

Wellington Conference on Cluster Munitions

**Closing Statement for the United Kingdom
By Ambassador John Duncan
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UK Delegation to the Conference on Disarmament
Geneva
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Mr. Chairman,

I would like to endorse the comments made by France on behalf of a group of likeminded states.

As I mentioned in my opening statement, we are now moving towards the endgame of the Oslo process.

The United Kingdom was one of the original 46 who signed the Oslo Declaration just over one year ago, and both the British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Defence Secretary Des Browne have underlined publicly the United Kingdom's commitment to work internationally for a ban on the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of those cluster munitions which cause unacceptable harm to civilians".

As many in the room will know, we were not hopeful that we could support the Declaration at the start of the week. We had, and still have, many concerns about the Draft Convention text and the process itself. At this stage we cannot support the Draft Convention text in its entirety. On process, we would have liked to see more transparency and a consolidated text emerging from these discussions taking into account all relevant positions. This was not to be.

But through your leadership and flexibility of the Core Group to try to meet our concerns you have produced a compendium that includes all our proposals. This recognition of all parties concerns is welcome. In our view the Draft Convention text together with the Compendium of proposals can now form a balanced basis for work in Dublin.

Mr. Chairman,

We have high hopes for the Dublin Conference, in particular that its intergovernmental nature will bring a level of commitment that will ensure that we focus on the serious and complex issues involved in tackling this grave humanitarian issue, balancing our real concern not to cause unnecessary harm to civilians with the need to protect our men and women engaged in crisis management operations. All too often this essential balance has not been recognized sufficiently in Oslo Process meetings. Nor has the level of transparency and inclusiveness been as high as we would have expected from our partners. I have heard your comment on the rules of procedure for the Dublin Conference

which will need to be brought into line with standard practice and with the Wellington Declaration.

Mr Chairman

The fact that many of the major users and producers of cluster munitions are not here, in Wellington only serves to underline the importance of maintaining coherence with the parallel track of the CCW in order to have the widest possible agreement in tackling this important humanitarian issue.

We are now closer than ever to achieving our collective aim of ridding the world of those cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians. The UK will continue to work with you and others, in this process and the CCW, to ensure that the humanitarian objectives we are all striving for are fulfilled.

With this in mind, I am pleased to say that today we can formally associate ourselves with the Wellington Declaration and join others in taking this matter to Dublin for the final negotiation. At that the Dublin Conference the United Kingdom will be negotiating on the basis of the draft Convention and our proposals as contained in the compendium.

Thank you.