

CLUSTER MUNITION COALITION

COMPLIANCE – DELIVERED IN ARABIC

Thank you Mr. President

Since Fifth Meeting of States Parties in September of 2014, cluster munitions have been used in Libya, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen. Given the grave consequences of cluster munition use for civilians, the serious harm that gave rise to this Convention, we must agree that this use is unacceptable wherever it may occur, by anyone and for any reason. It is important to note that there has been no evidence of new use of cluster munitions by any of the States Parties to this Convention.

The Cluster Munition Coalition's member, Human Rights Watch, has collected substantial evidence of new use of cluster munitions in these five countries since September 2014 in addition to local media and groups on the ground who have been doing their utmost to collect this information under difficult and dangerous circumstances. In most of these countries, we already know of civilians who have been killed or injured during attacks and from cluster munitions remnants. For example, at the end of April cluster munitions injured at least four people, including a ten-year old boy, near Saada city in northern Yemen when they handled "bombs that looked like toys" which subsequently exploded. Cluster munition attacks in Ukraine have hit residential areas, injured dozens of civilians and killed many others including a woman and a boy who were playing with friends at a playground near a local school in Artemivsk. Ongoing use in Syria, including as recently as January of this year, has resulted in thousands of civilian casualties.

This detailed evidence has been made available to States Parties over the past nine months and has been compiled in a single dossier for this meeting. We applaud the states that have spoken out over the last months since the last meeting of States Parties, including Costa Rica, Croatia and Norway. We also thank all of you who have taken the floor today to add your voice so that this meeting can send a clear message reinforcing the strength of the emerging norm against any use of cluster munitions. All States Parties and signatories must act to condemn this use if we are to prevent future use.

Already it is clear that our work—the work of states, the ICRC, UN agencies and the Cluster Munition Coalition -- has stigmatized use. Government actors were responsible for most of the recent instances of use, while non-state actors have used cluster munitions in Syria and perhaps elsewhere. Most states involved have denied this use, even in the face of compelling evidence to the contrary. This demonstrates the even users of cluster munitions recognize that this is not accepted by the international community.

Important progress has been made in the first five years of this Convention, but we still have work to do to universalize the Convention as the best response to new use is to reinforce and embrace international law. Bilaterally and in settings such as here today, States Parties must continue to speak out and strongly condemn the use of cluster munitions, wherever it may occur. It is an obligation of the treaty and it is the best way to ensure that instances of use dwindle to nothing and civilians are protected from these indiscriminate weapons.