



UK Mission
Geneva

**CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS
11TH MEETING OF STATES PARTIES**

AGENDA ITEM 8: GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

STATEMENT BY THE UNITED KINGDOM

H.E. Mr Aidan Liddle, Permanent Representative to the Conference on
Disarmament
Geneva, 11 September 2023

Mr President,

It gives me great pleasure personally to see you in the position that I had the honour to hold last year. You will know that I am sincere when I congratulate you on assuming this office, and when I assure you of the full support of my delegation in carrying out your duties this week.

Let me also welcome Ms Pamela Moraga to her first Meeting of States Parties as the Director of our Implementation Support Unit.

Mr President,

The United Kingdom remains committed to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and firmly believes in its goal of eradicating cluster munitions globally. We have continued to actively support the goals of the Convention through our actions as past President and as a member of the Presidential troika. We thank all our colleagues and conference staff for their enduring efforts towards our collective goals. The Convention now boasts 112 States Parties and 12 Signatories, and this should be celebrated. Particular congratulations must go to Nigeria and South Sudan who have joined the Convention as the 111th and 112th State Parties. And we welcome the progress that has been reported towards the clearance of contaminated land and the destruction of the remaining stockpiles of cluster munitions. However, we cannot be complacent as we aim for the full implementation and universalisation of the Convention and of the norms it enshrines.

In-line with our obligations and commitment to the Convention, the United Kingdom continues to make our best efforts to discourage all States not party to the Convention from using cluster munitions. Furthermore, we encourage all States not party to the convention to accede to it. The United Kingdom stands ready to enter into political and military dialogue with any State seeking to accede to the Convention, in line with Action 11 of the Lausanne Action Plan.

The goals of the Convention are as relevant now as ever. However, we must acknowledge the challenges the Convention has faced since the 10th Meeting of States Parties, not least as a result of Russia's illegal and brutal full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The United Kingdom continues to be gravely concerned by reports of the use of cluster munitions in Ukraine. Russia bears ultimate responsibility for this situation, which it can end by withdrawing its forces from within Ukraine's

internationally recognised borders. With the use of cluster munitions a continuing reality, we remind all parties to armed conflict of their obligations under international humanitarian law, which includes taking measures to protect innocent lives. As a committed advocate of the Convention, the United Kingdom wishes to see an end to the use of cluster munitions; as a member of the international community, the United Kingdom maintains that the protection of civilian lives is fundamental.

We must all work to ensure that confidence in the relevance of the Convention and its obligations remains high, whether in eastern Europe or elsewhere. Unwavering political and military commitment to the Convention by State Parties serves only to benefit our collective stability. We should ensure that the well-publicised use of cluster munitions in the years preceding this meeting should not erode the force of this Convention and should serve as a universal reminder to promote the Convention at every reasonable opportunity.

Since the 10th Meeting of States Parties the United Kingdom has had the pleasure to engage with a wide range of States and non-governmental organisations, supporting real progress to strengthen this Convention both in terms of universalisation and supporting States' implementation, and we will continue these efforts over the next year. I will speak to this in more detail under the relevant agenda item.

To conclude, Mr President, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the aims of the Convention in the year that has followed the United Kingdom's Presidency, and we look forward to continuing to work with all parties to strengthen both the universalisation and implementation of the Convention in the years ahead.