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**OPENING STATEMENT BY HON. GABRIEL NAMULAMBE DEPUTY MINISTER OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS ON BEHALF OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONVENTION ON
CLUSTER MUNITIONS DURING THE INTERSESSIONAL MEETING TO BE HELD IN
GENEVA FROM 7TH TO 9TH APRIL, 2014**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

LUSAKA

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, friends of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure, on behalf of the Zambian government to welcome you all to the fourth Intersessional meeting of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We last gathered in Lusaka during the fourth Meeting of States Parties (MSP) and since then a number of positives have occurred in line with the mandate and objectives of the Convention. The presence of many of you States Parties and other Stakeholder in Lusaka, made the 4MSP a success. In this regard, I wish to take this opportunity to thank your Governments and Organisations for sending representatives to attend the 4MSP in Lusaka.

Distinguished Delegates,

I am happy to note that the momentum generated by the 4MSP has been maintained as seen by increased activities of partnerships and cooperation, some of which I will soon elaborate on, particularly regarding the outreach exercise on Universalisation.

Since the 4MSP, the Zambian Presidency has worked closely with the States parties, the Coordination Committee, the Interim Implementation Support Unit, CMC and ICRC to support the implementation of the Convention. I wish to thank these partners for all their work and joint efforts in a spirit of collaboration which has made this work, even though demanding, very pleasant and I believe very fruitful. I also wish to thank the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining for its support both administratively and logistically aimed at making this intersessional meeting successful.

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates Ladies and Gentlemen,

I look forward to hearing constructive engagement on issues in the agenda of the meeting. It is my hope that this intersessional meeting will meet the expectation of all of us and will adequately prepare us for the 5MSP. I will be

particularly looking out to hear constructive contributions to the Non-Paper documents that have been circulated regarding the First Review Conference and the Recruitment Process of the Director of the ISU respectively. In addition, I look forward to hearing progress on the implementation of the Convention in the various thematic areas.

Before I hand over to the Coordinators, let me take this opportunity to update you on the activities of the Presidency since September, 2013.

Distinguished delegates

As you all may recall, at the 4MSP, Zambia in her capacity as President was mandated to carry out the following activities:-

- (a) Commence with immediate effect, the process of establishing the Implementation Support Unit (ISU).
- (b) Commence the Recruitment process of a Director to run the Implementation Support Unit (ISU).

It is important to acknowledge the cooperation received from Norway and Costa Rica as well the Coordination Committee and the GICHD in the process of carrying out this mandate.

In addition, you will recall that Zambia chose Universalisation as the theme for the 4MSP. This theme was chosen because Zambia believes that the future of the Convention lies in its full universalization. Allow me, in this regard, to once again congratulate the government and People of St. Kitts and Nevis for joining the CCM family.

Distinguished delegates

I am happy to inform this august gathering that Zambia since taking over the Presidency has used every opportunity at her disposal to engage countries in a bid to grow the CCM family and achieve universalization.

You will be happy to note that the issue of Cluster Munitions was successfully placed on the agenda of the 22nd Session of the Executive Council of the African Union which was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in January, 2014. The Minister of Foreign Affairs in his capacity as President of the 4MSP addressed the plenary which included Ministers of Foreign Affairs from the 53 African countries and emphasised the need African States to accede to or ratify the Convention given its indiscriminate effects on civilian populations especially in Africa. The Minister's statement was well received and most of the countries pledged commitment to the ban against the use and stockpiling of Cluster Munitions.

Zambia also held bilateral meetings on the side lines of the African Union Summit, with the governments of Kenya, Namibia, Equatorial Guinea, Benin, Gambia, Liberia, Congo Brazzaville, Gabon, Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania to discuss issues concerning their individual countries in relation to the Convention and to encourage them to expedite their internal processes.

Other fora which Zambia has used to advance Universalisation include the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Sri Lanka where Zambia engaged the governments of India and Pakistan to encourage them to reject the use of Cluster Munitions and join the Convention. Zambia also engaged the government of Nigeria and encouraged her to ratify the Convention.

At the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Heads of State Summit which was held in Kinshasa, DRC, Zambia engaged Zimbabwe and Mauritius and discussed the possibility of these countries acceding to the Convention. The discussion was positive and the President will be visiting these two countries to further the discussion.

Distinguished Delegates

Zambia is confident that the efforts made so far, including the efforts of the Coordinators who held a workshop here in Geneva and the Santiago regional conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, will bear fruit sooner than later as the stigmatisation against Cluster Munitions increases.

In terms of the implementation of the Convention and particularly compliance with various articles of the Convention by States Parties, I am pleased to state that since September, 2013, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom and Denmark have announced the completion of the destruction of their stockpiles ahead of schedule. I wish to once again congratulate them on their milestone achievement and I am confident that their commitment will encourage other States that are yet to complete their tasks.

Distinguished delegates

As part of the monitoring of the implementation of the provisions of the Convention, the President undertook a visit to Lao People's Democratic Republic during the period under review. The visit was aimed at learning from the experiences of the government of Lao PDR in relation to its obligation under article 3 which remains the bedrock of the Convention. The visit was further aimed at encouraging Lao PDR to partner with Zambia in its efforts to universalise the Convention in the South-east Asia region.

Zambia wishes to commend the government and people of Lao PDR for their efforts in decontaminating the affected provinces and give back the land to the communities. Zambia also wishes to commend the cooperating partners for the continued assistance to the clearance programme and Victim assistance programmes in Lao PDR. It is clear that more needs to be done in terms of assistance from donor countries if Lao PDR has to meet its obligation under the Convention. In this regard, we wish to encourage cooperating partners and all those that are able to assist the people of Laos in their clearance exercise and Victim assistance, to do so.

Distinguished delegates

In concluding, I wish to reiterate my expectations regarding the outcome of this important meeting. The Presidency expects to receive concrete feedback and progress on the general status of the implementation of the Convention by States and all other thematic areas. This is important in order for the Presidency to come up with a comprehensive San Jose progress report. On this note, I declare the meeting open.

I thank you for your attention