

**Statement of Mr. Hans Raidel, Member of the German Bundestag, Member of the Board of Directors of the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Deputy Chairman of the Subcommittee of the Foreign Relations Committee on Disarmament, Non Proliferation and Arms Control of the German Bundestag on the occasion of the Berlin Conference on the Destruction of Cluster Munitions, June 24, 2009.**

Minister of State Erler,

Mr. State Secretary Bart Eide,

Distinguished audience,

First I wish to thank the Auswärtiges Amt and the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for inviting me to this important conference. I feel honoured to be here this morning.

As a parliamentarian and a long time member of the Defence Committee of the Bundestag and of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly I felt challenged to be present in Oslo last December when representatives of 94 countries signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions. When the Convention was adopted by 107 countries in Dublin on May 30<sup>th</sup> last year I was convinced that the adoption meant not only a particular commitment for States and governments. It also implied a profound engagement within our parliamentary activities on national and international level.

As a member of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly I am satisfied to see that 18 members of the Alliance are among the signatories. This is a good point of departure for NATO Parliamentarians to exert their influence to work towards preparedness and willingness on the side of their partner countries and beyond to sign and speedily ratify the Convention if they have not yet done so. To ratify swiftly is an act of priority. Simultaneously it is our responsibility as parliamentarians not only to approach our colleagues in the various parliaments to urge their governments to ratify, but in particular to also support our own governments during the procedure of ratification.

The issue is important and far reaching so that governments and parliaments need to closely cooperate in the interest of innocent victims and military men and women killed in the field. Our efforts consequently need to be directed toward those countries who have so far refrained

from signing the Convention. I do not hesitate to mention the United States, the Russian Federation, China, Israel, Pakistan and India.

During our meetings in international fora such as the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Interparliamentary Union, the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons or the Euro Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly we are giving special emphasis to the humanitarian aspects. At NATO Parliamentary Assembly's meeting in Oslo last month the Defence and Security Committee discussed the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the implications of the Convention for NATO. I am glad to see Mr. Barth Eide again whose presentation was extremely impressive. Humanitarian aspects must come first in our discussions and deliberations. I have been deeply impressed and can understand the grief of the mother of a US marine killed by a US-made cluster bomblet in Iraq when she said: "It is now up to me to ask my country the United States of America to stand up and be the Nation my son believed he was fighting for. To do all they can do to safeguard innocent lives by banning the manufacture, the stockpiling and the use of cluster munitions".

In this context please allow me a short reference to the initiative of President Obama's arms control campaign aimed at drastically reducing atomic weapons globally. My question simply is why don't we urge President Obama to also include cluster munitions in his campaign and to challenge him to drive his efforts into the direction of signing and ratifying the treaty thus giving an important example to those countries who as well refrained so far from signing the convention?

Government representatives and parliamentarians have to include more and more the civil society into the dialogue. It is not sufficient to express deep concern as to the fact that cluster munitions are causing great sufferings among civilians living in areas of armed conflicts or close by. We have to go beyond and encourage ban-advocates and the Cluster Ammunition Coalition as a key interlocutor, expression of civil society positions and sources of technical expertise, as the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons recently has expressed at its regional session in Kenya.

I do welcome that the Oslo Process did include civil society right from the beginning. We would like to see more of this kind of cooperation in the future.

Let me underline the efforts undertaken by the German Bundestag and the Federal Government. The cooperation of these two constitutional

organs up to the signing of the Convention by Germany is exemplary. The declaration of the German Foreign and Defence Ministers, Steinmeier and Jung, one day before the adoption of the Convention in Dublin May last announcing that Germany would renounce cluster munitions with immediate effect and sign and speedily ratify the Dublin Convention found full support by parliamentarians.

The German Bundestag is aware of its responsibility! A motion was tabled by the Christian Democratic Party / Christian Social Union and the Social Democratic Party Parliamentary Groups already on September 28<sup>th</sup> 2006 calling for the Prohibition of these dangerous cluster munitions while further developing International Humanitarian law.

Ensuing to the Oslo Convention banning cluster munitions of any kind on December 3 last the Bundestag tabled another important motion by members of the above mentioned parliamentary groups requiring swift ratification and translation into international law. I consider it of particular importance that the parliament called upon the Federal Government to issue a declaration accompanying the Convention on a ban on cluster munitions, in which it presents its understanding of the treaty, specifically as regards its efforts to influence non – treaty states, and as regards joint military operations by simultaneously affirming that the Convention safeguards in full Germany's capacity to live up with its NATO obligations.

We will continue to call on the Federal Government to appeal to our alliance partners and other states –specifically those with large cluster – munitions stockpiles, like the countries I just mentioned a minute ago - to accede to the Convention banning cluster munitions.

But acceding to the convention is not enough. We do need to see that the provisions of the convention are implemented as soon as possible. That is why it gives my particular pleasure to be with here today. This conference aims at preparing a swift implementation of one of the major provisions of the convention: the destruction of cluster munitions stockpiles.

We as parliamentarians have clearly expressed our view that it is important to press ahead and give priority to destruction and disposal of all decommissioned cluster munitions stockpiled by the Bundeswehr, and to preferably complete the task even before the deadline set by the convention. The necessary funds need to be made available to achieve this goal. In addition, German parliamentarians continuously call for an increase of funds earmarked in the Federal budget for international

victim assistance and mine clearance in harmony with other related treaty states like the Ottawa Convention on Antipersonnel Mines.

You may ask what else parliamentarians could do to support the process. Let me assure you: We will continue meeting with parliamentarians of those countries who have not acceded to the Convention during the sessions of the Interparliamentary Assemblies and urge them to talk to their respective governments to also accede to the convention. Likewise, on the occasion of upcoming sessions we will make our view clear and urge them to follow our position. Whenever a delegation of the German Bundestag, for instance at the level of a bilateral or multilateral parliamentary groups, meets with its counterparts we emphasise the need and give them incentives to encourage their governments to sign, ratify and transform the Convention on Cluster Munitions into national law. This is part of our commitment to work for a worldwide abolition of cluster munitions.

To conclude let me underline that the Convention on Cluster Munitions is in my view the most important humanitarian and disarmament treaty of the last decade banning all types of cluster munitions and requiring each country to destroy its stockpiles of this weapon within 8 years. Fully implemented the Convention will make a real difference for countless lives and livelihoods by requiring clearance of contaminated land within ten years and recognizing the right of affected individuals and communities to receive assistance. Every country wishing to prevent further suffering from the use of cluster munitions is called upon to accede. Such a sign should be sent out from this Berlin Conference!

To strive for our goal that the community of states will sign and swiftly ratify the Oslo Convention we have to be ambitious. As parliamentarians we urge our governments by simultaneously providing them with the widest possible support. We owe such an engagement to the survivors of cluster munitions and to the family of those who did not survive. I mention again the young soldier and his mother I referred to at the beginning of my intervention. We have to ease pains and grievances of these families.

We will reinforce our engagement, because we owe it to humanity. We have to ensure that there will be no more innocent victims of cluster munitions! I associate myself with a cluster munitions victim who said "But this treaty is just the beginning. It will take us another ten years until cluster munitions stockpiles are destructed and victims will have received the assistance they need and they are now entitled to". I wish and hope that it will be sooner.

With these thoughts I wish this conference fruitful deliberations and a good success.

Thank you for your attention.