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*AMBASSADOR OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION*

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Ms Mary Wareham
Coordinator
Aotearoa New Zealand Cluster Munition Coalition
200 Oriental Parade, Oriental Bay
Wellington 60 11

18 August 2009

Dear Ms Wareham,

I refer to your letter of 12 August 2009 calling for Russia to sign the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CM). Russia's position on this issue is well known and consists in the following.

We respect the accords of states aimed at strengthening international humanitarian law (IHL) and at reducing human casualties and suffering both during and after armed conflicts. We recognize the right of states and NGOs to choose what they believe are the most adequate methods and forms of responding to humanitarian threats.

At the same time, in our principled line we presume that CM is a lawful type of weapon not prohibited by IHL, playing a substantial role in the defense interests of Russia. We cannot renounce it. We base our attitude to CM use on a balance between humanitarian and defense interests. We oppose unjustified restrictions and bans on CM.

We feel that the causes of humanitarian problems associated with these munitions lie primarily in their improper use and in departure from the norms and principles of IHL, not in the nature of the weapon itself (any munitions are potentially dangerous and "inhumane").

As to the Convention on CM, we presume that, despite the declared prohibition of this type of weapon, it allows for using certain classes of "hi-tech" CM which are in service or in the stage of development among a number of key CM producers

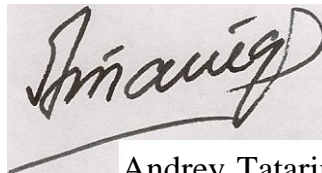
and users participants of the Oslo Process. Moreover, this is done under the pretext of "lower humanitarian danger" of these munitions. But there are no convincing arguments for "humaneness" of such munitions. At the same time the Convention in a separate article allows for participation in joint military operations with states which have not acceded to it and use this kind of weapon.

Russia acknowledges the serious negative consequences that arose as a result of CM use during armed conflicts in recent years. Guided by a striving to make our contribution to their solution, we participate in negotiations on this subject in Geneva under the Inhumane Weapons Convention (IWC).

We regard the IWC as an adequate format for considering the CM theme, because it covers the main producers and users of these munitions, possesses a proper expert potential, and has confirmed in practice its capacity to take balanced decisions.

In case of elaboration of accords in the framework of the Geneva negotiation process on CM we will be ready to assume the appropriate commitments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrey Tatarinov', is written over a light grey rectangular background.

Andrey Tatarinov

Ambassador of the Russian Federation
to New Zealand