



**Opening remarks by Thomas Nash, Coordinator, Cluster Munition Coalition
Global Conference on the Convention on Cluster Munitions
7 June 2010, Santiago, Chile**

Thank you very much and thank you to Chile for hosting this conference. Good morning everyone.

This is the most important meeting on cluster munitions since the signing of the Convention a year and a half ago. That is why over 100 campaigners from the CMC have converged on Santiago from over 50 countries, including cluster bomb survivors from Afghanistan, Croatia, Ethiopia, Lao PDR and Serbia as well landmine survivors from a number of other countries.

These campaigners remind us of why we are here and the ongoing need for commitment to this initiative. Just last Friday a policeman in Lebanon died from his wounds sustained in an accident with an unexploded cluster bomb left over from the 2006 conflict. This reminds us that what we're doing is urgent.

As usual we from civil society have arrived overflowing with energy and motivation. We feel like we have a lot to be excited about.

We have an opportunity here to shape the outcome documents of the First Meeting of States Parties – a meeting that will decide the future of the Convention we together fought so hard to achieve. As we approach the meeting in Vientiane we should all be guided by the same ambition and resolve that brought us through Dublin and Oslo and got us where we are today.

We have an opportunity here to focus on cooperation and assistance, which for many communities and individuals will determine whether the Convention fulfils its promise or not. In the end, this is why we embarked on the Oslo Process – to make a difference to the lives of those affected by cluster munitions.

We have an opportunity here to discuss our collective efforts to get more countries to sign and ratify this Convention. The progress so far is good by any standard and a new global benchmark has already been established, which as Norway just noted, will extend beyond the formal states parties of the treaty. But we should not be satisfied. Many more countries can and should join – in particular those who have joined the twin convention banning antipersonnel landmines – and there is more that can and should be done by all of us to make this happen.

We have an opportunity to formulate and share plans for the global celebration on the day of entry into force of the Convention on 1 August, when campaigners around the world will be mobilising the public through drumming events to 'beat the drum to ban cluster bombs'. You may have heard a taste of this drumming this morning and you'll see the t-shirts around this week...

We're excited about all this, we're aware of the hard work ahead of us and we're confident we can get the results we need. We see a number of reasons for this confidence.

First of all the Lao leadership as host and President of the First Meeting has been inspiring and we're encouraged by the work that the Friends of the President have done on a wide range of matters. We look forward to engaging actively in the discussion on the substantive matters this week.

Secondly, as a broad community, we continue to be effective with the winning formula of partnership between civil society, UN, ICRC and governments; flexibility and informality in diplomatic work; a focus on substance over process; and the dedication of individuals beyond

their official mandates. We should not take this for granted; it is not the case in all processes and we appreciate it and take it very seriously.

Third, after a lightning fast process to negotiate and sign the convention and to secure 30 ratifications, we see no let up in the momentum and dedication: campaigners, governments, organisations are as active as ever and this continues to be something people care about, not just another thing on their list.

Finally, we're convinced that this problem of cluster munitions is not some intractable crisis with no end in sight, but is something that can be solved as long as governments and organisation bring to bear the right resources, maintain the right focus and make and stick to solid plans that are well thought through. Through our work, we need to set the tone for such an approach this year. This conference is the place to start.

As we said in Oslo a year and a half ago, signing the treaty is just the beginning. The work starts here.

Thank you Chairperson.