



**Statement to be delivered by South Africa at the 10 MSP of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM)**

**Agenda Item 10- Storage and stockpile destruction**

Mr President,

At the outset allow me to congratulate you on your election as the President of the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). With this meeting being the first meeting after adoption of the Lausanne Action Plan, we have no doubt that this MSP will be a success under your able leadership and experience. My delegation further wishes to thank and congratulate Ms Sheila Mweemba, for the commendable work carried out in the ISU.

The harm caused by cluster munitions leaves dangerous duds that can kill and maim both combatants and innocent civilians, including women and children, like landmines, for years or even decades after the cessation of active hostilities. This harm has been discussed from as early as the 1960's and this week, we gather here, in-person, after a difficult period in earth's history owing to the COVID-19 pandemic to reflect on and take stock of the progress that has been made in the implementation of the provisions of the Convention.

We are faced with many challenges under this Convention and are mindful that many States are still being contaminated with cluster munitions remnants. This contamination not only results in injury and death, but also has a wide range of social and economic impacts, such as the displacement of people and hampering economic development. Thus, the use of cluster munitions has a negative effect on the livelihoods of civilians, particularly those who live in affected areas.

In this regard, it is important that we continue to stigmatise the use of cluster munitions as a weapon of war. South Africa therefore condemns the use of cluster munitions by any State or other entity and also calls upon all others to do so as well.

Mr President,

The rate of ratifications and accessions has decreased, which is reason for us to remain concerned about the progress towards Universalisation of the Convention. South Africa continues to be concerned about the lack of ratification by those States that hold large stockpiles of cluster munitions and calls for intensified efforts to bring into the fold those that have not yet joined, in order to achieve our goal of a cluster munitions free-world. As a former producer of cluster munitions, South Africa believes that these weapons have not only become irrelevant as weapons in modern warfare, but that their use in current internal conflicts, has led civilians to being killed or displaced.

My delegation wishes to thank Bulgaria and Australia, as Coordinators on Storage and Stockpile Destruction, for the report provided and the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) for its continued valuable support in the implementation of the Convention.

Mr President,

South Africa has consistently supported steps taken nationally, regionally and globally in recent years aimed at prohibiting the use of cluster munitions to put an end, for all time, to the suffering and casualties caused by their use. As part of our commitment to multilateralism and a rules-based international order, founded on our conviction that the use of these weapons in conflicts cause unacceptable harm to civilian populations, South Africa has been a staunch supporter of the full implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

The South African National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC), consisting of Cabinet Ministers, acting in terms of relevant legislation, vets all conventional arms transfer applications and prohibits the development, production, exportation and any form of transfer of cluster munitions.

In terms of our of our obligations under the Treaty, South Africa has taken out of commission and secured all prohibited stockpiled cluster munitions for their planned destruction, as stipulated by Article 3 of the Convention. South Africa remains fully committed to concluding this destruction process under Article 3 within the specified time frame. In terms of Article 3, South Africa will retain only the minimum number of cluster munitions absolutely necessary for the development of and training in cluster munition and explosive submunition detection, clearance or destruction techniques, or for the development of cluster munition counter-measures.

In compliance with Article 7 on transparency measures, South Africa submitted its Initial Transparency Report but is fully cognisant of the fact that it has not submitted its annual reports for a number of years. In meeting this obligation, we have been working unceasingly with our internal structures directly responsible for the Convention's national implementation, including South Africa's stockpile management and destruction obligations in order to address this important matter.

In this regard, the South African delegation to last week's ATT CSP8 held, what we believe, were frank and fruitful bilateral consultations with the UK Presidency of 10MSP, as well as with Bulgaria, in its capacity as Co-Coordinator on Storage and Stockpile Destruction on the issue. South Africa is confident that it will be in a position to resolve this matter soon and submit its Article 7 report on Transparency measures by the next MSP.

South Africa reaffirms its commitment to fully implement all the provisions of this worthy Convention and will continue to remain steadfast in fully reinforcing the norms established by this Convention and in implementing its obligations under the provisions of the Convention. South Africa reiterates its commitment to play an active role in partnership with other States and members of civil society towards the achievement of a cluster munitions free world.

I thank you.