

Wellington Conference on Cluster Munitions

Closing Session, Friday 22 February 2008

Arrangements for the Dublin Diplomatic Conference:

Remarks by Ambassador Dáithí O'Ceallaigh

Mr. Co-Chair, distinguished colleagues.

I believe I speak for all of you in warmly congratulating Ambassador Don MacKay and his team for the excellent Wellington Conference. It has been a credit to New Zealand.

The work we have done this week has laid the foundations for the next stage in the Oslo Process, which started just one year ago.

Ireland has long sought a comprehensive and effective Convention addressing the horrendous humanitarian impact of cluster munitions. This is a priority of the Irish Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs Dermot Ahern is personally committed to achieving an effective response to this problem.

Ireland is therefore particularly pleased to host the Diplomatic Conference in May 2008 to adopt a new instrument of international humanitarian law prohibiting cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians. This will be the critical stage in the process which began in Oslo in February 2007 and has continued in Lima in May 2007, Vienna in December 2007 and here in Wellington in February 2008.

The Conference will take place from 19-30 May at the Croke Park Convention Centre, about 2 kilometres to the north of Dublin centre. The website for the Dublin Diplomatic Conference will be live from the end of next week and will give information on practical arrangements such as registration, visa formalities and accommodation. While registrants are responsible for organising their own hotel and flight arrangements, some

accommodation at group rates is available until 14 March 2008 and may be booked online after the website is live. I would encourage everybody to make these arrangements as early as possible as Dublin is a popular travel destination.

The working language of the Conference will be English. Interpretation will be provided in the plenary in English, French and Spanish. Informal sessions will be conducted in English.

Delegations will have seen the draft rules of procedure for the Diplomatic Conference. These are standard rules for the adoption of treaties including important instruments of international humanitarian law. They are based in particular on the rules of procedure for the adoption of the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the Landmine Ban Convention, and on the general United Nations rules of procedure.

A sponsorship programme is available for participating states that are low-income or cluster munitions affected countries. UNDP will administer the sponsorship programme according to preset criteria for a maximum of two participants per delegation and within the funds available. Those States requesting sponsorship should contact UNDP directly.

Citizens of certain countries require a visa to enter Ireland. The visa requirement applies to holders of both ordinary national passports and diplomatic passports. You should be aware that Ireland is not a participant in the Schengen Agreement, and therefore a separate visa is required for Ireland. Those travelling to Ireland through a third country may require transit visas, and this should be checked with the authorities of the relevant country prior to departure.

May I again pay tribute to Don and his team for the excellent organisation and management of the Conference. We are not sure that we can guarantee you the glorious weather we have had in Wellington but we hope we have other attractions

We look forward to a successful outcome to the Diplomatic Conference and to warmly welcoming you in Dublin.