

Opening Statement

7th Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions

4 September 2017



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Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Dear fellow campaigners,

I would like to thank you for the great honor of making an opening statement here at the United Nations. At the First Meeting of States Parties there was much energy and commitment in the room. It is important to keep that commitment strong and the energy high. I hope my speech will wake up many countries to the reality that the Convention on Cluster Munitions is the best solution to the cluster munition problem. Now after all these years it is time for Signatory States to finally ratify and for others to accede.

None of us must remain only an observer or an eye-witness to the use of cluster munitions, the monstrous weapons causing casualties mostly among civilians, which make 98 % of the total casualties. What else should happen, and how many innocent civilians and children should be victims of the criminal use of these weapons to convince you to join this convention?

As the Cluster Munition Monitor 2017 Report has shown not everything is so bad. There are all those countries that have done a lot to resolve the problem by destroying their stockpiles, surveying and clearing the contaminated areas. And we are especially thankful to those countries that have been encouraging their neighbors to join the convention. On the other hand, there are countries that have not done a single thing they committed to when joining the convention. All this puts me in the position to ask you a few important questions on behalf of the CMC.

What are you doing to meet your deadline for destroying stockpiles of cluster munitions? Do you have a plan for destruction, and when are you planning to start?

If you have contaminated land, are you applying the best survey practices to release land in a safe and efficient manner?

Are you taking steps to improve the quality and quantity of assistance to survivors and other persons with disabilities?

We advocate to get the answers because by doing so, we make a strong incentive for the implementation of the convention, which would be a great signal for the other countries to start as soon as possible with the realization of their obligations.

Excellencies -- I believe you are familiar with the five-year Dubrovnik Action Plan, which says that by 2020 we should have 130 States Parties. Today we have 102, and an additional 17 signatories. We are interested how come after so many years the 17 signatories have not managed to ratify? How can it take that long? If you constantly encounter problems please contact us, and we as Coalition we will help you with great pleasure. Please bear in mind we are now half-way through the Dubrovnik Action Plan implementation period and additional efforts are required to make sure we have progress. Because of that, I call Your Excellencies to support the convention with more effort and energy, not only with the words spoken here, but also with the acts that will speed up realization.

In this blunt speech I have pointed to a lot of unsolved questions. I did not want to only criticize, but it is obvious that we have delayed realization. There are no new accessions since last year. I have to ask those states that have not yet joined: why are you waiting? Why not accede this year so that you will be a State Party when we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the convention? States Parties know that in the implementation of the convention we have a huge possibility for better progress. So, I beg you Your Excellencies, remember the energy and commitment of that first meeting. Our dream of a world without cluster munitions can become a reality, but only if you do your best at aiming for new members and increasing implementation successes.

Thank you.