

FSC.DEL/3/10
20 January 2010

ENGLISH only

**STATEMENT BY MRS. GENEVIEVE RENAUX,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BELGIUM, AT THE 600th MEETING
OF THE OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION**

20 January 2010

Ratification by Belgium of the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Thank you Madam Chairperson,

On the 22nd of December 2009, Belgium handed over the ratification instrument of the Convention on Cluster Munitions to the United Nations in New York. This treaty was signed by one hundred countries in Oslo one year ago. The ratification by Belgium brings the entry into force of this treaty closer. Belgium is the 26th State Party and 30 ratifications are needed.

Belgium does not spare any efforts to obtain a worldwide ban. As stressed by the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs Steven Vanackere: "Our commitment to a ban on cluster munitions fits in with a broader action to promote international security on a human scale, with respect for the dignity of the individual. Military conflicts are not just questions of states or regimes that sovereignly decide which resources they use. We must also take on the responsibility of thinking of the civilian population in zones of conflict. These must be protected to a maximum extent, and this certainly applies to the most vulnerable segments of the population such as children. This is why we wish to extend the humanitarian legal basis and help to prevent the use of weapons that cause disproportionate suffering. Just as with anti-personal mines there are types of cluster munitions which leave their destructive footprint behind in conflict zones long after the end of hostilities. As a result they also form a serious obstacle to the resumption of social and economic life."

Belgium uses this opportunity to encourage the participating States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Oslo Convention. Belgium attaches great importance to this disarmament treaty and calls for a large participation in the First Conference of the States Parties that will be held in Laos after the entry into force of the Convention.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Madam Chairperson,

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.