

UK Intervention on Other Implementation Measures

30 June 2011

Thank you very much Mr President. The UK would like to support the sentiments of Canada and Australia.

Article 21 was an important and crucial inclusion, which makes possible the UK's participation in the Convention and our continued need to work alongside coalition partners who are not yet in a position to join the Convention, with due protection for UK personnel. This was a red line issue for the UK during negotiations.

This reflects the UK's understanding of Article 21, that: subject to the significant limitations of those activities set out in Article 21(4), the UK's interpretation is that, notwithstanding the provisions of Article 1, Article 21(3) allows States Parties to participate in military operations and cooperation with non-States Parties who may use cluster munitions. UK law and operational practice reflect this.

We also do not share the view that negotiations on a cluster munitions Protocol within the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), is somehow contrary to the letter or spirit of paragraphs 1 and 2 of Article 21. These are negotiations within the framework of an instrument of International Humanitarian Law. They are aiming to establish restrictions on a significant number of cluster munitions, which would have a notable humanitarian effect. To participate in these negotiations with the aim of maximising this humanitarian outcome is complementary, rather than contradictory, to the spirit of the CCM.

Furthermore, Mr President, I believe these internal discussions on Article 21 are detrimental and potentially counterproductive to our ability to fulfil the obligations of the CCM. The Convention is young, all States Parties should be working hard to meet our humanitarian obligations; notably on stockpile destruction, victim assistance, clearance, and assistance and cooperation. Perhaps most importantly, we need to universalise the CCM. Universalisation is the only sure way that we can end the use of these weapons forever. Inward debates like this are not helpful to that goal. Let us instead look outward to best achieve our goals.

Thank you very much.