

Statement made by Ambassador ESTIFANOS Afeworki during the  
Convention on Cluster Munitions First Meeting of States Parties, 8 -  
12 November 2010 Vientiane, Laos

Mr. Chairperson

Honorable Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

First of all let me join previous speakers and use this occasion to express my heartfelt gratitude to the warm welcome, hospitality and support extended by Laos and the organizers for a successful participation of our delegation to this important conference.

I am present here among you not only as a diplomat and a representative of my country to this important conference; I am here to give you my personal testimony and message, as a living witness, to the more than 60 years of injustice. My name is Estifanos Afeworki. I am the Ambassador of Eritrea to Japan. I was born in 1947.

Elected "Assembly of Eritrea", federal constitution, our law and justice system, freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom to belong to political parties, human rights, the right of the Eritrean people to self determination and independence, any right leading to the continued building of a vibrant free, peaceful country in the Horn of Africa, was systematically and forcefully wiped out from our beloved country by the Allied Forces and their associates after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War.

These were replaced by almost every crime known against humanity. A savage war was unleashed against the people of Eritrea. The people were put in strategic hamlets, dungeons, tortured, maimed, mass - raped, forced into starvation, pushed into mass displacement, summarily executed, poisoned with chemicals and were blanket bombed indiscriminately from air, land and sea with cluster, sulfer, napalm, acid, nitroglycerin "facist", bombs and ammunitions. Name it, it has landed in Eritrea. Even the stones were burning in Eritrea for 30 years during the struggle for independence. I assure the participants of this conference that I am ready to stand in front of any justice system, among many others who have outlived these crimes, to testify and share our experience about these events before nature takes its course.

No one expect few peace loving people, here-and-there; have raised their voices in protest to this barbaric act. There is a total conspiracy of silence. No international body has called for justice to be met or for the wounds of the people to be dressed. Tyrants are kept protected in the many big capitals of the world.

The people of Eritrea were betrayed by the old and the neo colonizers and their allies – Italian, British, US, USSR for more than a century. Eritrea hosted Italian, US and USSR military bases including arsenals

of nuclear submarines and weapons of mass destruction during this important period of its history.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This conspiracy of silence is still on and chemicals including chemical weapons of mass destruction and cluster bombs are freely flowing into our region under the lime-light of the super powers to suppress stability, peace, hope, freedom and justice in our region today. Even now, there is a complete conspiracy of silence. History shall make its judgment, millions are suffering in our region and millions will continue to die if this silence continues now.

Eritrea and its people support the convention of cluster munitions and are looking forward to its full implementation not tomorrow but yesterday.

Thank you

