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Republic of Zambia

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE 4MSP ON THE OCCASION
OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON UNIVERSALIZATION OF THE
CONVENTION OF CLUSTER MUNITIONS HELD IN CHILE FROM 12TH
TO 13TH DECEMBER, 2013

12th December, 2013

Dear Colleagues and Friends of the Convention,

As President of the 4MSP-CCM, I send my best wishes to all the delegates to this Regional Conference on Universalization. I wish to commend Chile, in particular, the Ministry of External Relations, for hosting this important Regional Conference dedicated to the establishment of a cluster munitions free zone in Latin America and also extend my gratitude to the United Nations Development Programme for their continued support in these meetings.

Chile's long involvement in the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and her commitment to a total ban on Cluster Munitions is well known. Her membership to the Coordination Committee on Cooperation and Assistance is further evidence of this commitment. I am confident that Chile will use her influence in the Region to implore other countries to join the Convention and those that have not ratified to ratify the Convention.

It is indeed pleasing to note that the Conference has attracted 21 States out of the 29 invited. This is a clear testimony of the seriousness with which the Region is taking the issue of Universalization and commitment to join the Convention.

Distinguished Delegates,

Only over a week ago, on 3rd December, 2013, we celebrated the 5th Anniversary of the Convention on Cluster Munitions since it was opened for signatures. The Convention was established with the sole aim of putting an end to the suffering and casualties caused by Cluster Munitions. With the current momentum expressed through commitment and dedication, we are well on our way to meeting that goal.

Since the Convention was adopted, 113 countries have joined the convention, of which 84 are States Parties. Stockpiles of cluster munitions are being destroyed at a rate faster than the mandated period, high standards have been set for victim assistance, and clearance efforts have been sustained. There is now an overwhelming stigma attached to Cluster Munitions following the very few instances of use in recent years. The use of cluster munitions is no longer acceptable and in today's world, any association with their use, production or transfer is stigmatized.

Distinguished Delegates,

I wish to reiterate that Zambia's decision to join the Convention on Cluster Munitions was borne out of a moral conscious that civilians, particularly women and children, should never die or be exposed to

such dangerous and indiscriminate weapons. We were proud to host the Convention's Fourth Meeting of States Parties in Lusaka in September, 2013 and confirm our ongoing commitment to this cause as president of the Convention. It is with honour that we will pass the baton on to Costa Rica in September 2014.

While commitments against use, production and transfer of Cluster Munitions from states not party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions are very welcome, we can only have full confidence of a future world free from Cluster Munitions through universal adherence to the Convention and its provisions under international humanitarian law. It is for this reason that Zambia has chosen universalisation as the theme during her presidency of the Convention.

Distinguished Delegates,

As current President of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Zambia wishes to offer her support to the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to further their goal of a Cluster Munitions free zone. The Santiago Meeting shows a strong commitment towards this goal. Within the last two years we have worked in partnership with other African states to the same end, meeting in Accra, Ghana in 2012 and Lome, Togo in 2013. Regionally in Africa, states parties, signatories and non-signatories alike have adopted a strong Lome Strategy on the Universalisation of the CCM. I am confident the

Santiago Regional Meeting on Cluster Munitions will record the same success. Regionally and globally we are stronger in partnership, working together towards our common goal to protect civilians from this detestable weapon, and mutually reinforcing the varied global efforts towards peace and security.

Finally, it seems fitting to finish with a quote in honour of the late and great Nelson Mandela who reminded us that, I quote: "Landmines are blind weapons that cannot distinguish between the footfall of a soldier and, that of old women gathering firewood. They recognise no cease-fire and, long after the fighting has stopped, they can maim or kill the children and the grandchildren of the soldiers who laid them." While these words describe landmines (the weapon addressed by the CCM's sister Convention the Mine Ban Treaty), the meaning is resonant with the weapon we discuss here today. Like landmines, Cluster Munitions kill and maim civilians long after a conflict is over. It is for that reason that we need to strongly work together for a world free from Cluster Munitions and also other indiscriminate weapons.

I wish you successful deliberations.

Hon. Wylbur C. Simuusa

PRESIDENT OF THE 4MSP