



Kingdom of the Netherlands

**Statement of the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

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

**agenda item 8. General exchange of views**

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**By**

**H.E. Robert in den Bosch**

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Conference on Disarmament and Ambassador-at-large for Disarmament  
Affairs**

Mr. President,

First of all I would like to congratulate you on the assumption of the Presidency and let me assure you of the full support of my delegation. Also, we congratulate Ms. Pamela Moraga on her appointment as the new CCM ISU Director. The Netherlands appreciates the work that you and your teams have done to prepare this Eleventh Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. This week will provide an excellent opportunity to consider the application and implementation of the Convention. The Netherlands fully subscribes to the statement to be delivered by the EU, and I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. President,

Fifteen years ago, the Convention on Cluster Munitions was adopted since we recognized that it is our common cause to end the suffering from cluster munitions. We, as States Parties, decided to use diplomacy to convince others that cluster munitions should become a thing of the past.

This week, we will take stock to determine where we stand regarding this common endeavour. The Netherlands firmly believes that the arguments that brought us together 15 years ago are still valid today. Cluster munitions are a type of weaponry that causes unacceptable harm to the civilian population, especially when used in an indiscriminate manner. Moreover, cluster munitions have a severe negative impact on economic and social development, and continue to do so long after conflicts have ended.

The Netherlands is gravely concerned that cluster munitions are still being used in different parts of the world. As a firm supporter of the CCM, we committed ourselves to disapprove of

any use of cluster munitions by any actor. Therefore, we want to reiterate that The Netherlands discourages the recent use of cluster munitions by Syria and Myanmar, as well as the use of cluster munitions in Ukraine. Regarding the use in Ukraine, it is important to stress that Russia is the sole reason for this war. Next to that, the nature of Russia's use of cluster munitions is particularly worrying. There have been several reports regarding the indiscriminate Russian attacks with cluster munitions on the civilian population and civilian objects in Ukraine, for example in Kharkiv in February 2022. The Netherlands condemns such attacks in the strongest possible terms, especially since the use of cluster munitions in populated areas may, in many occasions, violate international humanitarian law.

Therefore, while discouraging any use of cluster munitions by any actor, the Netherlands believes it is also vital to note the context of the recent use by and the transfer of cluster munitions to Ukraine. As a State Party to the Convention, we promote the norms it establishes and we make our best efforts to discourage States not Party to this Convention from using cluster munitions. Even though these countries are not a Party to the CCM, we have established a firm norm with the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which we must collectively uphold. In accordance with the Lausanne Action Plan we also call upon States not Party to the Convention to refrain from transferring these munitions.

Once more, only Russia is able to stop this war and thereby the use of cluster munitions. We call upon Russia to withdraw all of its military forces and proxies from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders: immediately, completely, and unconditionally. Let me also be clear on the following: for however long it takes, The

Netherlands will continue its substantial support to Ukraine and its citizens, including with military support.

Mr. President,

However worrying the abovementioned events may be, this week will be about more than that. And there is some more positive news as well, like the fact that the support for the CCM is growing. That's why The Netherlands would like to welcome Nigeria and South Sudan as new States Parties to this Convention. The word is spreading, and we hope that we will be able to welcome even more States Parties to the Convention in the coming years.

Furthermore, we need to continue our efforts to implement the actions of the Lausanne Action Plan for 2021 -2026 as adopted at the Second Review Conference. A successful implementation will help to speed up the clearance of contaminated land and the destruction of remaining stockpiles. In this context, my delegation would like to highlight the contribution that *country coalitions* can make to expedite the implementation of article 3 and 4 of the Convention. Implementing these time bound obligations, by enhancing the collaboration between donors, operators and States Parties with outstanding obligations, is key to strengthening the implementation of the convention.

Another aspect of the Lausanne Action Plan that deserves our attention is the importance of gender and diversity. In order to reach our common goals, it is essential to continuously use an inclusive approach. During the last Review Conference, the Netherlands sponsored a working paper on this matter, which identified synergies with other legal and policy frameworks that have similar gender and diversity mainstreaming objectives.

Mr. President,

We have gathered here in Geneva to work towards our shared objective — to stop the suffering brought on by cluster munitions and to clear the world of them. Even though States Parties may hold different opinions on certain topics that will come to the table this week, let me assure you that the Netherlands stands ready to work together with all States Parties in an open, constructive and inclusive manner in order to achieve these objectives.

Thank you, Mr. President