

UNCLASSIFIED

UK STATEMENT ON UNIVERSALISATION

Geneva April 2012

Mr. Chair,

As this is the first time that I have taken to the floor I would be grateful if you would indulge me just a little diplomatic courtesy. I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Government of Lebanon for their tireless hard work and leadership in driving forward our collective work and for their warm welcome in Beirut in September last year. May I also extend my thanks to my distinguished Japanese and Portuguese colleagues for chairing this important session.

Mr Chair

We believe that promotion of the Convention to those who have yet to accede or ratify is critical to achieving the maximum humanitarian effect of the Convention, as well as consolidating its international legal standard. As a number of my distinguished colleagues have noted, for a young Convention the ratification or accession of 70 countries is a fantastic achievement. But we all have a responsibility to work to widen membership further.

I hope that one way we can do so is by sharing our experience of legislation. The Convention is implemented in UK law by the Cluster Munitions (Prohibitions) Act, 2010. The legislation prevents prohibited activity, including the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of cluster

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

munitions from taking place within the UK, and by any UK national wherever they are. It also establishes appropriate penalties and enforcement mechanisms for these acts, including a prison sentence of up to 14 years.

In addition to the Act, the UK implements a strict export control regime, which places cluster munitions in the highest category of control.

We remain very happy to continue to share our experience of legislating and implementing the provisions of the Convention. Although we of course recognise that there are many different ways of implementing the provisions of the Convention successfully, and that States Parties must do so according to their national context.

Mr President

The UK has also been active in promoting the Convention to non-signatories. In October the UK hosted a universalisation workshop for Commonwealth countries opened by Foreign Office Minister Lord Howell. We are grateful to the Lebanese Government, the ICRC, the Cluster Munition Coalition and the Commonwealth Secretariat for their input into the workshop and for the contributions of participants from across the Commonwealth. 30 out of 54 Commonwealth countries are signatories and we anticipate the accession or ratification of others in the near future. We would encourage other states to consider how they might use their own special relationships and networks to promote the

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Convention. And in this regard we warmly welcome the announcement by Zambia and Lebanon of universalisation workshops that will take place later this year in the Middle East and Africa.

Chair,

The UK will continue to use all appropriate opportunities, be they bilateral or multilateral, to promote the Convention. We look forward to a fruitful discussion on universalisation this week, and hope that we can increase the value of co-ordination between states and civil society in our work to promote the convention.

Thank you Mr Chair

UNCLASSIFIED