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## STATEMENT BY THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS AND THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

### COORDINATORS OF ARTICLE 3 - STOCKPILE DESTRUCTION COMMITTEE 12<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF STATES PARTIES OF THE CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS 10 -13 SEPTEMBER 2024.

Thank you, Madame President.

Since the 11<sup>th</sup> MSP, the Stockpile Destruction Coordinators, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the Republic of Zambia have undertaken a number of activities.

Detailed information on the progress in implementing the Lausanne Action Plan, including on Stockpile Destruction and Retention (Article 3), is contained in document CCM/MSP/2024/entitled "CCM 12 MSP Progress Report".

In this short intervention we, as Article 3 Coordinators, will provide additional details, focusing on the activities conducted during the reporting period.

To start with good news: All 41 States Parties with Article 3 obligations under the Convention have declared compliance as of 31 December 2024. Four States Parties with obligations remaining under Article 3 (Bulgaria, Peru, Slovakia, and South Africa) declared compliance during the period under review. Two States Parties (Bulgaria and Slovakia) presented their declarations of compliance to the 11MSP, while South Africa and Peru submitted their declarations after the 11MSP.

In this respect, we would like to congratulate South Africa and Peru for completing their Article 3 stockpile destruction obligations.

Nearly all States Parties that have retained cluster munitions in accordance with Article 3.6 have submitted their 2023 annual reports. We would like to encourage Cameroon to submit its annual report as soon as possible.

For clarification, Art. 3.6 stipulates the following: *Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 1 of this Convention, the retention or acquisition of a limited number of cluster munitions and explosive submunitions for the development of and training in cluster munition and explosive submunition detection, clearance or*



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*destruction techniques, or for the development of cluster munition countermeasures, is permitted. The amount of explosive submunitions retained or acquired shall not exceed the minimum number absolutely necessary for these purposes.*

Of the 11 States Parties that reported retaining cluster munitions in accordance with Article 3.6, seven reported using retained cluster munitions in 2023, therefore reducing their stocks. Belgium confirmed having destroyed all its retained cluster munitions and explosive submunitions.

During the reporting period, the Article 3 Coordinators engaged in discussions with UNIDIR and the CMC to draft a working document regarding retained cluster munitions for training purposes. Progress has been noted as States Parties have steadily reduced and, in several cases, completely destroyed cluster munitions originally retained for training. However, more extensive discussions are needed on this issue.

We thank those States Parties that have continued to submit transparency reports in which they declare the retention of Cluster Munitions stockpiles. A special responsibility is placed on all States Parties to submit detailed reports on the planned and actual uses of retained cluster munitions.

We applaud States that have shown a strong commitment to fulfilling their obligations under the Convention, including destroying stockpiled mines and clearing mined areas. We encourage all States Parties to provide information on how they used or destroyed cluster munitions during the periods covered by their transparency reports.

As mentioned in a previous paragraph, under Article 3 of the CCM, States Parties are allowed to retain a minimal number of cluster munitions and explosive submunitions provided that these retained munitions are used strictly for permitted purposes such as training in detection, clearance, and destruction techniques, as well as the development of countermeasures.

As you have heard from my colleague, the statistics are slightly encouraging but we should not be satisfied with them. We can do more. The Committee congratulates Belgium for reporting that their last stocks of retained cluster munitions are now harmless following their neutralization in 2023. We encourage other States Parties to follow suit and destroy their retained stocks.





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We reiterate the call by Malawi in 2021, that the retention of cluster munitions should be the exception and not the rule. There is merit in requesting States Parties to justify the retention of cluster munitions as an exception to the prohibition on stockpiling. From time to time, we have heard and been reminded by Clearance Organizations accredited to the United Nations, that none of them use live submunition for training purposes and that sufficient technologies are now available to detect unexploded submunitions, further requiring States Parties to Justify the retention of cluster munitions.

We urge States Parties that are still retaining cluster munitions to keep the number in view and retain only the minimum number required. Additionally, States Parties should report a decrease each year, in the number of retained cluster munitions following their use for the permitted uses as outlined earlier.

As a Committee, we would be interested to hear your views on the reasons why States Parties have continued to retain cluster munitions and any justification for the retention of cluster munitions.

The floor is now open for us to discuss the justification, if any, for the retention of cluster munitions.

If this is not the case, we thank you for your attention and will remain attentive to engage with delegations on a bilateral basis, while we continue the drafting of our working document on retained stockpiles, to be presented at the 13<sup>th</sup> MSP.