



**REGIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS
22 MAY 2007**

Intervention on behalf of the United Nations Development Programme

Delivered by

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to address this forum on behalf of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

At the outset, UNDP would like to congratulate the Government of Peru for hosting the conference on Cluster Munitions and maintaining the momentum behind the Oslo process to address the humanitarian impact and development challenges caused by cluster munitions. We would also like to thank the Government of Norway for their on-going commitment to this process, and for their generosity in supporting a sponsorship programme that has enabled many governments to participate in the Lima conference.

We would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Cluster Munitions Coalition (CMC) for organizing this Civil Society Forum today and the excellent work of the CMC in raising public awareness about the impact of cluster munitions. Civil society is again playing an invaluable role in raising concerns and demanding action by governments and the international community to urgently address the inhumane effects of cluster munitions.

The UN has, on numerous occasions, appealed to the international community to address the inhumane effects of cluster munitions. The former Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in his message to the Third Review Conference of the CCW in November 2006 stated that “recent events show that the atrocious, inhumane effects of these weapons – both at the time of their use and after conflict ends – must be addressed immediately, so that civilian populations can start rebuilding their lives.”ⁱ

Following the Oslo meeting in February, the new Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, said he was encouraged by the Declaration which envisages the conclusion in 2008 of a new agreement banning cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians. He also noted how the Oslo process supplements and complements the efforts underway to address the impact of these weapons within the Inhumane Weapons Convention (CCW).ⁱⁱ

On 4th April 2007 the UN Secretary General reiterated his call on the international community to address immediately the horrendous humanitarian effects of cluster munitions.ⁱⁱⁱ Referring to the efforts of a large group of countries to pursue a new international treaty to deal with these weapons, he encouraged all endeavours to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, the impact of cluster munitions on civilians.

UNDP as well as other UN agencies are here in Peru this week to give concrete support to these appeals.

So, why is UNDP so concerned about these weapons and supportive of legal measures to prohibit cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians and have a range of negative development impacts?

As many of you will be aware, UNDP has a global presence in 166 countries, of which some 80 countries are known to be affected by explosive remnants of war (ERW). At least 24 of the countries where UNDP is present are currently known to be affected by cluster munitions. Thus, UNDP has first-hand experience of both the short-term humanitarian impact and the longer term development impact that these munitions have on populations and communities.

Few here today will need reminding about the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions, including the immediate threat posed to civilians during cluster munition strikes. In our work, we have also witnessed the devastating consequences of cluster munitions that initially fail to explode, hence leaving behind large numbers of unexploded and unstable ordnance that continue to cause death and injury long after conflicts have ended, as well as preventing the productive use of contaminated lands.

In Laos, for example, more than 80 million sub-munitions were dropped with an estimated failure rate of between 10 and 30%, leaving behind millions of unexploded sub munitions.^{iv} It is estimated that some 11,000 people have been killed or injured in Laos, more than 30% of them children. And more than thirty years after the conflict, clearance operations are still on-going. The current Lao National Strategic Plan for the Unexploded Ordnance Programme covers a ten-year period ending in 2013, and now envisages the need to develop a new 10-year plan at the end of this period to effectively deal with the problem.

In newer deployments, as seen in Lebanon last year, the inherent inaccuracy of cluster munitions and the fact that they were used in close proximity to civilian

populations resulted in approximately 1,200 Lebanese civilians being maimed or killed as a result of the intensive bombing. In addition, the unacceptably high failure rates associated with these weapons – certainly much higher than their producers claim – have resulted in more than a million unexploded bomblets lying hidden in fields, olive groves and gardens. This means that people are prevented from returning home or farming their land. As of 7 May 2007, 872 individual locations of new cluster bomb strikes were confirmed totaling an area of more than 35 million square meters.^v As well as causing civilian injury and deaths – some 178 civilians have been injured and 22 killed since the conflict ended – the presence of these munitions is effectively denying access to approximately one quarter of usable arable land.

At the Oslo Civil Society Forum, UNICEF drew our attention to the terrible impact of cluster munitions on children.^{vi} The small size and curious shapes of sub-munitions make them particularly appealing to children. Handicap International has estimated that some 3,007 children have been killed and injured by cluster munitions. It is particularly harrowing to learn that children make up a high proportion of all casualties – estimated to account for some 50% in Kosovo and 36% of casualties in Afghanistan.^{vii} These are children whose basic rights to life and to enjoy a safe environment in which to grow, learn and play, have so cruelly been denied.

Returning to the longer-term developmental impacts, cluster munitions undermine food security through land denial and loss of livestock, and health and hygiene problems as a result of a lack of access to shelter, water and sanitation. In Iraq, for example, a recently completed impact survey demonstrated that much of the contamination is around populated areas. A large portion of the communities in urban and rural areas depend on land to directly sustain their families and maintain their livelihoods. Many activities they engage in such as planting crops and grazing and trading in livestock have been halted, due to contamination. This loss of livelihoods has resulted in losses in income generation for many families and thus increased poverty levels.

In other words, beyond the humanitarian impact, cluster munitions have the potential to exacerbate poverty, and to block local and national economic recovery and long-term development, thereby impeding states' abilities to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

In recognition of the humanitarian and development impacts of these weapons, UNDP and other UN agencies believe that it is time for the international community to urgently agree an effective legal instrument to prohibit cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians.

We welcome the opportunity provided by the Government of Peru during the course of this week to begin discussions on the content of a legally binding instrument. The Chairs' discussion paper provides a useful basis for our deliberations, and we

encourage all government representatives to engage in an open debate on the issues at hand.

In considering the scope and focus of the treaty, and deliberating issues of reliability, accuracy and area-effect, we would ask that delegates remain focused on the task at hand – to prohibit cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians. We would also ask that particular attention is given to establishing a framework for cooperation and assistance which ensures that affected governments can provide adequate care and rehabilitation to survivors and their communities, clear contaminated areas in a timely manner, provide risk education and ensure the destruction of stockpiles of prohibited munitions. In this regard, particular attention should be given to establishing clear obligations on users responsible for any existing and future contamination, including for example, the provision of financial and other types of assistance and cooperation, and the sharing of information to assist in addressing the contamination problem.

In closing, I would like to reiterate the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon's call on the international community in April 2007 to address immediately the horrendous humanitarian effects of cluster munitions, and to encourage all endeavours to reduce and ultimately eliminate the impact of cluster munitions on civilians.

We hope that states here in Peru will take up this challenge and ensure that a treaty can be concluded in 2008 in order to prevent any further human suffering.

Thank you.

ⁱ Secretary-General's message to the Third Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, Geneva, 7 November 2006.

ⁱⁱ Statement by the Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, 23 February 2007; SG/SM/10887

(<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/SGSM10887.doc.htm>)

ⁱⁱⁱ Secretary-General's message on the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action, 4 April 2007.

^{iv} R. Cave, A. Lawson (2006), Cluster Munitions in Lao PDR, published by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, p. 24 (the publication is based on research requested and funded by UNDP, UNMAS and UNICEF).

^v Statistics collated by the UNMAS implemented mine action programme in South Lebanon

(<http://www.maccsl.org/reports>)

^{vi} Statement by Reuben McCarthy, UNICEF, at the occasion of the Civil Society Forum on Cluster Munitions, Oslo, 21 February 2007

^{vii} Circle of Impact: The Fatal Footprint of Cluster Munitions on People and Communities, Handicap International, May 2007