

**UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND**  
**CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS – 10<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF STATES**  
**PARTIES 30 AUGUST – 2 SEPTEMBER 2022**

**Opening Remarks – Tuesday 30 August**

*[UK Opening Remarks – Aidan Liddle]*

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour, a privilege and a pleasure to be entrusted with the office of President of the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties.

Nearly one year ago, my friend and colleague Ambassador Felix Baumann brought down the gavel to close the Second Review Conference, having adopted the Lausanne Declaration and the Lausanne Action Plan. These documents have guided our work over the last year in preparing for this meeting. During that time, I have been supported by an outstanding team. Sheila Mweemba and her team at the Implementation Support Unit; the members of the Coordination Committee, the UN Secretariat, and my own team both here in Geneva and in London, have worked tirelessly to prepare for this meeting and to promote the implementation of our Convention. I am sincerely grateful for their hard work, dedication and expertise throughout the UK's Presidency.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Cluster munitions are horrible weapons of war. Once deployed, they do not differentiate between military targets and civilian objects. They leave behind high levels of dangerous explosives, posing an enduring threat to civilian lives and livelihoods. Thousands have been killed and maimed, and tens of thousands live daily with the appalling legacy.

This Convention is our answer. The holistic nature of this Convention has been fundamental to our combined efforts to not only rid the world of these deadly weapons, but to also ensure that victims can receive the help they need to reintegrate into society. Collectively, we have improved the safety and prosperity of hundreds of communities across the world, and we continue to do so.

## *Ukraine*

It is regrettable then, that despite wide international support for this important Convention, states are still choosing to use cluster munitions in conflict. As States parties and States signatories, we have a duty to bring to the world's attention any reports of use. At the Second Review Conference, we underscored our obligation never under any circumstances to use cluster munitions and, in accordance with the object and provisions of the Convention, we condemned any use of cluster munitions by any actor, remaining steadfast in our determination to achieve a world entirely free of any use of these weapons.

That determination is tested by the scenes we have witnessed since Russia launched its unprovoked and illegal invasion of Ukraine in February this year. Over the last six months, we have seen numerous examples of cluster munition use, including in the last few weeks. In March, the UK released a statement as Presidency of the Convention expressing our grave concern about reports of use. I know many States Parties and civil society organisations have done the same. It is crucial that we continue to advocate for the innocent women, men and children caught up in conflicts. For those who have lost their homes, land, and loved ones, and who will continue to live with the scourge of cluster munitions long after the conflict has ended.

## *Purpose of the 10<sup>th</sup> MSP*

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Today's meeting marks the first annual Meeting of the States Parties since the Review Conference, where we adopted the four-year Lausanne Action Plan. This is an opportune moment for us to review progress, and take a look at how States have considered and applied the Action Plan in its first year. I look forward to hearing from delegates about their experiences, and to exchange ideas on how we can improve implementation in the coming years.

## *President's mandate*

### Director selection

The Second Review Conference mandated the President to elaborate a calendar and a selection procedure for the recruitment of future ISU Directors to be considered at the 10MSP. Throughout our Presidency we have engaged regularly and constructively with the GICHD, the Coordinating Committee, other relevant stakeholders and all interested delegations. The Intersessional Meeting also provided an invaluable opportunity to hear your views. Further to that, on 28<sup>th</sup> July we held open informal consultations to receive any further feedback. It is my hope that by the end of the MSP we will be in a position to adopt the draft decision and the updated Terms of Reference for the Director's position so that the process can start immediately after the 10MSP.

### Transparency reporting

Transparency and exchanging information are essential to achieving the objectives of the CCM, including for confidence-building, monitoring implementation and for cooperation and assistance purposes. Action 45 of the Lausanne Action Plan recognises the importance of Article 7 reports and we have worked with Iraq, as the Coordinator on Transparency and Reporting, towards developing an adapted reporting form. However, the consultations that took place have demonstrated that this task requires more time to complete and work on this issue will likely need to continue.

### Intersessional

The Second Review Conference agreed to resume the practice of holding an Intersessional Meeting to share progress on our Convention obligations as well as on the implementation of the Lausanne Action Plan. The Intersessional Meeting took place on 16-17 May and offered us an extremely valuable opportunity to reflect on our substantive work and prepare for the 10MSP. As you know, this week we will need to decide whether to hold intersessional meetings during the next annual cycle.

## Finances

Over many years, financial challenges have been a cause for deep concern for our Convention. For this reason, the Second Review Conference was entrusted with adopting measures to address the financial predictability and sustainability of the CCM. These financial measures have recently started to be implemented by the UN and some time is needed in order for us to be able to fully assess whether or not they will have achieved their purpose. In addition, Action 9 of the Lausanne Action Plan also recognised that paying assessed contributions in line with Article 14 of the Convention is key to its successful implementation. Considering these factors, the Second Review Conference agreed that we should examine the possibility of including a 15% contingency in the cost estimates of the Meetings of the States Parties and Review Conferences. Over the last few months we have been consulting extensively on this issue, which we will consider under agenda item 11'

In addition to the President's mandate, the UK chose to pursue two objectives: universalisation, and alternative financing options for clearance of cluster munitions.

## *Universalisation*

With the adoption of the Lausanne Action Plan, States Parties reaffirmed our determination to advance towards full universalisation and the promotion of the Convention's norms. In the last few years, ratifications have slowed with non-States Parties citing legal, military and resource constraints as barriers to joining, amongst other reasons. Often, our efforts to engage these states can feel like an uphill struggle, particularly when we are working against a backdrop of continued use. The suffering we are seeing globally shows us just how important it is that we persist. We have a collective responsibility to continue working with these states to convey the Convention's purpose and humanitarian goals, and to help them see that ratification is the right thing to do.

Over the past year, the UK, the ISU and the Universalisation Coordinators collaborated to develop and deliver a strategy on universalisation, which considered which states and regions to include, and what the most effective ways to engage would be. Our work demonstrated the utility of both bilateral and regional approaches to encourage adherence and ratification, as well as the need for innovative thinking to increase engagement. We are grateful to past Presidencies and coordinators who undertook important work on the barriers to accession that enabled us to have fruitful exchanges with states on how we can move forward. With

74 States remaining outside of the Convention, and 13 signatories that have not yet ratified, there is plenty of work left for us all to do. We are ready and willing to support Iraq, as the incoming Presidency, to share the insight and lessons we learned, as well as potential next steps for engagement.

#### *Alternative finance:*

Funding remains a key obstacle to progress in clearance of cluster munition contamination. Available funding simply does not meet the demand for clearance. A lack of funding on the ground only prolongs the distress and hardship endured by affected communities. As identified by Action 38 in the Lausanne Action Plan, there is a clear need to explore alternative models of finance in addition to traditional models, to attract new investment into mine action, and use it more effectively. That is why this year, the United Kingdom has continued to take forward the research undertaken by Social Finance and the HALO Trust on alternative financing models. The Conference we organised at Wilton Park from 7-9 March being a notable highlight. We will hear more detail on these efforts during agenda item 10e on International Cooperation and Assistance.

#### *Conclusion*

This week we will hear from States and organisations about the progress they have made and the challenges faced over the past year. These annual meetings are a valuable opportunity to learn from one another, and share lessons and expertise.

I thank you for the opportunity bestowed on the United Kingdom to steer the vital work of the Convention this past year. Let us work hard over the next four days to pursue our objective of a world free of cluster munitions.