
**Report from the
Oslo Conference on Cluster Munitions
23-25 February 2007**



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Introduction

A Historic Moment in Oslo

On Friday, February 23rd, 2007, after meeting for a two day conference on cluster munitions sponsored by Norway, 46 out of 49 States present agreed to commit themselves to conclude a new international instrument prohibiting the use of cluster munitions which cause unacceptable harm to civilians. The Oslo Conference is a momentous step forward in the process to create a treaty to ban or regulate the use of weapons which cause disproportionate and unnecessary humanitarian suffering.

The Declaration agreed to at the Conference pledges States to conclude a legally binding instrument by 2008 to “prohibit the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians,” establish a framework for cooperation and assistance to affected countries and survivors, take steps at the national level, and continue to address the issue of cluster munitions “within the framework of international humanitarian law and in all relevant fora.” The Declaration also announced that meetings will be held in Lima in May, Vienna in November/December 2007, Dublin in early 2008, and in Belgium to continue the work begun in Oslo. Only Japan, Poland, and Romania refused to agree to the Declaration.

The Oslo process stems from the November 17th, 2006 Declaration by Norway at the CCW (Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons) announcing that it would organize a conference to work towards a ban on the use of cluster munitions and from years of

hard work from concerned NGOs, in particular the Cluster Munitions Coalition (CMC), and civil society to bring the issue of cluster munitions into the international spotlight.

The events in Oslo began on Wednesday, February 21st with the Civil Society Forum NGO presentations and guest speakers at the Nobel Peace Center, followed by two days of official sessions with state delegations, along with parallel NGO events designed to educate participants about issues pertaining to cluster munitions. The Conference was convened with the purpose of consolidating political will and producing a commitment to work towards the outcome of a treaty prohibiting the use of cluster munitions and ameliorating the humanitarian problems associated with the use of these weapons. The culmination of the events at Oslo represents a monumental achievement and a critical first step in this new international process.

While the outcome of the Oslo Conference is an undeniable success, it was not achieved without reluctance and opposition from certain state delegations. At the same time, the Conference offered States, UN agencies, and NGOs the chance to express their views, clarified the divergent positions held by participants regarding cluster munitions, and helped frame the debate and highlight areas of possible consensus. The political will and momentum to proceed with work on this issue, however, overshadowed dissent and was a tangible positive sign for the future.

The number of participants in the Conference was, in itself, an indication of growing political will. 49 States, 4 UN agencies (UNICEF, UNDP, OCHA, and UNIDIR), the ICRC, and many other NGOs such as the Cluster Munitions Coalition, Handicap International, Human Rights Watch, Norwegian People's Aid, and others took part in the Conference and the parallel events. New Zealand, Mexico, and Ireland co-chaired the Conference.

Background

What Are Cluster Munitions?

Cluster munitions is the general term for a variety of weapons which disperse between ten to several hundred smaller submunitions, or bomblets, over a large area. These weapons, by their very nature, are indiscriminate as their employment creates a large 'footprint' which is unable to distinguish between military and civilian targets. The submunitions contained in cluster bombs are unreliable and have high failure rates, resulting in many unexploded submunitions, or duds, which act as defacto landmines waiting to explode and maim or kill civilians long after conflicts have ended.

Cluster munitions have been used in combat in 23 countries, while 34 countries are known producers, and 70 (or nearly 40% of the world's nations) possess stockpiles. The worldwide number of stockpiled submunitions totals in the billions, many of which are outdated and increasingly unstable models. Non-state actors have reportedly used cluster

munitions three times. The threat of proliferation to terrorists or non-state groups underlines the urgency and necessity of the need to create international law regulating these weapons.

Why Have Cluster Munitions?

Mark Hiznay, Senior Researcher for Human Rights Watch, clearly demonstrated to participants at the Oslo Civil Society Forum events on Wednesday, cluster munitions no longer have any military utility. Cluster munitions are an antiquated relic of the Cold War, which were designed to be used in symmetrical combat. In reality, war is now fought in urban areas and amongst civilian populations, making it unconscionable, illegal, and even disadvantageous to use cluster munitions. Users of cluster munitions such as the UK and the US have admitted that use of cluster munitions actually hinders military operations and the mobility of their own forces, as unexploded submunitions present the same risks to soldiers. Technology and tactics are also shifting to favor more precise damage limiting weapons, thus further removing any utility of cluster munitions. NGO presentations went a long way to dispel the myths put forth by militaries and refute the beleaguered arguments from States that use, possess, and produce cluster munitions.

History Behind the Oslo Process

In Geneva, during the 3rd Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), the former Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, sent a message to the Conference emphasizing the urgent need for action by the international community on the issue of cluster munitions. “I have repeatedly called upon States to comply fully with international humanitarian law. However, recent events show that the atrocious, inhumane effects of these [cluster] 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,” he declared.

During the Review Conference of the CCW, Sweden read a declaration put forth by 25 countries (Austria, Belgium, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Holy See, Hungary, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, and Switzerland) calling for an international agreement “to prohibit the development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of cluster munitions that pose serious humanitarian hazards.” However, objections from Australia, China, India, Japan, Pakistan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, prevented the adoption of the 25 nation proposal. Frustrated by the lack of progress on the issue and the failure of the CCW to reach consensus on the negotiation of a new treaty on cluster munitions, on November 17th, Norway announced that it would hold a conference in Oslo to initiate a new process to negotiate a freestanding treaty banning the use of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable humanitarian suffering.

Recent use of cluster munitions by Israel in Lebanon in 2006 has demonstrated the urgency and vital necessity of securing an international instrument on cluster munitions. Israel dumped 4 million submunitions on Southern Lebanon just 72 hours before the ceasefire was to take effect. The Report of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Lebanon condemned Israel's actions, stating, "The use of cluster munitions by IDF was of no military advantage and was in contradiction to the principles of distinction and proportionality. These were part of a widespread and systematic targeting of civilians and their property, thus causing great suffering, injury and death during and after the conflict. The extent of the use of the munitions particularly during the last 72 hours of the conflict, points toward a plan by the IDF." The Report also urged States to take action to ban cluster munitions under international law. In her speech at the Nobel Peace Center, Nobel Laureate Jody Williams caustically thanked Israel for committing this crime and thus providing the motivation for the international community to take action to prevent future atrocities resulting from the use of cluster munitions.

The Oslo Conference

The purpose of the Oslo Conference was to solidify the political will necessary to move forward along the path to concluding a legally binding instrument on cluster munitions. The official Conference was divided into six sessions:

1. *Addressing the challenges posed by cluster munitions.* This session began with introductions by Peter Bachelor, UNDP, Peter Herby, ICRC, and Steve Goose, CMC, with the aim of providing the Conference with an overview of issues raised by cluster munitions.
2. *Realities from different field contexts and adequate responses.* During this session Dr. Colin King, King Associates/Jane's Defence, Grethe Ostern, Norwegian People's Aid and CMC, and Mr. Hansjoerg Strohmeyer, OHCHA, gave presentations outlining technical characteristics of cluster munitions, how use in different contexts impacts strike areas differently, and proliferation.
3. *Towards a framework for cooperation and assistance.* Stan Brabant, Handicap International, Canada, and Serbia made short introductory remarks opening this session aimed at addressing actions and assist victims and a framework for cooperation and assistance in affected countries.
4. *Translating present challenges into political action.* This session began with remarks from Dr. Patricia Lewis, UNIDIR, Jody Williams, Nobel Peace Laureate, and Austria and focused discussions on taking effective multilateral action in humanitarian disarmament processes.
5. *A future instrument—outlining scope and approached.* Dr. Gro Nystuen, University of Oslo and Belgium introduced this session, which aimed at identifying approaches to future negotiations on the scope, content, and design of a new international instrument, rather than specific definitions.
6. *The way forward.* Introduced by Peru, this last session allowed states to make concluding remarks and indicate their position on the Conference's Declaration.

Announcements

The Conference began on a positive note with an announcement by Austria declaring that it had passed “a national moratorium renouncing any use of cluster bombs or cluster munitions,” which will be upheld even if a future international Convention fails to materialize. In the course of the Conference, Bosnia-Herzegovina also announced its intention to place a moratorium on the use of cluster munitions and destroy its stockpiles. Belgium reaffirmed its own national moratorium and announced that the destruction of its stockpiles is a budgeted program which should be finalized by 2008. It is also discussing a draft law to prohibit investment in companies involved with cluster munition production.

Belgium, Norway, Austria, and Bosnia-Herzegovina are the only four countries which have actually (or in the case of Bosnia, will soon) put in place national measures prohibiting the use of cluster munitions. Luxembourg also stated that following Belgium’s example, it decided to draft a law last October pertaining to a prohibition on cluster munitions. One of the aims of the Conference and the Oslo process is to increase this number and encourage the adoption of national measures.

Both Serbia and Belgium announced that they will hold follow-on meetings to continue the Oslo process.

Issues Discussed During the Conference

The Conference produced constructive discussions on many key matters pertaining to cluster munitions. The major issues raised during general discussions by State delegations and participants were: the appropriate forum for work on cluster munitions—within the CCW or outside through the Oslo process; technical solutions such as self-destruction mechanisms and accurate testing; existing instruments of IHL versus elements of a new treaty; and nature and scope of commitments for future action.

An Appropriate Forum for Work

One of the most contentious issues raised during the Conference was whether work on an instrument on cluster munitions should take place under the CCW (Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons) or outside of it. Initially, it appeared that some States might oppose the Oslo process in favor of continuing work under the CCW. During the first day of the Conference, Germany, Italy, Argentina, France, and the Netherlands explicitly stated their support for the CCW and their belief that actions taken to negotiate an instrument on cluster munitions should be taken in the context of the CCW. Egypt, Latvia, Switzerland, Sweden, and Canada also made remarks expressing their support for the CCW or fears that the Oslo process might compete with it negatively.

The absence of some of the world's larger military powers and producers and stockpilers of cluster munitions, such as the United States, Russia, China, and Israel created concerns for some participants. Some held the opinion that the 'big players' must be included in the initial process. France remarked that it 'could not be satisfied with only 20 to 30 States signatories.' Others, such as Dr. Patricia Lewis of UNIDIR and Mr. Diego Belevan on behalf of Peru, stated that as international political will consolidated, the 'big players' would come on board, as demonstrated by the similar experience of the Landmine Treaty process.

Germany, in a statement delivered by Mr. Heinrich Haupt, of the Division of Arms Control, announced that it was working on a set of draft elements for a possible legal instrument on cluster munitions with the aim of presenting concrete text at the ICRC meeting this coming April. Mr. Haupt listed the national measures taken by the German armed forces restricting the acquisition of new cluster munitions and prohibiting the use of cluster weapons except when 'no suitable alternatives are available,' and those with failure rates of over 1%. He also stated that the CCW is the adequate forum for work on cluster munitions as it includes those not present at this process and that, 'without their participation, our common goal of protecting civilians cannot be achieved.'

France supported the German statement, saying that the CCW remains the relevant forum because it includes the users, producers, and exporters of cluster munitions and advocated producing a negotiation mandate in the CCW this coming November.

Italy, in a statement delivered by Ambassador Trezza, also supported the continuation of work in the CCW. Ambassador Trezza said that the CCW has not had a 'real chance' to achieve results on cluster munitions. He urged "decisive diplomatic action for the creation of a Protocol VI on cluster munitions to be annexed to the CCW Convention, containing a very advanced set of possible prohibitions."

The Netherlands made a call for the States to operationalize Protocol V, saying, "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."

On behalf of the CMC, Steve Goose addressed the Conference, expressing a commonly held opinion in the NGO community that 'the CCW approach can be seen in two ways—at best a 'go slow' approach, and if not, it is a 'do-nothing' approach.' He reminded the Conference that the CCW spent five years trying to produce modest restrictions on anti-vehicle mines (AVM), and even with the biggest countries and biggest producers they failed completely. He stated his hope that the biggest users and holders of cluster munitions will join the Oslo process and change their policy, as many did in the process to ban landmines.

In her passionate introduction to Session 4 of the Conference, Nobel Laureate Jody Williams admonished States not to hide behind the inactivity of the CCW, saying that working within the CCW will not accomplish anything except 'dilly-dallying,' and while

some ‘play away’ in the CCW, ‘those of us who accept responsibility to protect human beings and not our billions of weapons can go ahead.’ She declared that it is not the right of the State to protect its own right to exist or its weapons systems simply because it has them, as there is no way to justify keeping an indiscriminate weapon. ‘It is appalling what human beings will accept, what they will justify...I believe in human security, not national security,’ she said. ‘If you think that your responsibility to protect is the responsibility to protect your weapons, then go to the CCW, where one state can veto, like the US.’

Germany responded to criticism of its insistence on keeping the process within the context of the CCW by stating that if a negotiation mandate cannot be achieved in the CCW by next November, it would reconsider its position and ‘Oslo might take the lead.’

Fortunately, what seemed to be growing polarization within the Conference was avoided as the CCW versus Oslo issue was set aside. “Synergy” between the two processes became one of the catch-phrases of the Conference and the term was frequently mentioned by States in the following general discussions.

Co-Chair Ambassador MacKay of New Zealand reminded the Conference that the meeting at Oslo is not a question of participation in the CCW or outside of it, but rather an expression of likemindedness, saying that the two processes need to draw strength from each other and be mutually reinforcing. This compromissary sentiment was echoed by Austria, in a statement from Ambassador Dorteia Auer, who added that despite willingness to work within the CCW along side the Oslo process, “If States conclude that they want to keep the issue of cluster munitions inside the CCW, they will have to prove that the CCW is ready to take the challenge. But it looks like that progress in the CCW-process seems only to be possible if there is a strong parallel process.” Others, like Slovakia, expressed the hope that the Oslo process will exert pressure on the CCW to move in the right direction.

Norway also reaffirmed that the process in Oslo was not intended in any way to undermine the CCW and that progress in both fora would be welcomed and that the Conference should focus on the political aim and the humanitarian need in the field.

Technical Improvements

A few countries made statements advocating the use of ‘technical fixes,’ or technical improvements to submunitions designed to lower their failure rates and equip them with self-destruction mechanisms.

Argentina announced that while it has never used cluster munitions and is an affected country as a result of the 1982 Falklands conflict, it is developing a new generation of cluster munitions that have ‘higher standards’ and failure rates of 1%. It stated that older stockpiles which do not meet these standards would be destroyed.

Sweden, in a statement by Mr. Bosse Hedberg, declared that “The Swedish Armed Forces are equipped with cluster munitions called BK 90 and expect to keep them for the time being. The BK 90 holds a very high quality, a dud rate of 1-2% and is equipped with self-destruction mechanisms and self-deactivation. The result is that there are no dangerous duds left in the area.”

The UK referred to its national legislation requiring the destruction of ‘dumb’ cluster bombs. Germany also attested to the high standards of its cluster munitions with a failure rate not more than 1%.

Two informative and compelling presentations from Dr. Colin King, King Associates and Jane’s Defence and Grethe Østern, CMC and Norwegian People’s Aid, demonstrated the problems associated with technical improvements such as lower failure rates, self-destruction mechanisms, and the tests conducted to achieve these statistics. Dr. King emphasized that reliance on figures such as a 1-2% failure rate is dangerously misleading, as statistics compiled from conservative tests under ideal conditions are very different from the operational use of cluster munitions, by scared pilots flying low to avoid hostile fire, with the additional effects of weather conditions and the terrain of the target area. Beyond considerations of self-destruction mechanisms and failure rates, factors such as the quantity of submunitions per shell, the stability, lethality, and accuracy of the submunitions, along with the size of the footprint, the density and penetration of submunitions on the ground, and their resilience after conflicts end must also be taken into account.

Grethe Østern further demonstrated the unreliability of test results and the inaccuracy of statistical figures claiming that certain submunitions have failure rates of 1-2%. Showing a film documenting the recent use of cluster munitions in Lebanon, she proved to the Conference participants that many M85 cluster munitions which are equipped with a self-destruction mechanism and supposedly have a failure rate of 1%, failed to act as they were claimed to. The film verified that in a walk through a 50 square meter area of a cluster munition strike in Lebanon, over 20 unexploded submunitions were found, with some even armed to explode. If Israel’s statistics on self-destruction mechanisms and failure rates were correct, these submunitions would have detonated on impact. She established that prohibitions on cluster munitions based on quality or failure rate, or self-destruction mechanisms, will not protect civilians and will be difficult to monitor. Whether States will agree on a total ban on the use of cluster munitions will make the only real difference, she concluded.

The CMC emphasized that the ‘failure rate way is not the way to go,’ saying that ‘we can only hope that Sweden’s cluster munitions with a 1-2% failure rate function a lot better than the Israeli cluster munitions with a 1-2% failure rate because these failed miserably.’

The Lebanese Ambassador, Mr. Gebran Soufan, responded to Germany’s assurances that their cluster munitions have a failure rate not more than 1% and remarks about technical improvements, saying, ‘Can cluster munitions be improved? My feeling as a human

being is that you can't make a monster look like an angel...it does not matter what you do to make [cluster munitions] better if they are used against civilians.'

Improving failure rates and self-destruction mechanisms will clearly not provide an adequate solution to ameliorate the humanitarian suffering caused by cluster munitions and hopefully these approaches can be avoided in future work negotiating a treaty.

Existing International Law and a New Instrument

Another issue raised at the conference was the extent existing international law can be applied to cluster munitions. Italy and the Netherlands made statements maintaining that Protocol V of the CCW contains provisions which can adequately address the issue of cluster munitions. Canada made comparisons to mechanisms contained in Additional Protocol II of the CCW and Protocol V which could be of use to drafting a new instrument on cluster munitions, while raising concerns about the costs associating with negotiating a new instrument and the need to minimize the incidental costs of the process through benefiting from other existing instruments.

Mr. Hansjoerg Strohmeyer, representing OCHA, stated the opinion widely held by many participants that Protocol V is not sufficient to address the humanitarian suffering caused by cluster munitions.

Protocol V pertains to Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) and contains only generic measures on post-conflict aspects of unexploded submunitions. It obliges States Parties to mark and clear ERW after the cessation of armed conflicts, provide technical, material, and financial assistance for their removal in areas not in its direct control, or through a third party such as the UN or NGO. States must take "all feasible precautions" to protect civilians from the effects of ERW, provide warnings and risk education, and record and share information on ERW with the UN and other organizations. They must also provide assistance to the victims of ERW. However, many requirements are qualified as 'best practices' and are not retroactive, thus not applicable to areas already and still affected by ERW and cluster munitions prior to its entry into force in November, 2006.

Instead of relying on the implementation of Protocol V, many NGOs and States advocated the negotiation of a new instrument which will specifically address the unique concerns created by the use of cluster munitions.

During the Conference, many comparisons were made to the process to ban landmines, culminating in the Landmine Treaty, or Ottawa Convention. Despite the similarities to the Oslo process and the model and insights the Landmine Treaty can offer, it is important to note that cluster munitions are a unique issue. Unlike anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions are not designed to act as victim-activated area denial weapons and often have much more devastating effects on victims and clearance operations, which will need to be accounted for in the creation of a new instrument.

Contents and Scope of a New Instrument

Dr. Gro Nystuen, of the University of Oslo, presented the Conference with a number of specific elements which will help to produce a strong legally binding instrument on cluster munitions. He recognized the necessity of including definitions for what will be prohibited, but advocated in order to produce a prohibition on cluster munitions and not a restriction on their use, definitions should be addressed from an inclusive humanitarian perspective, from the point of view of proportionality and discrimination, as it is unlikely that every weapon category will fall within a given definition. A successful new treaty must address the scope, definition, actions to be prohibited, stockpile destruction, clearance of contaminated area, and cooperation and assistance for victims of cluster munitions. The CMC added that mechanisms on transparency and compliance would also be extremely important to include.

The Declaration and Outcome of the Oslo Conference

As States made their concluding remarks and expressed their position on the Declaration of the Conference, the success of the Oslo Conference was apparent. With many States enthusiastically supporting the Declaration and affirming their willingness to move forward on the issue of cluster munitions, it was evident that the conference had generated and consolidated the necessary political will and momentum to move forward on this issue.

However, several states used qualifiers in their acceptance of the Declaration. Germany, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and Latvia all stated that they interpreted Paragraph 3 on the continuation of work within “all relevant fora” to specifically include the CCW.

Canada, the Netherlands, and Switzerland emphasized the need to clarify Paragraph 1(i) and the definition of cluster munitions “that cause unacceptable harm to civilians.” Mexico emphatically announced that it proposed Paragraph 1(i) should be changed to read “prohibit the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions BECAUSE they cause unacceptable harm to civilians,” reiterating its earlier statement that there is no such thing as a cluster munition which poses acceptable harm to civilians.

Denmark, Spain, Sweden, Canada, Germany, France, Angola, and the Netherlands also expressed their views that the 2008 deadline to negotiate a treaty should be seen as an aspiration or an ambition. Ambassador MacKay of New Zealand and the CMC made statements affirming the importance of having a concrete timeline and demonstrating political commitment to act.

The full list of states supporting the Declaration and the negotiation of a treaty prohibiting cluster munitions which cause unacceptable harm to civilians are:

Afghanistan, Angola, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Canada, Chile, Columbia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Guatemala, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Mozambique, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

Only Japan, Poland, and Romania did not support the final Declaration.

In a vague statement, Japan mentioned its work in the clearance of unexploded ordinance in Lebanon, Afghanistan, and Laos and pledged to continue to do so. It stated that cluster munitions involve many areas for discussion, such as the humanitarian, technological, security, and legal aspects of the issue. Japan said that judgment on what types of action will be adequate cannot happen until all aspects of the issue are discussed with the participation of more countries. It also expressed the importance it attaches to the CCW, the ICRC meeting in April, and the GGE meeting in June. However, it concluded by saying it would continue to cooperate with other states.

Poland joined the statement made by Japan and added that while Polish troops are active in demining, Poland is also active within the CCW, ‘which is the unique opportunity to talk between those using, producing, and those affected by cluster munitions.’ It stated that the CCW should not be put aside and should be continued, with the sincere belief that the results of the Oslo meeting will give new momentum to work within the CCW.

Romania stated that it works within the CCW and after the meeting of the GGE it could say more.

NGO Parallel Events

Many NGOs held parallel events and training workshops during the official Conference. There were three advocacy-based workshops, several on key arguments about cluster munitions, and three country specific workshops:

1. *How to get the media on board*, facilitated by Simona Beltrami, dealt with engaging the media on cluster munitions, using media tools, and addressing hostile and or uninterested audiences.
2. *What are Cluster Munitions*, facilitated by Colin King, provided a general introduction to cluster munitions.
3. *How to undertake national campaigning*, facilitated by Derlicka Kasia, described the process of national advocacy by NGOs and the CMC and provided strategies, methods, and tools for conducting effective campaigns and engaging governments.
4. *Key arguments about cluster munitions*, facilitated by Richard Moyes, provided a history of humanitarian suffering caused by cluster munitions and government

- failures to address the issue, as well as military utility and failure rates of cluster munitions.
5. *International Humanitarian Law and cluster munitions*, facilitated by Preben Marcussen and Alex Breitegger, discussed the relationship between International Humanitarian Law (IHL), Human Rights, and cluster munitions.
 6. *Two examples of national campaigning*, facilitated by Per Nergaard and Stan Brabrant, discussed the examples of the national campaigns in Belgium and Norway and provided explanations of how to deal with cluster munitions on the ground.
 7. *Research on cluster munitions*, facilitated by Katleen Maes, dealt with the issues of victim assistance and cluster munitions research.
 8. *Investment and cluster munitions*, facilitated by Christophe Scheire and Dr. Gro Nystuen, illustrated examples of investment in cluster munitions by financial institutions, the difficulties posed by the lack of transparency in the financial sector, some best practice examples and success stories of legislative initiatives to prevent investment in cluster munitions.
 9. *Lebanon*, facilitated by Dr. Nasser Abou Lteif, presented participants with a photo exhibition and presentation about the devastating effects of the use of cluster bombs in Lebanon.
 10. *Afghanistan*, facilitated by Firoz Ali Alizada, analyzed the situation created by the use of cluster munitions in Afghanistan and presented the Handicap International Report, Fatal Footprint
 11. *Serbia*, facilitated by Jelena Vicentric, provided a description of the humanitarian suffering in Serbia resulting from the use of cluster munitions, an overview of civilian casualties during and after attacks and survivors' stories, and descriptions of contaminated areas and problems related to clearance.

Conclusion

The Oslo Conference is a fundamental and momentous first step towards the achievement of a ban on cluster munitions which pose unacceptable harm to civilians. The concrete political commitments made by 46 States present are a tangible accomplishment in the process forward. The Oslo Conference also helped to strengthen the emergent global norms and customary international law prohibiting the use of these unconscionable, indiscriminate, and inhumane weapons. Thanks to the concerted efforts of Norway, the CMC, and numerous concerned States, NGOs, and civil society, action will finally be taken to address the humanitarian suffering caused by the use of cluster munitions and prevent future tragedies.

Further Resources

The following Statements from the Oslo Conference, as well as comprehensive reports from other Oslo Process meetings are available at:

<http://www.wilpf.int.ch/disarmament/clustermunitions/osloreport.html>

Norway, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jonas Gahr Støre, Opening Statement

ICRC, Mr. Peter Herby

Austria, Ambassador Wolfgang Petritsch, Announcement of moratorium on use of cluster munitions

Ireland

Italy, Ambassador Carlo Trezza

Switzerland, Ambassador Christine Schraner Burgener

Handicap International, Mr. Stan Brabant

Netherlands

Austria, Ambassador Dorothea Auer, Translating present challenges into political action

Sweden

Japan

Declaration of the Oslo Conference

Cluster Munitions Coalition, Mr. Thomas Nash, Appeal to governments

Civil Society Forum on Cluster Munitions, Agenda February 21st, Nobel Peace Center

Belgium, Mr. Philippe Mahoux, Draft laws on cluster munitions

More information on cluster munitions at:

The CMC web site: www.stopclustermunitions.org

WILPF on Cluster Munitions: www.wilpf.int.ch/disarmament/clustermunitions