



Kingdom of the Netherlands

Statement of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

at the

Twelfth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions

agenda item 8. General exchange of views

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as delivered by

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Conference on Disarmament

and

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Madam 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. The Netherlands appreciates the work that you and your team have done to prepare this Twelfth 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. Please allow me also to convey my condolences to the delegation of Peru with regard to the recent passing away of H.E. Ambassador Ana Cecilia Gervasi Diaz.

Madam President,

Some sixteen 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 all those 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 condemn any use of cluster munitions by any actor. Therefore, we want to reiterate that The Netherlands disapproves of the recent use of cluster munitions by Syria and Myanmar, as well as the use of

cluster munitions by both Russia and Ukraine. However, while we mention Ukraine here, we have to take into account the context in which this use takes place.

Given the context and the difference in use between Russia and Ukraine, it would feel wrong to put them on equal terms with each other. The unprecedented Russian aggression towards Ukraine is the reason why Ukraine sees the need to deploy cluster munitions, and in doing so Ukraine takes extensive precautionary measures. Apart from Russia being the sole reason for this war, also the nature of Russia's use of cluster munitions is particularly worrying. There have been several reports regarding indiscriminate Russian attacks with cluster munitions on the civilian population and civilian objects in Ukraine, for example in Odessa in May 2024. The Netherlands condemns such attacks in the strongest possible terms, especially since the use of cluster munitions in populated areas may, on many occasions, violate international humanitarian law.

Once more we reiterate only Russia is able to stop this war and thereby the use of cluster munitions in Ukraine. 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.

While The Netherlands believes it is vital to note the context of the use by and the transfer of cluster munitions to Ukraine, we also discourage any use of cluster munitions by any actor. 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.

Madam President,

We regret the withdrawal of Lithuania, effective as of 6 March 2025, from this important Convention. We recognise that in accordance with Article 20 of the Convention, each State Party, in exercising its national sovereignty, has the right to withdraw from this Convention. We are also acutely aware of the increased sense of insecurity and threat that Lithuania is experiencing. We reiterate our strong solidarity with Lithuania, which is also demonstrated by the contribution of Royal Netherlands Army to NATO's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) in Lithuania.

Madam President,

The CCM was developed to end unacceptable harm to the civilian population caused by the use of cluster munitions. Furthermore, conventions such as the CCM can only be effective if its States Parties commit themselves not only in times of peace, but especially in times of growing security threats. As a CCM State Party, the Netherlands would like to underline action 11 of the Lausanne Action Plan that calls on States Parties to continue and intensify efforts to promote the observance of the Convention's norms by discouraging the use, development, production, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions. In that context the CCM community should encourage Lithuania to continue further exploring alternative ways to safeguard its national security.

Furthermore, we need to continue our efforts to implement the actions of the Lausanne Action Plan. 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 congratulate Peru for completing their obligations under Article 3 of the Convention.

Furthermore, country coalitions can contribute 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 equality, diversity and inclusion. In order to reach our common goals, it is essential to have an inclusive approach. My delegation would like to thank the Gender Focal Points, Belgium and Germany, for their excellent work. The Netherlands has cosponsored the Working Paper “Taking stock of gender, diversity and inclusion in the Convention on Cluster Munitions: A mid-point review of the implementation of the Lausanne Action Plan” as well as the joint cross-regional statement on gender, prepared by Germany. Together we can place the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda at the heart of global peace and security and make gender equality and diversity a reality.

Madam President,

In closing, we have gathered here in Geneva to work toward 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, Madam President