



**Remarks on universalisation by Branislav Kapetanovic, Spokesperson, Cluster Munition Coalition
Global Conference on the Convention on Cluster Munitions
Santiago, Chile, 7 June 2010**

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, dear fellow activists,

As a former military man, let me take a few minutes to talk to you about why the common arguments we hear about the military necessity of cluster munitions make no sense.

Cluster bombs are outdated weapons, and their use cannot be justified from either a military or economic point of view. As for the military aspects, there is a wide array of other bombs currently available that can be successfully deployed in any war situation instead of cluster bombs. There are many types of guided bombs which are highly accurate and that can minimize harm done to civilians.

The military advantages gained from the use of cluster munitions are very limited in modern warfare. These weapons were designed for cold war operations involving large formations of tanks or troops over open ground. Today's combat often takes place in urban environments, where the humanitarian harm of cluster munitions is hugely magnified.

Using cluster munitions is often counterproductive for modern armies. They interfere with military operations by endangering both friendly troops and civilians. Continued use of the weapons would also increase civilian hostility towards the army using them.

Also, no one can use this weapon with the excuse that it was for defensive purposes, when it is a well-established fact that this weapon can only be used offensively. It does not make sense to use them on one's own soil because of the large number of duds they leave behind that endanger civilians. That's why the use of this weapon is illogical in every way.

Many cluster munitions are already reaching the end of their shelf life and will soon be unsafe to use. Keeping these weapons in use drastically increases the cost of their deployment due to expensive maintenance. So it is more logical to destroy these weapons than to constantly invest in their expensive maintenance. We have already said that there are other and more up-to-date weapons that can replace cluster bombs and which are less costly to maintain.

Therefore, I am inviting all countries to join the Convention. In this I hope we will strengthen the global stigmatization of this cruel weapon and help prevent its further use, which could affect any country in the future.

I would also like to encourage governments to reach out to your friends and neighbours who have not joined the Convention yet and to focus on military to military dialogue. Sometimes it is only by military people speaking to each other that obstacles can be overcome to allow countries to join the Convention.

Finally, I would like to once again express my gratitude to all of you for gathering here and showing great enthusiasm to ban these weapons and protect the ones who suffer the most, civilians. I'd like to ask you to make this conference a real springboard for further work at conferences of states parties, beginning with the conference in Laos.

Thank you.