Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since the Third Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, it has become the practice of the Chairpersons of the Meetings of the High Contracting Parties to report on CCW universalization efforts and progress to the First Committee. As President-designate of the Fourth Review Conference, which will take place from 14 to 25 November in Geneva, I am pleased to have the opportunity to provide an update on universalization efforts within the CCW.

Over the past twelve months much activity has been taking place in support of CCW universalization. The President of the Fourth Conference to Protocol V, Ambassador Peter Woolcott of Australia, and the President of the Twelfth Annual Conference to Amended Protocol II, Ambassador Germán Mundarain Hernández of Venezuela, and myself wrote to the Foreign Ministers of all States not party to the CCW urging them to join the Convention.

In line with the First Committee resolutions, there has been an increased focus on promoting the universalization of Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War. Both Australia as President of the Fourth Conference of Protocol V and Belarus in its current role as President-designate of the Fifth Conference have encouraged States Parties to join the Protocol.

These efforts are greatly appreciated as Protocol V continues to be the centre piece of the CCW. One of Protocol V’s unique attributes is that for the first time in a treaty of International Humanitarian Law, it established a clear rule that explosive remnants of war must be cleared once
the fighting has ended. In order to promote Protocol V, the CCW Sponsorship Programme produced a DVD on the Protocol and the work of its States Parties. The DVD is titled “Before the Blast”, which is available in the room today. I hope that delegations will find it useful.

In preparation for the Fourth Review Conference, I have been holding a number of bilateral meetings. During these meetings I have urged States Parties to join all CCW instruments. Also, at the preparatory session held during the Third 2011 Session of the CCW Group of Governmental Experts last August, I spoke on the issue of universalization and how this could be advanced.

Taking an overall perspective, since the Third Review Conference in 2006 important progress has been made on CCW universalization. For example, in 2006 the CCW had 100 States Parties and now it has 114 States Parties. Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War has seen the largest increase with its number of States Parties increasing from 27 in 2006 to 75 in 2011.

States Parties should take considerable satisfaction from this progress. However, much more needs to be done on CCW universalization. At the Fourth Review Conference, States Parties will have the opportunity to strengthen the Plan of Action agreed to at the Third Review Conference and put in place actions which will hopefully accelerate the progress on universalization within the CCW. I urge all States not party to the CCW to join and I look forward to working with CCW States Parties to achieve a truly universalized Convention.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.