

Oslo Conference on Cluster Munitions, 22–23 February 2007

Session 6 – The way forward

Chair's summary

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Raymond Johansen

Main points

- Representatives from almost 50 states in all parts of the world, United Nations organisations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Cluster Munition Coalition and other humanitarian organisations met here in Oslo to start a new process to ban cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians.
- The Oslo Conference has been very successful, as participants have agreed to take concrete action to address the problems of cluster munitions. We have agreed that the humanitarian problem is so urgent that we need to take action NOW.
- The conference has secured support for a declaration that sets out a process towards an international agreement by the end of 2008.
- The road ahead will not be easy and previous attempts to create new international law in this area have not been successful, but this should not prevent us from embarking on this task.

We are committed to meeting again – and our next meeting will be in Lima in May this year. This will be a very important meeting, and we are grateful to Peru for offering to host it. We are also grateful to Austria and Ireland for offering to host follow-up meetings in this process.

We further welcome offers from Belgium, Serbia and others to host additional meetings, in response to different needs in this process.

Given the urgency of the matter, and our shared concerns, we will immediately proceed, together with our partners, to translate these concerns into concrete work on a new international instrument.

This conference has been a major step forward towards an international agreement on cluster munitions, and the fact that so many countries are participating is very encouraging.

We will continue to work in an open and inclusive way – and in continued partnership with committed states, civil society, the ICRC and UN organisations. We will continue to respond to your call for action.

- Some states have already taken concrete action on a national level, and we very much welcome the announcements made by Austria and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and earlier by Belgium, to renounce these weapons. These are important steps and we are confident that more states will follow similar paths of action.
- It is urgent to prevent the increased proliferation of cluster munitions. We know that there are billions of submunitions in stockpiles. Let us respond to the UN call for a freeze, and let us prevent these submunitions from ever reaching the ground – and from killing and maiming civilians.
- We invited you here to discuss ways to address this pressing humanitarian issue in a determined and effective manner. The discussions have shown that we are ready to do so. The declaration adopted at this meeting is an expression of a political ambition to respond to the urgency of the problem. We are now prepared to develop a new, legally binding instrument by 2008.
- Not all states may be in a position to endorse this political ambition at this stage. We recognise this, and welcome all committed states to join us at any stage of the coming process. The door is open for those who share our commitment to concluding a new instrument by 2008.
- At this stage, we have not discussed concrete definitions or a draft agreement text, but we have developed a road map for the further

multilateral process. We have also agreed on the importance of including provisions for cooperation and assistance in a new instrument.

- This conference has pushed the humanitarian issue of cluster munitions higher up on both the international political agenda and the agendas of many states. The Oslo Conference has therefore already achieved a great deal and fulfilled our ambitions for this meeting. We have now established a process to develop a new instrument, and we can begin our work. I look forward to seeing you in Lima.