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01st August 2011

Ms Mary Wareham
Coordinator, Aotearoa New Zealand Cluster Munition Coalition
200 Oriental Parade
Wellington

Dear Ms Wareham,

I appreciate your invitation to participate in the event that you are organizing in Wellington on 11 August 2011 as well as the opportunity given to me to present Lebanon's plight with Cluster munitions according to the priorities set forth in the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munition (CCM) which was entered into force on August 1, 2010. This Convention bans the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions and requires countries to clear affected areas and to destroy stockpiles. It is an important achievement for humanity.

Lebanon was entrusted to preside and host the second meeting. The Secretary General of the United Nations, in his letter No. ODA/25-2011/CCM dated March 30, 2011 convening the 2MSP, asked all States Parties to participate and invited States non Parties to the Convention to attend as observers.

Cluster munitions have been a persistent humanitarian concern; the high rate of unexploded released ordnance inflicts unacceptable harm to affected populations. I come from a country littered with Cluster munitions. It consists of around 200,000 unexploded bomblets scattered across South Lebanon, far outnumbering the population there. They are stuck in the branches of olive trees, and broad leaves of banana trees. They are on roof tops, mixed in with rubble, littered across fields, farms, backyards, driveways, roads and outside schools.

“Each cluster bomblet, as described by Amnesty International on 2 November, 2006, has the potential to destroy lives, particularly those of curious children” for whom the bomblets look like “toys for boys”.

The Lebanese Authorities have been exerting extensive efforts, assisted by international and local partners, to clear contaminated areas in Lebanon, and to implement public awareness campaigns to avoid risk and danger. Nevertheless, 400 persons, mainly farmers, women and children were victims to cluster munitions explosions, since 2006.

The Second Meeting of States Parties will focus on the progress in implementing the Vientiane Action Plan. This five-year Plan aims to assist States Parties to meet their obligations in an effective and timely manner. The meeting will be also an opportunity to promote the Universalization of the CCM.

Cluster munitions are not self-activated weapons and the key issue, in relation to law, lies in their deliberate use against civilians while knowing their wide dispersal nature.

I hope that the producers of the cluster munitions will earn the glory of the real humility by acknowledging that these weapons are monstrous and apocalyptic and by supporting the ban on cluster munitions.

I wish you every success in organizing the event in Wellington by giving a boost, on behalf of many victims dismembered and disfigured civilians and their families, to the efforts aimed at ending the nightmare of these deadly weapons.

Yours sincerely

Jean Daniel
Ambassaodor