



**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the
OSCE regarding the death of Dutch cameraman Stan Storimans on 12 August 2008**

Permanent Council 23 October 2008

Mr. Chairman,

On 20 October 2008 the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, Maxime Verhagen released the report of the "Storimans investigative mission". He appointed the investigative mission on 25 August 2008 to gather factual information that could clarify the circumstances in which the Dutch cameraman Stan Storimans died in the Georgian town of Gori on 12 August 2008. The mission was headed by former Ambassador Jacobovits de Szeged and former Commander of the Royal Military and Border Police, General Beuving.

The mission conducted its investigation in Georgia from 29 August to 3 September 2008. It interviewed eyewitnesses, representatives of international organisations, military experts, and the Georgian and Russian authorities. Technical and forensic evidence was also analysed, and various independent international media organisations made photo and video material available.

The mission concluded that Stan Storimans was the victim of cluster munitions, propelled by a type of rocket available only to the armed forces of the Russian Federation. The mission found that by 12 August military and police units had abandoned the town of Gori. It is therefore unclear what military purpose was served by launching the rocket. Besides Stan Storimans at least four other people suffered fatal injuries. Several others were also injured.

The Netherlands is deeply concerned by the findings of the investigative mission. Cluster munitions are known to cause unacceptable humanitarian harm. On the eve of the Ministerial Council meeting in Helsinki on 3 December 2008 the Netherlands, together with more than 100 other countries, will sign the Convention on Cluster Munitions that forbids the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of cluster bombs. The Netherlands calls on all OSCE participating States to do the same, because it is convinced that the world is better off without these munitions, as they cause unacceptable harm to civilians.

The Netherlands acknowledges that the use of such munitions is not prohibited. Nevertheless, as a general rule of humanitarian law, parties to an armed conflict must carefully weigh the use of any type of munitions in order to avoid possible civilian casualties. This is the more so in the case of cluster munitions. The case of Gori is one more reason for the Netherlands to urge participating States not to use cluster munitions in situations without essential military target and where it must be anticipated that the casualties will be civilian.

Anticipating the entry into force of a legally binding international agreement on cluster munitions, the participating States should reaffirm their commitment not to use cluster munitions in situations of this kind. The Netherlands would urge the Permanent Council to express its support for a statement to this effect.

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.