

EU Statement
Vienna Conference on Cluster Munitions
(5-7- December 2007)

Mr. Chairman,

1. I am taking the floor on behalf of the European Union.
2. Let me first of all congratulate you on the organisation of this very important meeting here in Vienna and thank you and all your collaborators for making this timely event possible.
3. The momentum for dealing with the issue of cluster munitions is now more evident than ever.
4. The problems connected to cluster munitions are well known. Cluster munitions that spread large numbers of explosive submunitions over very large areas can present a high risk of civilian casualties. Cluster Munitions also have long term and deadly consequences for civilians when their submunitions fail to explode as intended and become explosive remnants of war.
5. The European Union is convinced that this matter needs to be dealt with urgently and effectively taking into account both military requirements and humanitarian concerns.
6. Countless urgent calls for action on cluster munitions have already been made world-wide inter alia by the Secretary General of the UN, the International Committee of the Red Cross, a large number of States, as well as many prominent representatives of the civil society. Discussions have already been held in various fora such as the CCW, the Conferences in Oslo and Lima, the ICRC Expert Meeting in Montreux, and the Brussels European Regional Conference on cluster munitions.
7. We commend all those who have taken the initiative of putting forward possible draft texts, proposals and ideas for future negotiations.
8. Due to the importance of the issue, the EU considers that cluster munitions should be addressed in all relevant *fora*. We believe that work undertaken in these *fora* is mutually reinforcing.
9. In this respect, the EU strongly recommends that existing relevant international instruments, including CCW Protocol V, and ongoing work in all relevant fora be taken into account.

10. At several occasions the EU has expressed its commitment to negotiate a legally binding instrument that addresses the humanitarian concerns of cluster munitions in all their aspects by the end of 2008.
11. The EU is supportive of efforts conducive to attain our aim of concluding a legally binding instrument that prohibits the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians and includes provisions on co-operation and assistance.
12. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.