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Seventh Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, 4-6 September 2017

Statement given under Clearance and destruction of cluster munition remnants and risk reduction education (item 8 (c)).

Mr. President,

We would like to thank you for your active leadership during this past year.

Last month saw the seventh anniversary of the entry into force of this Convention.

We would like to congratulate Mozambique, a state party, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, a signatory state, for having recently completed clearance of all areas known or suspected to contain cluster munition remnants. This brings the number of countries which have completed clearance to 11. A total of 27 states and 3 other areas are still contaminated with cluster munition remnants. 13 of these are states parties to this Convention.

We are making progress. We welcome the fact that 25% more area was cleared and 15% more submunitions were destroyed in 2016 than in the previous year.

Mr President, we are heading in the right direction, but we are heading there slowly. The first of the Article 4 clearance deadlines are only three years away, but very few States Parties are currently on track to meet their deadline. Of the 13 contaminated states parties, most are either not on track, or it is not clear whether they are on track.

The ability to reach deadlines has to be part of the discussion between donors, affected countries and operators. We are strong

believers in focussing on country-level efforts in order to accelerate progress, both at **policy** level and, just as importantly, at **technical** level to identify and address remaining challenges. In its capacity as co-coordinator for clearance and risk reduction education for the past two years, Norway has been able to support to such efforts.

Mr President, you have been very supportive of such efforts by introducing the “country coalition” concept which also aims to bring together all relevant stakeholders to share experiences and best practice.

Norway would therefore like to see country-focussed discussions take place in the margin of every meeting of states parties in the years ahead.

One point of departure for such country-focussed discussions could be the annual report produced independently by Mine Action Review, which rates the **performance** of each national mine action programme and provides **recommendations** for action. This report will be presented at a side event tomorrow.

Mr President, Norway will continue to have a strong focus on article 4 implementation even after the conclusion of our term as co-coordinator for clearance. We will maintain a direct dialogue with operators and national authorities in the 20 countries where we are currently funding survey activities and clearance of cluster munition and landmines.

We are convinced that an evidence based approach to clearance is the way to get the most out of scarce resources. Nationwide surveys and clearance must go hand in hand, simply because it is difficult to properly address cluster munition contamination in a country if the real extent of the problem remains unknown.

Our common aim must be to avoid Article 4 extension requests as much as possible.

Thank you.