

Convention on Cluster Munitions - Intersessional Meeting 07-09 April 2014

Statement by Ireland on Clearance and Risk Reduction

Thank you Mr Coordinator

My delegation would like at the outset to welcome the appointment of Switzerland and Lao PDR as joint coordinators on Clearance and Risk Reduction and we wish you both well in taking this important work forward during the period of your coordinatorship.

We would also like to recall the paper titled '*Effective steps for the clearance of cluster munitions*' presented by the then Coordinators, Ireland and Lao, to the fourth meeting of states parties at Lusaka in 2013. We also recall the theme reflected in that paper that 'cluster munitions can be cleared and can be cleared relatively quickly'.

That paper identified more effective and targeted methods of survey as a key element in accelerating the clearance of cluster munitions and in returning land that had been classified as hazardous areas to productive use. The paper also recognised the tremendous progress made by the mine action community in the fifteen years since the entry into force of the Anti-personnel Landmine Convention.

The entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions has also had an energising impact on the clearance community and has been a catalyst for new thinking, particularly in the development of survey methodologies and the more focused application of available detection technologies to the cluster munition problem.

In that context we welcome the presentations this morning by the Director of the NRA of the Lao PDR Mr. Phoukhieo Chanthasomboune, and Mr Guy Rhodes of the GICHD and by Mr Atle Karlsen of NPA this afternoon.

We note in particular the initiative reported by Mr Phoukhieo to tailor the cluster munitions clearance effort to address focused development areas. This is an interesting development and we look forward to updates on the progress of this initiative at future meetings.

We agree strongly with Guy Rhodes that both clearance objectives and the prognosis for future achievements should be more optimistically framed and that the prioritisation of cluster munition clearance is both technically feasible and desirable.

Mr Coordinator

We also agree with Atle Karlsen's strong emphasis on the merits of 'Evidence Based Survey' and his view that the characteristics of cluster munitions make them very suitable for prioritisation through survey methodologies. We also feel that there is merit in his recommendation that progress can be best measured in terms of numbers of submunitions cleared against the area involved rather than in terms of simple land area declared free of contamination.

My delegation believes Mr Coordinator that it is vital to maintain the momentum in cluster munition clearance that has been generated since the entry into force of this Convention and that it is particularly important that the States Parties maintain their commitment to this key area of implementation of the Convention. We are confident that the process is in good hands under your joint leadership and my delegation remains ready to support you as required in your joint endeavour

Thank you Mr Coordinator