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Statement by Mr. Mário Duarte,

Deputy Permanent Representative

Intersessional Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions
Geneva, 16 - 19 April 2012

Thank you, Mr. coordinator

I speak in the capacity of one of the Co-ordinators on matters pertaining to the Universalisation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, a position Portugal was honoured to accept, at the Second Meeting of State-Parties, last September, in Beirut.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Partners in the Universalisation team, especially Japan, whose leadership has contributed to a fast rate of accessions to the Convention. Japan and Portugal, along with the Team, will continue to promote the CCM and the solutions contained therein for the serious humanitarian problem that these weapons cause.

Mr. Coordinator

Portugal strongly supported, from the outset, the Dublin process and the Convention, and has for the past two years been actively engaged in the universalisation of the CCM.

We are pleased to note that, so far, 70 countries have ratified the Convention. The growing number of States joining the CCM is a sign of its vitality, as well as the recognition by the International Community that the suffering these weapons bring about must be outlawed.

It is also proof of the soundness of the Ventiane Action Plan, adopted at the first Meeting of States Parties, in 2010, in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Following Action #3 of such plan, Portugal has recently conducted demarches in Portuguese-speaking countries that have yet to accede to the Convention.

On such occasions, we pointed out how the CCM advances the goal of regional stability and the humanitarian principles that we all value.

In addition, Portugal is organising a field trip, in Lisbon, for all Portuguese-speaking countries, regarding the demilitarisation of defence materials, such as ammunition and

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explosives. We will be seizing this opportunity, not only to promote the adherence to the Convention, pursuant Action #2 of the Ventiane Action Plan, but also to find practical solutions to the challenges identified beforehand.

Indeed, as the number of States-Parties increase, Actions # 5 to 7, which attend to the more pragmatic obstacles, become more relevant to the goal of Universalisation.

In general, these countries expressed a political interest in the Convention, despite some technical difficulties to go forward with the accession or the ratification processes. Portugal will continue to work with these countries to overcome such difficulties, in the hope that progress will be made shortly.

Portugal, along with Japan and the Universalisation Team, urges other States Parties and Regional Organisations to embrace this goal and to strengthen the CCM, by helping us to carry out the mandate with which we were entrusted.

Thank you