

Remarks by Laura Cheeseman, Director of the Cluster Munition Coalition

Intersessional meeting on the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Monday 27 June 2011, Geneva, Switzerland



It was not that long ago that the treaty negotiations on the Convention on Cluster Munitions were just beginning, and look how far we have come since then. Thanks to the hard work of many of us in this room, not only do we have a comprehensive Convention banning cluster munitions, but it has already entered into force, its obligations are legally binding on 57 States Parties, and those countries are making notable progress in turning its provisions into a reality. The Cluster Munition Coalition is thrilled to be here with the same community that brought about the Convention to take stock of the progress that has been made so far, and to plan for an even more productive future. All of us have a responsibility to make sure that this Convention gets off to the best possible start and that it has an immediate impact on the ground.

There has been significant progress so far. 108 countries have joined the Convention including 57 that have ratified it – and more countries have committed to joining in the near future. In the coming days we expect to see the Convention's first accession, as Grenada has informed us that its instrument of accession is on its way to New York to be deposited. The first accession will be a great celebration, but hopefully there will be more good news this week. We hope that states that have not yet joined the Convention will lay out steps they are undertaking to accede and timeframes by which to do this, and signatory states will update on their steps to ratify, aiming to do so before the Second Meeting of States Parties in Beirut in September.

There has also been noteworthy progress in implementing the Convention. Already, two countries contaminated by cluster bombs have completed clearance and are now free from the risk they pose to civilians. Eight States Parties and several signatories have already destroyed their stockpiles of cluster bombs.

At the First Meeting of States Parties in Vientiane, Lao PDR, in November last year, States Parties agreed to a 66-point action plan to turn their legal obligations into concrete actions, these include commitments to:

- Develop a plan to destroy stockpiles within one year of entry into force, and to start physical destruction as soon as possible;
- Identify possible locations and size of all cluster munition contaminated areas;
- Designate a focal point for developing, implementing and monitoring victim assistance, as well as assessing the needs and priorities of cluster munition victims;
- Encourage and support States not Party to become States Parties in time for the Second Meeting of States Parties.

This rigorous action plan should be the tool that is used by States Parties to measure progress that has been made so far, and what remains to be done. We hope many states will report against this plan this week.

Sadly, this year saw two instances of cluster munition use – by the governments of Libya and Thailand. The CMC condemned the use of cluster munitions on both occasions, as did some States Parties. The substantial media coverage that was

generated as a result of this use shows the stigma attached to these illegal weapons – a stigma that should prevent any other country from using these weapons whether they have joined the Convention or not. We hope to hear from more states condemning the use of cluster munitions as they committed to do under the Vientiane Declaration and as the Convention also requires.

We are looking forward to a substantive and productive first week of intersessional meetings that will help lay the groundwork for what we anticipate will be an excellent Second Meeting of States Parties in Beirut, Lebanon in September this year. We plan to continue working in close collaboration with Lebanon, other States Parties and other partners on preparations for that meeting.

It is crucial that the same speed, energy and conviction that brought about this Convention is harnessed once again to make sure the Convention has the best possible framework, leadership and support in place to deliver results quickly, and where it is most needed. Together civil society, governments, the ICRC, the UN and others made the convention a reality, and together again, we can ensure that it lives up to its tremendous promise.