



## **Statement to the Wellington Conference on Cluster Munitions**

22 February 2008

Delivered by Mary Wareham, Advocacy Director, Oxfam New Zealand  
On behalf of the Aotearoa New Zealand Cluster Munition Coalition

Kia Ora and thank you Mr. Co-Chair for this opportunity to take the floor on behalf of the Aotearoa New Zealand Cluster Munition Coalition, the group of nineteen domestic non-governmental organisations that has been providing civil society support to this conference.

We are encouraged that the draft treaty text was not weakened or compromised over the course of this crucial meeting. We believe it critical that all governments endorse the Wellington Declaration and move on to negotiate a strong ban agreement with no loopholes or delays. We warmly welcome the groundswell of support we have heard this morning for the Declaration. The ringing endorsements make us very proud. We welcome the new countries that have joined the Oslo Process over the past week especially from the Pacific.

We are grateful to our international guests as well as to the New Zealand public and our government for the strong and constructive stance they have taken over the past week to support the draft treaty prohibiting cluster munitions. New Zealanders have played a significant part in achieving this outcome by expressing their strong support for a clear and unequivocal ban against cluster munitions.

More than 1,000 members of the public and many conference delegates came to Civic Square on Wednesday 20 February to support the cluster bomb ban. Later that night at Parliament, the delegation of cluster bomb survivors handed over a total of 3,367 petitions to the Minister of Disarmament and Arms Control Hon. Phil Goff. In the 24 hours since the handover another 1,500 petitions were received by the coalition, a number that is expected to rise further.

We're grateful to the coalition's member organisations including their staff and volunteers for their tireless work to prepare such an impressive array of engagement events and activities to enable the public, media, and delegates to this conference to learn more about why cluster munitions urgently need to be tackled.

Over the past week members of the Aotearoa New Zealand Cluster Munition Coalition have organised an array of events including four public talks, two Nobel lectures, and a film screening. We have produced a daily *Cluster Ban News* update for conference participants and have also engaged in significant media outreach, securing stories in major news outlets around the country.

We are thankful to our Minister of Disarmament and Arms Control Hon. Phil Goff and Ambassador Don MacKay for their kind cooperation. The transparency and inclusiveness surrounding this meeting have created a very positive atmosphere. On behalf of the Aotearoa New Zealand Cluster Munition Coalition, Oxfam NZ has for months been engaging directly with Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials on preparations for the conference. Immigration New Zealand and New Zealand high commissions around the world provided prompt and positive support for the 142 civil society participants who came to the conference from 44 countries.

The Wellington Conference demonstrates that by working in partnership, government and civil society can achieve significant results. We hope our positive experience will serve to invigorate and strengthen the global movement to ban cluster munitions as it prepares for its greatest challenge yet of negotiating a strong cluster ban treaty that saves lives.

In our newsletter this morning we called on all delegates to stand strong--*kia kaha*--in the months ahead. We also say *ka kite ano*: we hope to see you again here in our beautiful country.

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