



**Accra Regional Conference on the
Universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions**

Opening Session

Statement by Mr. Kamil Kamaluddeen, UNDP Ghana Country Director

28 May 2012

Excellencies, Ladies, Gentleman,

It is with pleasure and I am deeply honoured to be here and address you all today, an event equally important to Ghana, as to all states participating here today. It is also an event important to the Convention on Cluster Munitions itself, and to UNDP and its sister agencies.

The United Nations Development Programme has played an active role in the process to achieve the ban on cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm and continues to do so today. At the last Meeting of States Parties held in Beirut in 2011, Mme. Helen Clarke, the Administrator of the UNDP, conveyed a reaffirmation of UNDP's unwavering commitment in advancing the universalization and implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

It is a pleasure to see that so many African States are being represented here on this very important occasion. I believe that this is reflective of the pivotal role that African States have played during the development of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. UNDP applauds the strong level of engagement that you have shown throughout the process leading to a comprehensive ban on cluster munitions, and has very much appreciated the opportunity to have both supported and participated in all the previous regional meetings in Africa; Livingstone, Kampala, Pretoria, and now Accra.

It is important to us that all States must shape and guide the work of this Convention, also those that may not be able to afford it and we have demonstrated this through a series of sponsorship programmes that have allowed for these States to become active and



prominent participants at every stage in the process. At this meeting, UNDP has sponsored 60 delegates representing 37 States to ensure that their voices continue to be heard, providing the evidence base of the developmental impact of cluster munitions and sharing success stories of how the threat they pose can be addressed. Removing these remnants of war is not only about safety, but it is also about human and economic development. And it is this very fact that resonates loudly with UNDP's prime occupation – empowering lives and helping to build resilient nations.

At this moment we see that over one third of all States Parties to the Convention are located within Sub-Saharan Africa, and it remains clear this regional group will continue to drive this Convention towards the realisation of its humanitarian goals. UNDP calls on all States present that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Convention to do so as soon as possible. We appeal for you to cement your commitment to this prohibition, which categorically rejects any future use of these weapons, and aims to deal with the unacceptable harm caused by their use in those countries where cluster munitions have already been deployed.

To this end, we would encourage all States not yet party to the CCM to openly share and discuss the obstacles you may see to ratification or accession over the next two days. This conference presents a perfect opportunity to explore potential ways in which States Parties and States not yet party can overcome these challenges together through joint dialogue and mutual support.

Before deliberations begin, I think it is important to note that many of the challenges relating to CCM compliance in Sub-Saharan Africa, such as clearance, stockpile destruction and assistance to victims can realistically be addressed within the framework of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Within the positive provisions for cooperation and assistance with sufficient support from States in a position to assist – as well as the political will from affected States themselves- we can achieve an Africa where cluster munitions no longer pose a threat to the protection of limbs, lives and livelihoods.

We are dealing with a finite problem that can be overcome. But we must remain vigilant and work hard to safeguard the norm being established by the convention... We are deeply concerned by the allegations of recent use highlighted in media and plead that such allegations are followed by necessary clarifications.

In the meantime, we eagerly anticipate the outcome of this conference, which will result in the development of a universalization strategy in Africa, to promote the ban on cluster munitions, created by African States, for African States. We look forward to supporting



you in the implementation of this strategy and hope that many new African states will accede in the coming year.

In closing, UNDP would like thank the Government of Ghana for hosting this meeting, and the Governments of Togo, Zambia and Norway for providing their support, as this initiative promises to be a productive and fruitful set of discussions that will mark the way forward with respect to the universalization and implementation of the Convention in Sub-Saharan Africa. We look forward to the work leading up to the Third Meeting of States Parties to the Convention and beyond—in part guided by the Action Plan that will be presented on Tuesday.

UNDP stands ready to provide assistance in this regard, to ensure that the political will that African States have demonstrated thus far translates into improved safety, security and sustainable development for those already affected by these abhorrent weapons and in ensuring that no one will be affected again.

I thank you,