

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF THE
INTERIOR AND NGO AFFAIRS TO THE
BERLIN CONFERENCE ON THE
DESTRUCTION OF CLUSTER MUNITIONS
STOCKPILING
25TH - 26TH JUNE 2009

Mr. Chairman,

From the outset my delegation and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the organizers of this Conference which is a follow-up to the last one which was held in Oslo, Norway in December of 2008.

Allow me also Mr. Chairman to thank the people of Berlin for hosting this very important Meeting.

Since our arrival in this beautiful city my delegation and I have received splendid reception from the people of Berlin and by extension from the entire people of Germany; indeed we are most grateful.

Mr. Chairman,

In reflecting back on some of the conclusions reached during the Oslo Conference a number of countries, including The Gambia re-affirmed their commitments to the elimination of Cluster Munitions or their use throughout the world. As a result, to date, 97 countries have now signed the Convention, thus leaving only a few countries that have not done as yet.

Mr. Chairman,

This bring the situation, The Gambia would like to appeal to those countries to Join the rest of the International Community in signing this Convention which is a noble and moral task in creating a peaceful and stable environment for all mankind.

You may wish note, Mr. Chairman that the Gambia's quest for ratification of the convention is progressing and ^{Cabinet has now} ~~now~~ ~~awaiting~~ ~~Cabinets~~ approval.

*approved to Convention
is and will be tabled
during next session*

Mr. Chairman,

You will recall that during the Oslo Conference, I indicated that My country, The Gambia have no recorded History in using Cluster bombs manufacturing and Stockpiling them; and in this regard, I solemnly stand before this August body to re-affirm The Gambia's commitment to the ideals of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and similar conventions that seeks to promote the elimination of these types of weapons.

Mr. Chairman, close look at the countries that are affected by these destructive weapons will show that most of them are from the developing countries, while their production comes from the advanced world.

Mr. Chairman, there is a dichotomy in this particular situation, which in my delegations view needs to be given a particular attention to conform with the objectives of the Convention.

Mr. Chairman,

Being mindful of the cost involved in the manufacturing of these weapons and their capabilities in hindering progressive development of the countries that use them, The Gambia has instead prudently decided to use its meager resources, Not in weapons, but on social and economic development programmes that benefits its people.

Mr. Chairman,

Because of this wise choice taken by The Gambia, we are today benefiting from an unprecedented progress in our social programmes particularly in our Education and Health Sectors.

Mr. Chairman,

To all member countries present here, we call upon you with great humility to intensify our concerted efforts to eliminate these weapons, and in so doing will be able to meet the targets of The Millennium Development Gold set for 2015.