

Aotearoa/NZ CMC members:

Amnesty International Aotearoa NZ, Aotearoa Lawyers for Peace, Campaign Against Landmines, Caritas Aotearoa NZ, Christian World Service, Development Resource Centre, Engineers for Social Responsibility NZ, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War NZ, National Council of Women NZ, National Consultative Committee on Disarmament, Oxfam NZ, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament NZ, Pax Christi Aotearoa-NZ, Peace Foundation NZ, Peace Foundation Disarmament and Security Centre, Peace Movement Aotearoa, UN Association NZ, UN Youth Association NZ, UNICEF NZ, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Aotearoa



www.stopclusterbombs.org.nz

MEDIA RELEASE - 4 December 2008

NEW ZEALAND ONE OF THE FIRST COUNTRIES TO SIGN GLOBAL TREATY BANNING CLUSTER BOMBS

New Zealand was one of the first countries to sign the Convention on Cluster Munitions at a high-level signing conference in Oslo, Norway on 3 December. By the close of the first day of the two-day conference a total of 92 nations had signed the treaty, which bans cluster munitions outright and provides strong humanitarian provisions for their clean-up.

“This Convention represents a significant step forward in efforts to protect civilians from harmful weapons,” said Mary Wareham, coordinator of the Aotearoa New Zealand Cluster Munition Coalition. “The signatures we witnessed today are a huge reward for the campaigners, survivors, deminers and diplomats who have fought so hard to create a strong treaty banning cluster bombs.”

The Convention on Cluster Munitions was created through an 18 month period known as the “Oslo Process,” during which the New Zealand government hosted a crucial meeting in Wellington in February 2008. The agreement prohibits the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions. It commits signatories to clear affected areas within ten years, declare and destroy stockpiled cluster munitions within eight years, and provide comprehensive assistance to victims of the weapon.

“We are disappointed that New Zealand could not send a minister to sign on the government’s behalf, but it was fitting that Ambassador Don MacKay undertook this honour given his central role in negotiating the Convention,” said Wareham. “We’re very pleased at the Pacific signatures to this life-saving agreement and hope that New Zealand and these states will swiftly ratify the treaty over the coming year,” she added.

New Zealand’s Geneva-based Ambassador Don MacKay signed the treaty on the government’s behalf in an opening event featuring ministers from affected states Laos and Lebanon as well as treaty leaders Norway, Holy See, Ireland, Mexico, Peru, and Zambia. Five Pacific states (Cook Islands, Fiji, Nauru, Palau, and Samoa) signed the Convention on 3 December joining Afghanistan, Laos, Lebanon and other countries seriously affected by cluster munitions. Most NATO states, including the UK, France and Germany, signed the agreement as well as other producers, stockpilers and past users of cluster munitions.

More countries are expected to sign the Convention on Cluster Munitions on 4 December at Oslo's ornate City Hall, site of the annual Nobel Peace Prize award ceremony. The agreement will enter into force six months after 30 signatories ratify the agreement. Wareham is participating on behalf of the ANZCMC, a network of over 20 non-government organisations and a member of the international campaign to ban cluster bombs.

- To schedule an interview please contact Mary Wareham, ANZCMC, in Oslo, Norway. Tel. +64-21-996-905 or +47-922-146-02, wareham@hrw.org
- Hi-res Photos from the Signing Conference: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/ANZclusters>