Mr. Chair

Norway is strongly committed to humanitarian disarmament. Our engagement in the fields of landmines, cluster munitions, small arms and other related issues is rooted in the unacceptable harm to civilians caused by the use of these weapons.

On 1 August the Convention on Cluster Munitions entered into force. The Convention has been signed by 108 states, and so far ratified by 42 states – a number which continues to grow. This is promising, and we urge all states to accede to the Convention without delay. The First Meeting of States Parties will be held in November this year in Lao PDR, the world’s most affected country. We commend Laos for the commitment shown by taking on such a task, and we are convinced that the meeting will be successful.

The fact that the Convention on Cluster Munitions entered into force so rapidly after its adoption is proof of the value attached to the Convention by the signatory states, and an indication of the need for speedy implementation. The Convention is not only a categorical ban of a weapon that causes unacceptable harm both during and long after conflict. It is also a comprehensive agreement with strong obligations in the fields of clearance, stockpile destruction and victim assistance. The partnerships between affected and other states, and the cooperation with international and humanitarian organisations and civil society, will remain as important in the implementation of the Convention as it was during its development.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions is establishing itself as a new international norm. The experience with the Minb Ban Convention and other conventions is that a new legally binding instrument becomes an international norm which goes beyond the membership of the
Convention. This is demonstrated by the broad support for the annual resolution on the implementation of the Mine Ban Convention. In this connection my delegation refers to this year’s draft resolution on the Implementation of the Mine Ban Convention tabled by Switzerland, Norway and Albania. Norway urges all states to support this important resolution which invites all states that have not signed the Convention to accede to it and focuses on the humanitarian importance of its full implementation.

As President of the Second Review Conference of the Mine Ban Convention that was held in Colombia last year, Norway has focused on the humanitarian objectives of the Convention with a continued emphasis on realities in the field and what is needed to address the challenges that remain. Because challenges do remain – thousands of women, girls, boys and men are injured or killed each year, and this is an unacceptable situation. We would like to thank Colombia for the excellent cooperation in making certain that the Second Review Conference put survivors and victims at centre-stage.

Since the establishment of these two conventions, we have seen increasing international support for the protection of civilians and their communities from the consequences of armed conflict and wars. The main lesson has been that the humanitarian consequences of the use of these weapons were simply unacceptable. This is also the focus for Norway in the negotiations on a cluster munitions protocol in the CCW in Geneva. For us it is important that these negotiations do not result in a lowering or fragmentation of the international norms which are emerging from the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

The effects of armed violence raise similar concerns and trigger the same humanitarian imperative for us to act as responsible states. Armed violence kills 2000 people every day, in the majority of instances by the use of small arms and light weapons. But also other conventional weapons and explosives are being used in violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. By reducing and preventing armed violence, more people will be able to live their lives in safety and security, and it will have a positive effect on development.

Norway, together with UNDP, took the initiative earlier this year to organise a conference on armed violence which resulted in the endorsement by 62 states of the Oslo Commitments on Armed Violence. These states committed themselves to work to include armed violence prevention in development strategies and plans, to better monitor and report on the problem, and to recognize the rights of victims of armed violence, and to strengthen international cooperation and assistance to reduce armed violence.

Armed violence is complex, and requires complex and multifaceted responses that address both the demand and the supply side of problem. On the supply side we see multilateral efforts to control and regulate certain weapons as an essential tool to prevent and reduce armed violence. Therefore, Norway is a strong supporter of an effective Arms Trade Treaty, and we participate actively in the preparatory process. We believe the goal of an ATT should be the reduction and prevention of violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law through the use of conventional arms. Norway is also of the opinion that an ATT should address the rights of victims of armed violence, including their rights to adequate care and rehabilitation, as well as
their social and economic inclusion. We also believe that an ATT should have a wide scope of application, and apply to all conventional arms, ammunition, arms technology and related services. The treaty should also place a responsibility on states to publicly report on all licensed international arms transfers in order to ensure transparency and accountability.

Let me finally touch upon the question of use of depleted uranium in ammunition and armour. We have registered concerns caused by signs of worrying health and environmental implications in areas where depleted uranium ammunition and armour have been employed. While further research is needed we feel that these concerns warrant our serious attention. To be on the safe side Norway does not use depleted uranium and encourage others to show similar restraint. This is of particular concern within a wider context of fighting in densely populated areas. Norway supports research to bring more knowledge to this field.

Thank you