceding to the treaty, and failing that to start adhering to its norms.

Our third concern is that the number and quality of transparency reports falls short of that required. We note that reporting is just as much an obligation on States Parties as the other requirements of the convention.

Mr President, as you know, the UK completed the destruction of its stockpile of cluster munitions in December 2013, and we encourage all states parties with outstanding Article 3 requirements to complete the destruction process as soon as possible.

Finally, we note that the United Kingdom continues to provide substantially to mine action projects around the world. These include countries with substantial cluster munition contamination, such as Laos PDR, Vietnam and Cambodia. The UK has recently commenced clearance and risk education operations in a new phase of work in those three countries, in projects worth a total of approximately 7 million pounds.

Mr President, we wish you and this conference every success, and we look forward to a productive meeting which takes forward the work of the convention.

Thank you.