Statement by Ambassador François Rivasseau of France,  
President of the CCW Third Review Conference  
on the occasion of the First Committee  
New York, 23 October 2007

Thank you Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies, Dear delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. At the outset, Mr. Chairman, please allow me to first of all thank you and the Secretariat for the very efficient manner you are conducting this meeting. Secondly, permit me to greet all my colleagues around the room with whom I have had the privilege and pleasure of working together, including in this very chamber, for a number of years, before taking up my current assignment in Washington D.C. First committee fulfils today an essential role for improving the security of our planet and in the tense present international context, where multilateral mechanisms are demonstrating there crucial relevancy, this role cannot but increase.

2. I’m taking the floor today, in my capacity as the President of the Third Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects, or normally known as the CCW. I have indeed been tasked by CCW States parties to report about the universalisation of this Convention, its protocols and associated decisions to the General Assembly of the United Nations pursuant to the decision on Universality contained in the Final Declaration of the third Review Conference of the CCW which took place from 7 to 17 November 2006.

3. Let me now turn to the Plan of Action to Promote Universality of the Convention and its annexed Protocols adopted during the third Review Conference, and on which it is my duty to report to the United Nations General Assembly, through this Committee. From the very outset, it was my conviction that achieving universal adherence to and strict implementation of the Convention and its Protocols should be a top priority of the presidency of the Third Review Conference. Under the Plan of Action, the States parties undertook to implement a series of positive actions, and to begin with, to consider joining all the Protocols and the amendment to Article 1 of the Convention, to which they were not yet party; then to encourage the States signatories of the Convention to ratify it as soon as possible; to foster interest in the Convention and its annexed Protocols by all States, especially States belonging to zones of conflict or regions where the level of adherence to the Convention remains low; to prevent and suppress violations of the Convention by persons or on territory under their jurisdiction or control; and to encourage involvement and active cooperation in these universalization efforts by all relevant partners.

4. In order to achieve these seven actions, the States parties agreed to undertake all appropriate measures, including seizing the opportunity of bilateral contacts and diplomatic channels; enhancing the knowledge of the Convention and its annexed Protocols through the appropriate means and in cooperation with all relevant actors; and coordinating regional actions in accordance with the characteristics of each region. This issue will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis by the States parties to the CCW. For this purpose, the CCW Secretariat within the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, Geneva branch, will keep the States Parties regularly informed on the implementation of this Plan of Action.
5. Since the First Committee session of last year where I introduced this problematic, the CCW, its protocols and relevant decisions have gained in universality as follows:

- Protocol II amended: Cameroon 7th December 2006, Niger 18th September 2007

6. For the sake of being complete have I to mention also that I have co-signed a letter with Ambassador Franciscos Verros of Greece, in his capacity as the Chairperson of the 2007 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties, addressed to all CCW States parties; I have co-signed a second letter with Ambassador Tomáš Husák of the Czech Republic, in his capacity as the President of the Eighth Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II. In both letters, we have expressed our common conviction that each country’s active participation in this universalization effort would indeed represent a substantial contribution to the strengthening of international law in the field of disarmament and humanitarian action. We have also invited States to consider taking appropriate actions that would serve the achievement of universal adherence to this important international legal instrument.

7. I would also like to welcome the valuable initiative undertaken by the European Union in order to support the implementation of the Plan of Action by encouraging accession, especially by developing and least developed States that are suffering from the effects of mines and explosive remnants of war. I would like to welcome in particular the bilateral demarches undertaken by the German presidency of the EU in several States not parties to the Convention during the first half of 2007. Moreover, the adoption and official launching last Friday of the EU "Joint Action to Promote the Universality of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons" deserves a special mention. This far-reaching and generously funded programme, alongside other on-going efforts, is a major contribution to the implementation of the Plan of Action to promote the Universality of the CCW.

8. Last, but not least, as part of the efforts at universalizing the Convention, the States parties have established a Sponsorship Programme to assist the least developed States, as well as ERW- and mine-affected countries to participate in activities related to the CCW and to facilitate their implementation of the Convention. This Programme, generously supported by a number of States - in particular by the EU as part of its “Joint Action” - is now being put in practice under the able co-ordinatorship of Ambassador Edvardas Borisovas of Lithuania. The first group of States that are eligible for sponsorship will participate in the up-coming three
back-to-back CCW meetings to be held in the first week of November in Geneva. This Sponsorship Programme is intended to enhance efforts at gaining more accessions to the Convention as well as to assist States parties in getting them better acquainted with the workings of the Convention and the challenges facing the implementation of the Convention in the future. I am confident that it will greatly improve regional representation in the CCW thus multiplying its noble humanitarian effect.

Excellencies, Dear delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Before ending, I would like to make a suggestion directed to those of you who represent States parties to the CCW which would be to recommend to the next States party meeting of the CCW which will take place next month to report in front of this committee in 2008 on the same subject. For multilateral diplomacy is not to score goals against some of us but to dig tirelessly the furrow where to seed the hopes of a world which would be more just and fair, therefore more peaceful and more secure.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.