

BRANISLAV KAPETANOVIC
CLUSTER MUNITION COALITION

**Your Excellences, ladies and gentlemen,
Dear fellow campaigners,**

I would like to thank the hosts, Croatia, in the first place for investing all the efforts in organizing this conference and making us all feel welcome.

Your Excellences, allow me to take a moment to remind you of all the successes we have achieved in the previous five years since the Convention on Cluster Munitions entered into force. The success is reflected in the significant number of countries that have joined the Convention. To date 117 have signed, 95 are States Parties. The progress achieved in destroying stockpiles of cluster munitions is another great success, and so are clearance and victim assistance efforts. But let us not dwell on our successes – there is some space for criticism and we should take note of that. While accessions and ratifications have increased in the lead up to the conference there is still urgency to do more to universalize the Convention further. It is important not to overlook the fact that the use of cluster munitions has occurred in conflicts – this conference provides us with another opportunity to continue to condemn this use strongly, uniformly, and undeniably. I would like to use this opportunity to open these important topics in the hope that in near future, we can achieve new successes and put a stop to all the wrongdoings.

Your Excellences, I would like to point out that our primary concern now should be expanding the number of States Parties. The trap we have to avoid now is the lethargy, the slowing down of the universalization of the treaty. Starting from this conference, a course needs to be taken that will positively steer this Convention forward. With further expansion of the membership we ensure greater stigma and support to the effectiveness and impact of the Convention all over the world. Let us not rest on our laurels, but remain committed to constructive problem solving which will enable further progress.

States Parties have to invest far more energy into universalization through regional lobbying. The Cluster Munition Free-Zone in Central America is a shining example of this. Neighbor countries can build on the existing various forms of cooperation. One such way to go about this is through regional conferences--by getting some of the states on board, a climate of trust would be created which could then absorb an entire region into the Convention. That is just one of the means to enhance the process of universalization of the Convention.

The Convention entered into force in August 2010, but even now, five years later we have recent cases of use of cluster munitions in Libya, Syria, Sudan, Ukraine and Yemen. Every use of cluster munitions is a crime, whether there were casualties or not. CMC is strongly opposed to any use of cluster

munitions and calls on user states to cease that use and to rapidly join the Convention. We insist that the entire international community should join in the condemnation of such actions, as that would enhance future prevention of use.

Your Excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, we only have one planet that we all share. We should all make an effort and endeavor to live a more humane and better life. The Convention is oriented towards improving human lives and reducing the catastrophic consequences these banned weapons have. If we all get together to work on these common goals, we can achieve a lot. Our goals are a world free of cluster munitions, an end to the suffering caused by cluster munitions. You can contribute to these significantly as you represent the international community so I call on you to do it.

Finally, I would like to say something from a personal perspective. I dream about a world with no wars, conflicts and suffering due to the loss of a loved one. My wish is to live in a world filled with love, solidarity and mutual understanding. I hope that you – as you all have the power to influence the future of humanity –will give your contribution to a better life, life without human suffering that wars imminently bring. I sincerely believe in you and I believe you can do that!

Thank you,