



**Convention on Cluster Munitions
10th Meeting of States Parties**

New Zealand General Statement

30 August 2022

Thank you, Mr President.

Please allow me to express my sincere thanks to you, and your team, for your excellent leadership and commitment to guiding the Convention over the past year. I assure you of Aotearoa New Zealand's full support for a successful term.

Please also allow me to place on record New Zealand's huge thanks, and best wishes, to outgoing ISU Director Sheila Mweemba. We all owe you a debt of gratitude for your exceptional leadership, professional support and friendship to me and my colleagues.

We are meeting in extraordinary times. President Putin's unprovoked and unjustified attack on Ukraine has placed an unconscionable toll on the people of Ukraine, with unthinkably cruel humanitarian consequences.

The attack is a clear act of aggression, and a violation of international law and the UN Charter by a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council. Aotearoa New Zealand condemns Russia's invasion in the strongest possible terms.

New Zealand is deeply concerned by the reports of Russia's extensive use of cluster munitions since its invasion in February.

While the international community had witnessed a significant reduction in the number of casualties observed globally in 2021, that glimmer of progress was short-lived.

Indeed, the statistics make for horrifying reading: by the end of June, hundreds of cluster munition attacks by Russian forces had been documented, reported, or are alleged to have occurred in at least ten of Ukraine's 24 provinces.

Russia's widespread use of these weapons has caused at least 689 recorded civilian casualties in the first half of 2022. It is destroying and damaging civilian infrastructure including homes, hospitals, and schools. Russia's actions have flagrantly disregarded the norm against use of these intolerably cruel weapons.

We also note with concern reports that Ukrainian forces appear to have used cluster munitions against Russian forces on at least three occasions since February 2022.

Aotearoa New Zealand unreservedly condemns any and all use of cluster munitions, anywhere, by anyone. That cluster munitions have been used in 2022, to such cruel and inhumane effect, should be a rallying cry for us all.

Against that context, universalizing our Convention – and its norm against cluster munitions – has seldom been so important. It is a task that we must all approach with even greater urgency.

So what does this mean in practice?

- We must condemn unequivocally instances of use, when they occur.
- We must continue our efforts to universalise the Convention, and we note the encouraging outreach that the UK and Switzerland, as the Presidents of the 2nd Review Conference and 10th MSP, have completed over the past 12 months, alongside the hard work of our universalisation coordinators Spain and the Philippines. And good progress has been made in recent years, with membership of the Treaty having grown steadily. But, we also take heed of the ICRC's message from earlier today, that we cannot afford

to become complacent. I'm sure all here today would agree that we must continue this important work, with renewed energy.

- And in order to encourage greater uptake, we need to better understand the rationale of, and issues facing, those States that are still to join the Convention. Key challenges my delegation often hears from States the Pacific region relate to competing priorities and significant overall resource constraints, rather than any objections to the Convention itself. Indeed, the vast majority of states outside the Convention have never used or produced cluster munitions. Annual reporting can also be a significant burden, including for States that have never dealt with or used these weapons.
- And we need to keep exploring ways to support new and future members in terms of treaty implementation. New Zealand stands ready to provide States wishing to become party to the Convention with assistance they may need to give full effect to the Convention. This includes assistance with putting in place legislation or other administrative measures which may be necessary to give full effect to the Convention. A range of model legislation and other tools have been developed to support States with this, and we would be happy to point you in the direction of this, or to provide more tailored advice.

Mr President,

New Zealand was one of the first States Parties to this Convention and our commitment to it is unwavering. We have been proud to serve on the Convention's Coordination Committee since its inception, as Coordinator for National Implementation Measures. And we will be making a more detailed presentation on Article 9 progress later this week.

The Convention is operating in an ever more challenging context. The wins that we, as an international community, have made are being overshadowed by the devastating attacks launched by President Putin on Ukraine, with significant human suffering.

We are clear-eyed about the challenges we face. But we *are* making progress, even if the road towards eradicating these weapons is marked with challenges. The events of this year are a stark reminder of the importance of our work. New Zealand looks forward to working with you all towards the Convention's full implementation.

I thank you.