



**Universalisation and entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions  
Laura Cheeseman, Campaign Manager, Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC)  
7 June 2010, Santiago, Chile**

Thank you Mr Chairperson.

Promoting broad adherence to the Convention on Cluster Munitions is essential to fulfil our common goal of bringing an end to the suffering and casualties caused by cluster munitions. All states that have joined the Convention have a legally binding obligation under Article 21 to encourage States not party to this Convention to join.

So far, over a hundred countries have signed the Convention. Signatories include most of the world's severely affected countries – Afghanistan, Iraq, Laos and Lebanon, which should benefit from the Convention's provisions on clearance and victim assistance. Also included are major former users, producers and stockpilers of cluster munitions, including our host country Chile, which will ensure that across the world cluster munitions are progressively eliminated with any future use becoming far less likely. The countries that have joined so far comprise the necessary mix needed to make a difference to peoples' lives.

With every new country that joins the Convention, the global norm rejecting the weapon and requiring assistance to those affected is strengthened. It does not matter whether a country is big or small; affected, stockpiler, or neither. By joining the Convention, each state gives one more voice in favour of the ban and helps to generate strength in numbers.

By joining the Convention, states that may not be affected by cluster munitions today will strengthen the global stigmatisation of the weapon and therefore help prevent further use which could affect them in the future.

Joining the Convention is not a difficult process, in particular for states with no stockpiles and no affected communities. For these states accession is a straightforward procedure, with which the CMC, ICRC and UN all stand ready to provide support. We strongly encourage more countries to get on board and join the Convention before the First Meeting of States Parties in November.

Although some states have presented arguments against joining the Convention, at least in the immediate future, there are sound reasons to counter all objections to joining.

Signatory states can assist non-signatories to overcome the challenges and obstacles they face in joining the Convention. Sharing information about how they were able to meet the requirements under the Convention will help other countries to join.

As we all know there are also human reasons to join and to make joining a matter of urgency. Earlier this year on 22 February 5 children were killed and one injured when a cluster submunition exploded in a village in Lao PDR's Champasak province. They found the submunition while they were feeding buffalo in rice paddies.

This is the key year to be carrying out universalisation work. 2010 has two important milestones: entry into force of the Convention on 1 August, and the First Meeting of States Parties in November. These occasions provide valuable opportunities to build on the momentum that exists. Collectively we need to capitalise on these and use them to convince countries to prioritise joining now, and not later. Experience from the Mine Ban Treaty shows that the best chance of getting new states to join the Convention will be in its early years.

For the CMC, reaching out to states and encouraging them to sign and ratify the Convention is our primary focus of work this year. In April, the CMC launched its Countdown Campaign to entry into force calling on non-signatory countries to join the Convention through letter actions, advocacy meetings, national workshops and other creative campaign actions.

Across the world on 1 August, we will be “drumming in” the entry into force of the Convention in a global drumming action across cultures and time zones. We are aiming to hold an action in every country where we have a local member, and we invite all governments and partners to ‘beat the drum to ban cluster bombs’ with us on 1 August.

All signatory states have an obligation and duty to promote the Convention on Cluster Munitions and we urge all states to take on some of this work this year. This work need not require unreasonable time or resources. States should raise the CCM in bilateral meetings with non-signatories. Military-to-military dialogue is particularly important in convincing countries that giving up cluster munitions will not undermine national security. In multilateral meetings, place the CCM on the agenda, promote it in your speeches and discuss it with your colleagues. The CCM has been raised in ASEAN, the Commonwealth, European Parliament, NATO and the UN General Assembly. Some states have mobilised their diplomatic representatives abroad to promote the Convention. All of these efforts help.

The CMC is pleased that Japan has taken on the role of Friend of the President on this issue, to act as a government focal point. Japan’s leadership on universalisation with other states and with the CMC, UN and ICRC, will help to ensure coordinated, targeted and effective outreach to non-signatory countries.

We look forward to working closely with Japan and all states to promote the Convention in the lead up to the First Meetings of States Parties in Vientiane, and before then, we look forward to celebrating entry into force of the Convention with you on 1 August.