



## **Eleventh Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions**

**11 – 14 September 2023**

### **Statement by Sri Lanka**

#### **Agenda Item 8: General Exchange of Views**

Thank you Mr. President,

Sri Lanka joins other delegations in congratulating you for assuming the Presidency of the Eleventh Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. I wish to assure you of my delegation's fullest support towards a productive outcome of our deliberations. We also warmly welcome Nigeria and South Sudan as the 111<sup>th</sup> and the 112<sup>th</sup> States Parties to the Convention. This is an important step towards universalization of the Convention.

Mr. President,

As a country which has never used, developed, produced, acquired or stockpiled Cluster Munitions even during the time of a brutal terrorist conflict, Sri Lanka wishes to reiterate its strong and enduring commitment to realizing the core objectives of the Convention *inter alia* 'to put an end for all time to the suffering and casualties caused by cluster munitions'.

We consider that the Convention on Cluster Munitions is a significant disarmament treaty adopted by more than half of the world in the past decade, with far-reaching obligations.

In today's global context, when the world is experiencing conflicts in a number of regions, it is important to ensure that the principles and rules of international humanitarian law are upheld by all parties for the protection of civilian populations and civilian objects in the military operations. As a weapon, cluster munitions entail very destructive consequences to human beings as they target and deliver explosives to a large area. Cluster Munitions cannot distinguish civilians and civilian objects and once used, the remnants of cluster munitions which remain on the ground for years or perhaps decades can cause major injuries and risks to the civilian population. This is an explicit violation of universal principles of IHL as it is unable to distinguish civilian population, civilian objects and military.

As history shows us, the long-term destruction caused by cluster munitions to civilian life and infrastructure are heavy. Moreover, the detrimental effect of cluster munitions to environment is severe. In order to prevent tremendous human suffering, we call on all member states to adhere to the mandate of the Convention in destroying stockpiles, clearing remnants, providing risk education, and victim assistance. We believe that promoting cooperation between states, regional and international organizations to provide technical, scientific, material and financial assistance to State Parties affected by cluster munitions is also important to realize the objectives of the Convention.

We are optimistic to learn the progress of implementation of the Lausanne Action Plan during the past year since its adoption in 2022. We remain hopeful that Lausanne Action Plan would be an effective monitoring framework for States Parties to achieve significant and sustainable progress towards the universalization and implementation of the Convention from 2021 to 2026.

Sri Lanka also wishes to take this opportunity to update this forum on our progress in national implementation of the Convention. Sri Lanka has been studying the existing legal system to enable the effective implementation of the CCM and at present, the draft Cluster Munition Prohibition Bill is with the Legal Draftsman for clearance. Sri Lanka hopes to bring in enabling domestic legislation for the national implementation of the CCM very soon.

Sri Lanka strongly promotes universalization of the Convention and calls on States Parties and other organizations to take all measures not only to stop using cluster munitions but also to prevent its stockpiling, production and transfer as important steps towards ensuring a world free of cluster munitions.

We also sincerely appreciate the work and commitment of the CCM ISU in the implementation process of the Convention and in organizing this meeting.

In closing, Mr. President, let me assure Sri Lanka's commitment to realize the humanitarian objectives of the Convention and our fullest cooperation for the success of the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties.

Thank you, Mr. President.