



S L O V A K I A

Statement

by

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**at the Eleventh Meeting of States Parties
of the Convention on Cluster Munitions**

Agenda 10 (b) - Storage and Stockpile Destruction

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Mr. President,

Let me start by congratulating you on your presidency of the 11th Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. You can count on full support and cooperation of my delegation.

Mr. President,

Once the Slovak authorities made the political decision to join the Convention on Cluster Munitions ten years ago, our commitment to this key instrument of international humanitarian law, has been the priority for Slovakia.

Since January 2016, when the Convention entered into force in Slovakia, our fundamental obligation under the Convention has been to destroy cluster munitions stockpiles by the stipulated deadline - the 1st January 2024.

Slovakia has exerted all efforts to meet this obligation. We have informed the State Parties and CCM community regularly, in a transparent manner, at the Convention's meetings and through our national reports, about the state and progress of our endeavour.

And finally, today, my delegation has come here with good news.

It is my great pleasure to announce that Slovakia has successfully fulfilled its obligation in accordance with Article 3 of the Convention, and destroyed all stockpiles of its cluster munitions. As of 1st September we have zero stockpiles of the cluster munitions in our possession.

I also wish to reiterate the declaration we made at the previous CCM meetings that Slovakia will not retain any cluster munitions according to the Article 3.6.

We are satisfied that we have completed this effort ahead of the deadline.

Our road up to this point was quite complex as we had several types of cluster munitions in our stockpiles. We were destroying them through our national capacities and also in cooperation with our partners.

Now, I would like to hand over the floor to my colleague, who will present the main milestones in the process and challenges we had to overcome.

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Mr. President,

Let me share final reflections on why, we believe, we were able to succeed in our efforts to destroy the cluster munitions stockpiles in timely manner.

The main elements are the following:

- Strong political commitment: Decisions and the Action Plan on destruction of cluster munitions were adopted on the level of the Slovak Government.

- Early commencement of the destruction process: After reaching the political decision on the accession to the CCM, the destruction process commenced straight away, building upon previous processes that had started already before the accession to the Convention.
- Political leadership, oversight of the process and dedicated staff: We believe, awareness, understanding and ownership of the task particularly on the mid-level management was an important driver to achieve the set goal. Personal dedication of the staff also proved to be important factor in keeping the pace of the effort.
- Efficient Communication: The relevant Slovak agencies communicated not only through standard bureaucratic channels of communications, but also informally. As Slovakia is a smaller country, personnel involved knew each other and communicated directly and thus efficiently.
- Intra-agency cooperation: The relevant agencies of the Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces cooperated smoothly in performing tasks stemming from the requirements for cooperation with partners.
- And finally, allocation of adequate financial resources: Slovakia safeguarded the required financing early on through national budget as well as through bilateral cooperation.

I also would like to express gratitude to our partners, who enabled us to destroy the M-26 type munitions on time and in conformity with the CCM. Namely, NATO Supply and Procurement Agency and the Norwegian ammunition disposal company NAMMO NAD. I would also like to thank the United States of America for their financial support and cooperation.

Let me also express appreciation to the Implementation Support Unit, its Director and staff, for their continued support and advice. Thank you also to the Coordinators on Stockpile Destruction and Retention for all their efforts in advancing the implementation of Article 3.

Even though Slovakia's experience with the destruction of its stockpiles may not necessarily be directly transferable to other State Parties, we are open to share our know-how and lessons learned with interested States Parties.

Mr. President,

To conclude, let me reiterate that Slovakia will continue to cooperate with all CCM stakeholders to promote humanitarian objectives of the Convention and its full implementation.

Thank you for your attention.