

## OSLO CONFERENCE on CLUSTER MUNITIONS, 22 + 23 February 2007

### Intervention by The Netherlands on a Framework for Cooperation and Assistance

Mr. Chair,

When discussing the establishment of a framework that ensures cooperation and assistance for clearance of contaminated areas, risk education and other aspects of the use of cluster munitions, we cannot overlook the fact –and some delegations have already mentioned it- that there already is an international, legally binding instrument, under which we have agreed to do just that. I am speaking of course of Protocol V to the CCW, which entered into force only three months ago.

As one of the main driving forces behind Protocol V, The Netherlands feels obliged to point out the relevance of its framework for those who want to deal effectively with unexploded cluster munitions. I'll give you three reasons:

**First:** Protocol V already exists. States *have* already committed themselves to information sharing and to clearing unexploded ordnance immediately after the cessation of hostilities. They *have* already agreed to cooperate on risk education, victim assistance, and related activities.

**Secondly:** It sets universal standards for dealing with ERW, including unexploded submunitions, agreed to by all militarily significant states.

**And thirdly:** It does contain preventive measures to minimise the risk of ordnance becoming ERW, including suggestions on production processes, quality control, testing, and shelf-life.

Now, it may be argued that Protocol V does not go far enough and that its Technical Annex is voluntary. This can be said though of many an international instrument. The heart of the matter however is in our *commitment* to make it work. Take the Mine Ban Treaty, which does not force States to assist in mine action. Still, every year hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent to help nations clear minefields, simply because we are *committed* to get rid of the problem.

Today's is a conference of front runners, of likeminded nations who want to deal with the problems caused by cluster munitions. As progressive States, many of us also belong to the first group of nations that ratified Protocol V. On the occasion of its entry into force, we, as CCW States Parties, issued a declaration expressing our determination to reinforce international cooperation and assistance on the issues related to the implementation of the Protocol, in particular in clearance and removal, transmission of information, risk education, victim assistance, and to dedicate greater efforts and resources toward that end.

What matters now, is to operationalize Protocol V.

This conference in Oslo is a valuable tool in helping us to operationalize Protocol V. We have the ambition to seek synergies between the 'Oslo' Process and Protocol V. We have to avoid unnecessary duplication.

Therefore, we think that a reference to the importance of Protocol V should be part of our message to the outside world.

Having said that, let me end my statement by calling upon those nations present that have not yet done so, to ratify Protocol V as soon as possible.

Thank you Mr. Chair.