

CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS – INTERSESSIONAL MEETING

16 – 17 MAY 2022

Agenda item 3a: Universalisation

Monday 16 May 10:00 – 13:00

Increasing global adherence to this important Convention is a priority for the United Kingdom, both in our Presidency and as a State Party. We are committed to promoting the Convention's humanitarian objectives, with a view to achieving full universalisation.

Over the past few months, we have worked with the ISU and the Universalisation Coordinators, the Philippines and Spain, to develop a strategy on universalisation. Together, we have considered which states should be the key targets for ratification; the most effective methods to engage with these states; who the key stakeholders are; and at what level we should be engaging.

Our initial focus has primarily been on the African continent, where there are nine of the thirteen signatories to the Convention. In 2020, Switzerland was due to host a regional cluster munitions workshop in Nigeria, inviting neighbouring states to learn about the Convention. Due to the impact of COVID-19, the workshop was cancelled. The UK decided to continue with this event, with Switzerland and Nigeria as co-hosts. I must thank the ISU team for their fantastic work organising this event. Their participation and support throughout was invaluable, and it is in large part due to their determination that the event ran smoothly from start to finish.

The workshop took place over two days in Abuja, with MFA and MOD representatives from six States Parties, seven Signatory states, and two non-States Parties in attendance. Representatives from the ICRC and Norwegian People's Aid attended as moderators, and delivered presentations from a civil society perspective. The workshop provided a platform for participants to further their understanding of the Convention's obligations and its mechanisms, as well as the extensive technical support and resources available to them. An important part of this was dedicated military-to-military dialogue, an element of outreach efforts that is often overlooked.

I am thankful to Botswana, Cameroon, Mozambique and Zambia who kindly shared their experiences of joining the Convention and how they have upheld the Convention's obligations. These States served as important examples of adherence to the Convention in the African region.

We facilitated interactive discussions for participants to exchange information on the challenges they had faced in joining the Convention, and encouraged states to find potential solutions to these. Participants were also given ample opportunity to consult with other attendees to discuss their experiences and learn from each other. The workshop provided a valuable opportunity to refresh universalisation efforts in the African region since the last ratification seminar held in Kampala in 2017. It was

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well received by the participants who were pleased by the Convention's interest in the region, and we left Abuja with useful recommendations and feedback to take forward, as well as the hope that ratifications will follow.

During my Presidency, I will continue to take opportunities, both bilateral and multilateral, to encourage universal adherence to the Convention. The United Kingdom is committed to using our diplomatic and military network to promote the Convention, sharing our experience and offering our assistance.

Global adherence to this important Convention requires patient and consistent efforts to promote the humanitarian objectives of the CCM with states not yet party. In some cases, it might take years to build the necessary understanding and support for a state to accede. In line with Action 10 of the Lausanne Action Plan, we encourage States Parties to seek opportunities to work with states outside of the Convention to bring them into the fold. Working together, we will reach our goal of a world free of cluster munitions.