



**Statement by H.E. Dell Higgle  
Ambassador for Disarmament**

**Convention on Cluster Munitions  
9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties**

**Universalisation**

**2 September 2019**

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Thank you Mr President,

Please allow me to congratulate the Sri Lankan Presidency of this Conference for your strong leadership this year. We are delighted now to be marking eleven years since our Convention's adoption, and nine years since its entry into force. Building on the excellent work of the previous Presidents, Nicaragua and Germany, good progress has been made towards the objectives we set in the Dubrovnik Action Plan and the 2016 Political Declaration.

We particularly welcome the efforts of our co-coordinators, Panama and Chile, in promoting universalisation over the past year and are delighted that Gambia and the Philippines have joined the Convention since the last MSP. This brings the total number of States Parties to 106. Congratulations to our newest members and we look forward to working closely with you over the coming year. We still have some considerable way to go to reach the target we have set ourselves of 130 States Parties by 2020 but we have no doubt that our new members will bring insights and energy to help us move forward.

New Zealand's efforts to promote our Convention have been particularly focused this year on the South-Asia and Pacific regions. In June, we co-hosted a workshop in Manila which brought together 8 states not party and 5 States Parties from the region to discuss the Convention and promote its implementation and universalisation. We were fortunate

there once again to have the assistance of our excellent Implementation Support Unit, the Cluster Munitions Coalition, the ICRC, and our co-coordinators from Switzerland and Laos. We were grateful, too, Ambassador Azeez for your participation in the workshop.

Uptake of the CCM remains relatively low in South Asia and the Pacific, with our partners in the region having identified a number of challenges they face for ratification. As is the case with other regions, these states face a range of competing priorities as well as significant overall resource constraints. Notwithstanding these challenges, a number of participants in the Manila workshop have committed to positively consider their membership of the CCM.

Following the Auckland Conference on Conventional Weapons Treaties, including the CCM, which was held in February last year, New Zealand has continued to stay in close contact with our Pacific neighbours on the Convention. We have now conducted eight bilateral 'universalisation' visits since the Conference - including three this year. We will continue to provide any support our Pacific neighbours need in their efforts to join and implement the Convention.

New Zealand was again pleased to co-sponsor the CCM resolution at the UN General Assembly in 2018. This text usefully highlighted the increasing support enjoyed by the Convention including on the part of many States that are not yet party. We will continue to promote the resolution this year, and will work to turn abstentions into positive votes, and positive votes into signatures and the all-important ratification of the Convention.

Mr President,

The urgency with which we must pursue universalisation and full implementation of our Convention is reinforced by evidence of the ongoing harm caused by cluster munitions use. We certainly welcome the indication in the Cluster Munition Monitor of the continued decrease in cluster munition casualties between 2017 and 2018. This is, of course, cause for celebration but not for complacency. Our community is striving for a world in which there are no casualties whatsoever from cluster

munition attacks or cluster munition remnants - and we remain committed to achieving zero.

New Zealand continues to unreservedly condemn any, and all, instances of the use of cluster munitions - including recently in Syria. Such use can only compound the suffering of those caught up in conflict, and will continue to hamper efforts and undermine confidence even long after the worst is over.

We welcome all endeavours to strengthen the norm against cluster munitions and consider that further work can be done over the coming year in this regard. We will continue to focus on the universal condemnation of any confirmed use of cluster munitions as well as on efforts to end investments in the production of these inhumane weapons. New Zealand looks forward to working with the CCM family to this end.

Finally, New Zealand would like to reiterate our ongoing appreciation for the tireless work of the Cluster Munition Coalition including for its valuable production of the Cluster Munition Monitor and we look forward to continuing our excellent relationship with them.

Thank you.