



Convention on Cluster Munitions Signing Conference

2-4 December 2008, Oslo, Norway

Opening statement by Branislav Kapetanovic, CMC Spokesperson Oslo, 3 December 2008

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Colleague Activists,

I am pleased to see so many states here to sign the Treaty. The active work by cluster bomb survivors in the Oslo Process has helped states reach the right decision. The affected states also made a great creative contribution to this.

The experience of the survivors points out the suffering of the injured, our families, societies and the state affected. Our presence and sometimes our sheer appearance, the sight of a human being whose body parts were taken away by this weapon, has made an impact. I owe enormous gratitude to all of you, who have made a difficult, but I'm sure, the right decision for humanity.

I hope the unity and determination showed here in Oslo today will mark the future of international cooperation, especially for victim assistance and clearance.

I appeal to the states not signing today, especially those who were active in the process, to join in and sign the Treaty. Your decision to sign can save thousands of innocent lives and protect the future of our children.

For us here, this is not the end of our road: we still have to make sure the Treaty is implemented, monitored and that funding is available to those in need.

The Oslo process has meant a lot to me because I have been able to fight against something that has brought a lot of suffering into my life and left me without arms and legs, with severe injuries, that brought immense posttraumatic consequences, deprived me of normal life, made me dependent on others, even for the simple tasks of hygiene or nourishment, deprived me of finding a life-time partner or even making love, left me without hope...left me in the dark.

The Oslo process gave me a new life, gave me strength to live on. Now my life has a new meaning and I have a future. Now I feel there is light.

I'm extremely glad to have come here to Oslo for the second time in less than two years to witness the Treaty signing.

It is a mere coincidence that tomorrow is my birthday and I think that I'm the happiest person in the world. I will get the best present ever – the official signing of the Treaty!

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Colleague Activists: thank you for such a beautiful present!