

## Celebrating entry into force of the convention on cluster munitions: 1st August 2010

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### ***"Beat the drum to ban cluster bombs"***

On Sunday August 1st 2010, the Convention on Cluster Munitions will enter into Force. As the world inches closer towards a safer and more peaceful place with a ban on the use, exportation, importation and stockpiling of these weapons, The Gambia joins the rest of the world in this global celebration around the slogan "Beat the drum to ban cluster bombs!"

The Convention on Cluster munitions is the most significant disarmament and humanitarian treaty since the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty. The entry into force of such a major piece of international humanitarian law is a rare and special occasion. Entry into force was triggered when the Convention reached 30 ratifications in February 2010, just 14 months after it opened for signature in Oslo in December 2008. On 16 February 2010, Burkina Faso and Moldova ratified the Convention, becoming the 29th and 30th states to ratify and triggering an entry into force date of 1 August 2010.

Cluster Munitions Coalition (CMC) members worldwide will take part in coordinated campaign actions to celebrate this historic milestone presented by the entry into force (EIF) the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

The Cluster Munitions Coalition is an international civil society campaign active in some 90 countries of which The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding - WANEP Gambia is a member and core to its objective, is to put an end to the suffering caused by cluster bombs.

The diplomatic initiative started by Norway in 2006, usually referred to as the "Oslo Process", resulted in the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions. For most part, The Gambia has been a part of this process and was among the 96 countries that initially signed the convention in Oslo. Therefore on this special day we are calling on the government to move this process further and ratify, implement and promote the Convention in solidarity with the countless victims of these deadly weapons. We also use this opportunity to encourage the government to participate in the upcoming First Meeting of States Parties (1MSP) in Vientiane, Lao PDR, from 8-12 November 2010. This meeting will lay the foundation for future engagement on the convention by bringing together for the first time States Parties to the Treaty, UN agencies, international organisations, civil society and cluster bombs survivors.

In the Gambia, celebrations will take place in Basse in the Upper River Region where drummers of various ethnic groups will congregate to beat the drum to ban cluster bombs, thus signalling the entry into force of the Cluster Munitions Convention. Other planned activities celebrating this symbolic day include a press release and a radio programme.