



**Statement by Branislav Kapetanovic, CMC Spokesperson
Berlin Conference on the Destruction of Cluster Munitions
Friday 26 June 2009**

Your Excellences, ladies and gentlemen, dear fellow activists,

On behalf of the Cluster Munition Coalition I would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the German Government for the swift organization of this conference after the treaty was signed in Oslo. Since then I received the Tipperary Peace Award in Ireland on behalf of CMC, now we have this important meeting. This momentum is a huge boost to all of us in our work.

As we leave to go home to our own countries, we must follow up on the commitments made here to destroy stockpiles and to work with other countries not here to help them join the treaty and destroy their stocks. Simply put, the only way to ensure there is no more use of this weapon is to convince all countries to sign it and to destroy their weapons as states here are doing. I believe in all of you and I am sure that you will do everything in your power to urge other countries to join this treaty.

Germany you have led the way by marking the beginning of the destruction of cluster bombs at this meeting. You have proven with your actions that nothing, not even a global economic crisis, can stop the process to destroy all cluster munitions from stockpiles. You have motivated all of us in our own countries to start the same process as soon as possible, without any delays. We do not yet know how large the stockpiles are around the world or how long it will take to dispose of them, but we have learnt a lot this week and we have seen that it can be done. That there are many options and that help and support is available. We urge all stockpilers to start early and do your best to finish this task as soon as possible within the treaty deadline.

Today is one of the most beautiful days of my life because we have started a process to destroy the cluster bombs which have in the past destroyed thousands of lives, crippled many and destroyed any hope for a better life. Many of you may not even be aware of how drastically your life can change when you lose a part of your body and how terrible it is when your best friends, the ones with whom you have spent so much time in the past, forget about you and turn their heads away as if you are sick and pass you by like they don't even know you. There are many more terrible things than this and I don't want to talk about them now.

In the beginning I was in a very bad condition without any wishes or ambition, but when this process began my condition improved and gave me a ray of hope, a purpose in life; if I have not succeeded in helping myself, at least I have helped others by being involved in saving thousands and thousands of potential future victims. That is my purpose. This conference has had the same purpose: destroy these weapons now and prevent future victims. By the time of the First Meeting of States Parties next year in Laos, thousands and thousands of cluster bombs will already have been destroyed.

By starting the practical implementation of this agreement already before entry into force states confirm that only agreements which are practically realized have any meaning, and those that remain only words on paper are destined to be forgotten. This will not be the fate of the present agreement. It will endure as a landmark to both present and future governments, preventing them from using cluster bombs now or ever.

Thank You.