



Event to celebrate the entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions
The Beehive, Wellington, New Zealand
Tuesday, 3 August 2010

Statement by Mary Wareham
on behalf of the Aotearoa New Zealand Cluster Munition Coalition

Minister, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Aotearoa New Zealand Cluster Munition Coalition, the national campaign comprised of 24 non-governmental organizations. I will be brief because shortly, in the film screening, you will be hearing much more from me!

We would like to thank our Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control, Hon. Georgina Te Heuheu, for hosting this event tonight to commemorate entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We view this convention as a major achievement in the field of international humanitarian law. We've been celebrating entry into since Sunday, the date that the convention became law, with a drumming session in Civic Square to beat the drum and welcome in the Convention. This was one of the first many event that have since taken place in 75 countries around the world.

The Coalition has been supported in its work by its member organizations and I would like to acknowledge my NGO colleagues for the contribution they have made to educate the New Zealand public about this weapon and what can be done about it. The Coalition was formed in early 2007, but New Zealand NGOs have long been concerned about the effects of cluster munitions on civilian populations.

I would also like to acknowledge the members of the Public Advisory Committee on Disarmament and Arms Control (PACDAC) who are here tonight. With the assistance of the Department of Internal Affairs and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Committee disburses the interest from the fund established from reparations paid by France to New Zealand following the bombing of the Greenpeace Rainbow Warrior ship twenty-five years ago last month. The Peace and Disarmament Education Trust (PADET) fund has been supporting peace and disarmament activities by civil society across the country for the past 22 years.

While the coalition to ban cluster bombs has been mainly supported by its member NGOs, three PADET grants were crucial in enabling it to make a real impact. I'd like to mention some of campaigning activities in relation to these grants, which assisted with the beginning, middle, and conclusion of our work to ban cluster bombs.

The first PADET grant enabled the coalition to bring out John Rodsted on a nationwide speaking tour in late 2007 and at the same time publicly launch the campaign. John's photographs and stories showed Kiwis first-hand the civilian casualties caused by cluster bombs used in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Laos, Lebanon, Vietnam, Western Sahara, and elsewhere. On November 5th, 2007, we held a press event in which a light plane circled above the city of Wellington dispersing hundreds a cluster bomb-shaped flyers petitioning the government to take action on cluster bombs. Creative agency DraftFCB came up with that innovative idea and has supported the Coalition pro bono since the beginning.

The second PADET grant was used to undertake outreach and campaigning events during the Wellington Conference on Cluster Munitions. We hosted the civil society delegation to the conference, which comprised approximately 150 campaigners, including a dozens survivors of cluster bombs and landmines. Using a range of materials and resources, we were able to create a sense of expectation among the participating diplomats that civil society would not accept a weak Convention; we wanted one with no loopholes, exceptions, or delays. PADET funding also enabled Pacific government delegates to attend the Wellington Conference and endorse the Wellington Declaration committing to the Oslo Process.

The third and final PADET grant was received for the production of the film that you are about to see. This brief documentary tells the story of New Zealand's engagement in the Oslo Process from a campaigning perspective, but, for the record, we have attempted to cover every aspect of engagement from the political to the diplomatic to the response on the ground in the aftermath of a cluster munition attack and the provision of ongoing assistance and care to survivors of cluster munitions.

I would like to thank the filmmakers, several of whom are here tonight for dedicating their talent and energy to this project. I would like to acknowledge the people who appeared in this film: Minister Te Heuheu, Hon Phil Goff, and John Flanagan. Sadly, Ambassador Don MacKay, who played such a central part in the Oslo Process to ban cluster bombs could not be here tonight. I would also like apologize to those of you who are not included in the film as this was a process that involved many, many people. Overseas, several Kiwis have played crucial roles in the Oslo Process, not least Thomas Nash who has coordinated the international Cluster Munition Coalition since its inception.

The title of the film, *Cluster Munitions: Banned in New Zealand*, has two meanings. Cluster bombs have indeed been banned in New Zealand through our signature and ratification to the convention and that is enforced through the Cluster Munitions Prohibition Act of 2009. Internationally, the title also refers to our role during the Oslo Process, as New Zealand's contribution helped deliver the strongest possible convention banning cluster munitions now signed by 108 governments.

While we can declare cluster munitions "banned," I think everyone realizes that our work is far from over. A total of 38 signatories have ratified the convention, including several states represented here tonight such as France, Germany, Japan, and the United Kingdom. But every signatory needs to ratify. We hope that signatories, including those here tonight—such as Australia, Canada, Chile, and South Africa—will ratify in time to participate fully in the Convention's First Meeting of States Parties to be held in Vientiane, Lao PDR in November 8-12, 2010.

This will be the first formal meeting in the life of the convention. It is particularly important that Laos host it as one of the most cluster munition contaminated countries in the world.

This historic event is open to all states, including those that have not yet signed the convention. We hope that several countries represented here tonight—such as Argentina, Brazil, the United States, and Vietnam—will be able to participate in the Laos meeting and carefully consider their position in order to join the convention. In Laos, we will see that there is still much more work required on the ground to cleared contaminated areas and assist cluster munition survivors.

Beyond cluster munitions, there's no shortage of disarmament challenges that need to be tackled. Members of the coalition also work a range of urgent issues from the unregulated arms trade to the abolition of nuclear weapons to problematic weapons such as depleted uranium. We hope that the spirit of the Oslo Process to ban cluster bombs will enthuse our government and civil society can take bold, creative measures to tackle these and other issues, to push forward the boundaries of international humanitarian law, and to prevent civilian harm in armed conflict.

Thank you.