

Check against delivery

CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS – INTERSESSIONAL MEETING

10MSP President Opening Statement

Monday 16 May 2022

I have the honour to make the following remarks in my capacity as President of the 10th Meeting of States Parties.

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the United Kingdom, thank you for joining us here today, both in person and virtually. It is a pleasure to Chair the first CCM Intersessional Meeting since 2015.

First, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the ISU, who have provided our team with advice and assistance over the past eight months. We are also extremely grateful to the GICHD for their continued support and generous contribution, which has allowed us to hold this Meeting in a hybrid format. I would also like to thank the interpreters and the technical support staff for facilitating this meeting, which requires particularly skilful management due to its hybrid nature.

Ukraine

Distinguished delegates, it pains me to say that we meet here today against the backdrop of a senseless and brutal war, in which we see once again cluster munitions being used, causing untold misery to innocent civilians. I express my sympathy and solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

We here are acutely aware of the destructive and deadly nature of these weapons. We have all witnessed the devastating impact that cluster munition use has had in recent conflicts in Libya, Syria and Nagorno Karabakh. At the Second Review Conference, we underscored our obligation never under any circumstances to use cluster munitions and, in accordance with the object and provisions of the Convention, we condemned any use of cluster munitions by any actor, remaining steadfast in our determination to achieve a world entirely free of any use of these weapons.

Check against delivery

On 2 March, as President of the Convention's 10th Meeting of States Parties, I issued a statement recalling that declaration, expressing our grave concern at reports of the use of cluster munitions in the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and calling upon all those that continue to use such weapons, to cease immediately, and upon all States that have not yet done so to join the Convention without delay.

The barbarity we are witnessing, and which the people of Ukraine are enduring with some fortitude, underlines the urgency and importance of our Convention's goal.

Purpose of the Intersessional Meeting

Distinguished delegates, the Second Review Conference agreed to revive in 2022 the practice of holding an Intersessional Meeting to monitor progress on the implementation of our Convention obligations and on the Lausanne Action Plan. This meeting is also an important opportunity for the Coordinating Committee and me to consult States Parties on the decisions we will put to the MSP. It is also something of a trial: as you know, the 10th and subsequent MSPs will need to decide whether to repeat the practice in subsequent years.

On the one hand, intersessional meetings can maintain momentum and ensure decisions for the Meetings of States Parties are properly prepared and consulted upon. On the other, the disarmament calendar is already heavily loaded. I am keen to hear your views on the utility of this meeting to inform the decision on next year's programme at the 10MSP.

As you have seen, we have many issues to consider over these two days. We will hear updates on the implementation of the Convention and the Lausanne Action Plan from coordinators, and from States Parties with obligations under the Convention, particularly under Articles 3 and 4.

In addition, I would like to highlight four issues which will require action at the 10MSP. We will have substantive exchanges on all four tomorrow, and I would ask delegations to come prepared to share their views.

Check against delivery

First, transparency and exchanging information are essential to achieving the objectives of the CCM, including for confidence-building, monitoring implementation and for cooperation and assistance purposes. Actions 44 and 45 of the Lausanne Action Plan recognise the importance of Article 7 reports and we have been working with Iraq, as the Coordinator on Transparency and Reporting, towards developing an adapted reporting form, in conformity with the rules of procedure and existing practice, as well as assisting and engaging with the relevant States Parties. We will hear more about progress on this issue during the thematic segment on Transparency Measures.

Second, the Second Review Conference also mandated the President to elaborate a calendar and a selection procedure for the recruitment of future ISU Directors to be considered at the 10MSP. Over the past months, we have been engaging regularly and constructively with the GICHD, the Coordinating Committee and other relevant stakeholders. We thank all of them for their active participation. Over the course of these Intersessional Meetings we will be presenting the draft decision, calendar and updated Terms of Reference for the Director's position that were circulated last week in order for us to have a preliminary discussion on this crucial issue.

Third, over many years, our Convention has sadly faced financial challenges, which have been a cause for deep concern. The Second Review Conference adopted new measures that, once implemented, will contribute to addressing financial predictability and sustainability of the Convention. In addition, Action 9 of the Lausanne Action Plan also recognised that paying assessed contributions in line with Article 14 of the Convention is key to its successful implementation. Unfortunately, we are not there yet and tomorrow we will have an opportunity to hear more about the status of contributions from our UNOG colleagues. In this regard, we will also have a preliminary discussion about the possibility of including a 15% contingency in the cost estimates of the Meetings of the States Parties and Review Conferences, as agreed by the Second Review Conference.

Fourth, the Second Review Conference decided to designate the Coordinators on the General Status and Operation of the Convention as focal points to provide advice

Check against delivery

on gender mainstreaming and to ensure that matters related to gender and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities are taken into account in the implementation of the Lausanne Action Plan, in cooperation with the other thematic coordinators. As this is a new practice for this Convention, the coordinators, France and Namibia, will propose Terms of Reference to guide this work, on which they will welcome the views of delegations.

I encourage you to engage substantively in all these discussions and provide your input on these important issues.

Presidency priorities

Distinguished delegates, I also want to use this meeting to update you on two issues which the United Kingdom has chosen to pursue during our Presidency in addition to the President's mandate, namely universalisation and alternative financing.

Universalisation remains a key priority for the Convention. In 2015, we committed to reaching the goal of 130 States Parties before the Second Review Conference, which we unfortunately did not meet. It is clear that ratifications and accessions to the Convention have slowed over the past few years. There are many reasons States choose not to join the Convention, be it financial; legal or bureaucratic, which makes this work all the more difficult. While this can be discouraging, we should instead use this as motivation to continue pursuit of universalisation with the 74 States that remain outside of the Convention. It is our job as States Parties to work with these States to bring them closer to adherence, and eventually ratification.

During our Presidency, the United Kingdom has been working closely with the ISU and the Universalisation Coordinators to explore the barriers to joining that States have experienced, and the ways in which the Convention can help them overcome these. We have implemented both bilateral and regional approaches to engage with States outside of the Convention, and continue to have fruitful exchanges on where and how best we can make a difference. We will hear more detail on this effort in the thematic session on Universalisation later this morning.

Check against delivery

The Lausanne Action Plan also recognises the importance of ensuring States with contamination are not disadvantaged by a lack of funding for clearance, in part by exploring all possible alternative and innovative sources of funding.

Given the scale of the challenge, there is a clear need to find new funding mechanisms and partnerships without which a world free of cluster munitions will remain a distant prospect. The UK considers itself well placed to develop this theme, given its commitment to the Global Mine Action Programme (GMAP) and its extensive partnerships and strong engagement with the international community. Over the last eight months we have been able to make further progress, most notably through a Wilton Park conference in March that brought together representatives from the mine action community as well as innovative finance and development experts. We will provide further detail on this, and our proposed next steps, during this Intersessional Meeting.

Conclusion

To conclude, I am keen that we use this meeting as an opportunity to take stock of progress since the Second Review Conference; to engage in open and frank dialogue on how we are all working to comply with the Convention's obligations, as well as the challenges we face; to listen and learn from one another; and to assess how we can better implement the Lausanne Action Plan in the coming months, ahead of the 10th Meeting of States Parties. We look forward to hearing from delegations over the next two days.

* * *