



Convention on Cluster Munitions Signing Conference

2-4 December 2008, Oslo, Norway

Statement by Margaret Arach Orech, ICBL Ambassador Oslo, 3 December 2008

Today is a very historical date; the Convention on Cluster Munitions is now open for signature. Today is also a day when we commemorate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. It is of great significance that the Cluster Munitions Convention is signed. Right now, states are demonstrating their support and commitment by signing the Treaty. I am happy that survivors are here today as part of this auspicious gathering to witness states; their states sign the Convention on Cluster Munitions. On behalf of the Cluster Munitions Coalition, we would like to acknowledge efforts made by all the states here today in taking this noble move to put an end to the humanitarian suffering caused by cluster munitions. What does this mean to us?

We are here in our various capacities. We have all played and will continue to play our roles to ensure the ultimate success of the Convention; when Cluster Munitions ceases to pose any more threats to mankind.

In our strife for a world without cluster munitions we have focused on the humanitarian imperative and we are glad to see so many states doing the same. In order to keep our focus we:

- a) Urge states to take the responsibility of making plans to enforce the treaty in your respective countries; with particular emphasis on plans to implement Victim Assistance in close collaboration with survivors. The victim assistance provisions are groundbreaking. It has a broader definition and takes into consideration the affected community as well as the survivors. The victim assistance provision of the treaty looks at the treaty from a human rights angle. Now, more than ever, we must make sure that they have a positive impact on people's lives. In this respect, we urge States that have not done so, to adhere to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- b) Encourage donors to render full support to countries, by availing resources for implementing certain specific aspects of the treaty where states need help in;
- c) Urge civil society, to raise awareness of the dangers and threats of cluster munitions to affected communities. To provide risk education to minimize injuries and death, and to work with affected states and above all keep the campaign alive!

Our focus is on the humanitarian aspect of the problems of cluster munitions. Clearing contaminated areas within the shortest possible time frame will ensure access to land, and pave way for further development in the affected areas. Above all, this will cause a reduction in the number of new victims.

To states that have signed, we urge you to go all the way: Ratify the Convention as soon as possible and take the next steps to implement the Treaty. Make it real and give the survivors and their families and communities hope for a better tomorrow. Give survivors assurance of an acceptable level of care and access to services.

To states that are hesitant or undecided about signing the Treaty, we remind you to focus on the humanitarian aspect. Look at people like Berihu, Branislav, Song Kosal, and myself to name but a few. Do you need more people injured and killed? Think of the people first, their needs and their future. We shall continue to walk with these states until they are all safely on board and in line with the Convention, however long it takes. Please do not make us walk for long!

Thank you.