



Statement by H.E. Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Apostolic Nuncio, Permanent Observer  
of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva at the  
**second preparatory meeting of the Second Review Conference of the Convention on  
Cluster Munitions**  
*Geneva, 4 September 2020*

Mr. President,

The Holy See appreciates Switzerland's commitment to the Convention and wishes to thank you for the excellent preparatory work for the Second Review Conference, notwithstanding the ongoing challenges and constraints brought by the pandemic. Indeed, it is of paramount importance that the obligations contracted, especially in relation to victims' assistance, are not placed on hold.

As one of the first States to ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Holy See remains fully committed to its implementation and has continued to encourage other State Parties and non-Parties to reaffirm the preeminent and inherent value of human dignity and the centrality of the human person.

Since the Convention on Cluster Munitions entered into force, through the combined contributions and synergies between different stakeholders, it has achieved significant progress and made a real difference in the world, especially among the victims affected, as well as in the prevention of further victims. In so doing, it has also reinforced the link between disarmament and development.

Mr. President,

Moving on to the proposed informal draft Action Plan, the Holy See Delegation wishes to reiterate, for the sake of transparency, what was already submitted to you in writing, namely that the Action Plan and Political Declaration be rooted in the fundamental principles and objectives of the Convention on Cluster Munitions:

1. to place the human person, in particular the victims, at the center of concern;
2. to focus on prevention, peace and risk-education;
3. not to evade responsibilities, but to take concrete measures in the implementation of the obligations contracted;
4. to continue to grant the administrative and financial resources to achieve the goals of the Convention.

Mr. President,

the Holy See, however, cannot accept the introduction of new terminology, such as "gender and diversity", in the proposed drafts. Such terminology finds no precedent in the agreed language of previous documents. Bearing in mind the desirability of attracting the adherence of all States to the Convention, and in light of the universalization efforts and full implementation, this Delegation is concerned that the introduction of new terminology which, among other things, is not clearly defined, would shift the attention and efforts away from the core obligations of the Convention toward political and ideological issues.

Mr. President,

This Delegation is happy to work with you and your team on the proposed language. We remain hopeful that the State Parties to the Convention will carry out their responsibility - individually and collectively - in order to prevent that cluster munitions become a threat to the life of populations and an obstacle for the socio-economic development of the regions that experience conflicts.

Thank you, Mr. President.