



Convention on Cluster Munitions, 9MSP

**Statement by New Zealand
Universalization**

25 November 2020

Thank you Mr President.

Please allow me to congratulate the Swiss Presidency of this Conference for your strong leadership and your determination to proceed with the Second Review Conference of our Convention this year, despite the extraordinary circumstances of 2020. We are delighted to have this opportunity to mark a decade since the entry into force of the Cluster Munitions Convention: to see how far we have come in the past ten years, and to decide together on our goals and milestones for the future.

New Zealand warmly welcomes the four States that have joined this Treaty's membership since the last Meeting of States Parties: the Maldives, Sao Tome and Principe, Saint Lucia, and Niue – one of our near neighbors in the Pacific. Although we have not met the very ambitious goal we set at the first Review Conference relating to the number of States Parties we would wish to have by now, we should all be encouraged, and proud, of the fact the membership of this relatively young Treaty – and the level of international support for – continues to grow at a steady rate.

But universalizing our Convention and its important norm against cluster munitions requires the continued efforts of our Convention's community, including its existing States Parties – who, after all, have all agreed by virtue of Article 21 to “promote the norms it establishes” and to “encourage States not party to [our] Convention to ratify... or accede to [it], with the goal of attracting the adherence of all States to this Convention”.

In this regard, we welcome the very impressive efforts of our co-coordinators, Chile and the Philippines, in promoting the Treaty's universalization over the

past year, and the concrete step-by-step plans they have made to achieve universalization.

For New Zealand's part, we have focused this year on outreach close to home. Building on an existing outreach programme of visits by a former Disarmament Ambassador of New Zealand to a range of Pacific Island Countries, we have continued to lead discussions on the Convention's outreach this year in a virtual format.

We note that most States that have not yet joined the Convention have never used cluster munitions – so it's important to try and develop a clear picture of why they have not yet joined us. Key challenges we hear from States in our region relate to competing priorities and significant overall resource constraints. Annual reporting can be a significant burden, including for States that have never dealt with these weapons. To that end, we have focused our outreach programme this year on offering States from our region assistance with their existing or future reporting requirements.

A decade into the life of this Convention, the good news is that there been no confirmed reports or allegations of new use of cluster munitions by any of its 110 State Parties; but the bad news is that these weapons have been used in seven other countries during the life of the Convention, including in the past year in both Syria and Libya. We are deeply concerned about the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh. New Zealand unreservedly condemns any and all use of cluster munitions, anywhere, by anyone. We must – as a community of states, international organisations and civil society representatives – do all that we can to make cluster munitions a weapon of the past and to put an end to the suffering caused by these inhumane weapons and their remnants.

New Zealand looks forward to working with all of you to this end.

Thank you Mr President.