

UK SPEAKING NOTES FOR THE INTERSESSIONAL MEETING ON  
CCM, GENEVA, 27-30 June 2011.

## **UNIVERSALISATION**

Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin by thanking the Government of the Lao PDR for their continued leadership role driving forward the Vientiane Action Plan and the Government of Lebanon, as President Designate, for preparations to make further progress. May I also extend my thanks to you Mr Chairman and distinguished Japanese colleagues for overseeing this important session on universalisation, and for the work the Government of Japan has done to advance this agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

We believe that promotion of the Convention to those who have yet to accede or ratify is crucial to achieving the maximum humanitarian benefit of the Convention, as well as consolidating its international legal standard. We congratulate the 11 States who have ratified the Convention since Vientiane and hope to see many more ratifications and accessions in the run up to the 2nd Meeting of States Parties in Beirut later this year. We therefore support the proposal for a working group on universalisation as part of our implementation architecture.

The Convention came into force in the UK on 1<sup>st</sup> November last year and we have sought to use our example and experience to encourage others to both sign up to the Convention and achieve early ratification. Cross-party political support in the UK for the Convention remains as strong as

ever. It is a stated priority of our Coalition Government to work to achieve a global ban on cluster munitions.

This priority is reflected in the importance given to meeting our CCM obligations. For instance, we have so far destroyed 60% of our stockpiles, which were some 38 million submunitions. Under current plans we remain on course to meet our target to destroy all stocks by the end of 2013, 5 years ahead of our deadline. I am pleased to say that we will be sharing the experience of our destruction programme with colleagues later this afternoon.

Mr. Chairman

In line with the Vientiane Action Plan, the UK continues to take all possible opportunities, both bilateral and multi-lateral, to encourage universal adherence to the Convention. Government Ministers, including Mr Hague, the Foreign Secretary, remain seized of the issue and regularly raise the Convention with non-signatory states. We have continued to use our network of Embassies and High Commissions in a targeted way to promote the Convention with their host governments, sharing our experience and offering our assistance. For example, we used the coming into force of the Convention in the UK in November last year, as the springboard for our diplomatic network to globally engage with States yet to join and encourage swift ratification and accession.

The UK also continues to raise the necessity of universalisation with non-signatory States at relevant international meetings, including within the EU and the Commonwealth. At the last Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, we co-sponsored, with our Australian and Ugandan colleagues, a political declaration encouraging Commonwealth

countries to sign up to and ratify the Convention. This was followed by a round of inter-ministerial correspondence with non-signatory Commonwealth colleagues. Like our Australian colleagues, we are keen to use the opportunity provided by the next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Perth, Australia, this October, to make a further push for globalisation. We will be engaging with Commonwealth partners and civil society in the coming months to take this forward and invite any interested parties to contact us on this matter.

Mr. Chairman

It is deeply regrettable that there have been reported incidences of cluster munitions use this year. But the response to these reports from many States Parties and civil society has been highly encouraging. The swift condemnation will have sent a clear and unambiguous message about the world's concern over these weapons. Stigmatising the illegal use of cluster munitions must remain central in achieving our aim of a global ban and a world free of the humanitarian impact of these weapons.

In Conclusion, Mr. Chairman,

The Convention is one of the most significant disarmament treaties of recent years. It is a tribute to the dedication and determination of States Parties, Signatories and Civil Society that 108 States have signed the convention and 57 States have now ratified. The UK will continue to prioritise our universalisation work and we very much look forward to

working with States Parties and civil society this week, and in the future, towards our shared goal of a global ban on cluster munitions.

Thank you.