

2014 Inter-sessional Meeting of the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Statement of the International Committee of the Red Cross on Universalization

7 April 2014

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) would like to begin by thanking Ghana and Norway for their work and commitment as coordinators on universalization. We also would like congratulate Saint Kitts and Nevis for acceding to the Convention since the 4th MSP. With the total number of ratifications and accessions to the Convention now at 84 the world is slowly moving towards the global elimination of these weapons but like the coordinator, CMC and others have outlined in their comments we would like to see the pace of ratifications quicken significantly especially between now and the MSP in Costa Rica..

The ICRC continues its efforts to promote the Convention and urge its full implementation. As we have outlined in previous meetings, the adherence of all States to the Convention is a priority for the ICRC and we are actively engaged in a range of promotional activities through our delegations and through the support that we provide to National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies around the world.

Over the past year, our efforts have concentrated on urging signatory States to advance their formal ratification of the Convention. This is primarily taking place through our delegations and their direct contact with government and parliamentary officials at the national level. In addition, we were pleased to participate in the 2 workshops organized for signatory African States by the coordinators, UNDP as the interim ISU and hosted by NZ. These events were important and useful initiatives and ICRC delegations will be contacting the States that participated for follow-up discussions. Although progress in universalizing the Convention is being made, nevertheless, we continue to urge all States to adhere to the Convention if they have not already done so. We particularly call on signatory States to formally ratify the Convention as soon as possible. Many signatory States signed the Convention more than 5 years ago and we believe that the time has come for them to take the next step and join the Convention as a fully participating State Parties. Joining the Convention is an important effect of reinforcing the important prohibitions and norms that this Convention is establishing. Also allow to fully participate at the upcoming review conference for the Convention which is not that far away.

The ICRC continues to be concerned about reports of the continued use of cluster munitions and the humanitarian consequences that following such use. Importantly, the use of such weapons has been generally limited since the adoption and entry into force of the Convention. In our view, this is in part due to the recognition that these weapons have a limited military value and the international concern and condemnation that often occurs when such weapons are used. Concern about the continued use of cluster munitions has been expressed by many States and organizations, and importantly by Non-party States. The ICRC welcomes these efforts and statements. For its part, the ICRC will normally include messages about the use of cluster munitions in its bilateral and confidential dialogue with the parties to an armed conflict.

But the fact that cluster munitions continued to be used, even if only in a few instances, shows that there is still work to be done. And we must redouble our efforts to encourage all States to join the Convention if they have not already done, and we again call on them to do so as a matter of urgency and ICRC legal advisers are available to you achieve this. We also

call on States Parties and signatories alike to continue condemn the use of cluster munitions whenever they are used. These efforts will help bring us closer to the goal of universalization will be achieved.

Thank you.