Mr Chairman,

I would like to take the floor to speak in support of the delegation of Sweden, introducing Resolution L.50 on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the CCW.

The Netherlands attaches great importance to the revitalization of this important Convention that aims to minimize the humanitarian effects of armed conflict, by prohibiting or restricting the use of certain conventional weapons, and establishing post-conflict remedial measures to protect civilian populations.

One important element of the work in the CCW framework, as was mentioned by the Swedish delegation, is the negotiation of an instrument on Explosive Remnants of War. This is a humanitarian priority, because the number of casualties caused by unexploded ordnance tends to exceed the number of victims caused by mines. Last year the States Parties to the Convention appointed the Netherlands to act as a co-ordinator to chair these negotiations.

I can inform this Committee that these negotiations have made considerable progress over the last year. The draft text focuses on post conflict remedial measures to minimize the effects of unexploded ordnance, like clearance, removal, destruction, warning, provision of information, and co-operation and assistance, including victims assistance. There is also a voluntary preventive dimension in the draft text, that aims to improve the reliability of munitions, as a consequence of which there would remain less unexploded ordnance on the battlefield after a conflict.

Mr. Chairman,

We very much hope that the States Parties will be able to reach consensus on an instrument on Explosive Remnants of War at their upcoming meeting, in the last week of November. I is my feeling that, after 3 years of work on this issue in the CCW framework, the text is sufficiently mature to provide a good basis for a successful outcome.

Thank you Mr. Chairman