Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)

Meeting of High Contracting Parties

General Exchange of Views

13 November 2014

Statement by Australia

Mr. President

Australia warmly welcomes your appointment to the role of Chairman for this Meeting of States Parties to the Convention of Certain Conventional Weapons. You have the full support of the Australian delegation in your stewardship of these meetings.

Mr. President

The CCW is a landmark international instrument that provides States with a mechanism to respond to new and emerging weapons technologies and means and methods of warfare. Through the CCW, States are able to work together to strike the right balance between allowing for legitimate military uses for new technologies and protecting armed forces and civilians from the use of weapons or means and methods of warfare that are excessively injurious or have indiscriminate effects. High Contracting Parties to the CCW must continue to work to ensure that the Convention fulfils its mandate and can prove its importance as an instrument of international humanitarian law.

Australia has a firm and long-standing commitment to the CCW and its effective implementation. Australia supports all five Protocols, including Amended Protocol II, to the Convention and their humanitarian aims.

Australia recognises that the effectiveness and success of the CCW will be enhanced through greater membership and in this context High Contracting Parties should resolve to promote the universality of the Treaty. Australia urges those States which are not party to the CCW and its Protocols to consider signing and ratifying in the near future. We also encourage those High Contracting Parties that have not accepted all of the Protocols to the Convention to do so.

Australia continues to be a financial contributor to the CCW sponsorship program, which is an important tool for enhancing the universalisation of the Convention and assisting its effective implementation.

Australia welcomes Iraq’s accession to the CCW and all of its Protocols. This brings the total to 118 High Contracting Parties. The current serious security situation in Iraq underscores the urgent need for the CCW to function as a mechanism for reinforcing international humanitarian law and protecting civilians from the use of weapons or means and methods of warfare that have indiscriminate effects.
Mr. President

Yesterday, as Co-ordinator on Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) under Amended Protocol II, Australia with the Co-Coordinator from France, presented the Coordinators’ report on the work of the Group of Experts meeting held in April 2014. We appreciate the support that High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II provided yesterday for the recommendations put forward by the Coordinators on continued work on IEDs in 2015.

Australia has now relinquished its role as the Co-ordinator, a position it has held for the past three years. Australia expresses its strong support to France and Moldova as next year’s Coordinator and Co-coordinator respectively. We urge High Contracting Parties affected by IEDs to support continued further work in this important area.

Mr. President

Australia expresses satisfaction with the informal experts meeting on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) that was held in May 2014. Australia supports further informal exploratory discussion on LAWS in 2015 under the CCW framework to allow States Parties to develop a more informed understanding on the possible technical, military utility, legal and humanitarian aspects associated with LAWS.

Australia also notes that mines other than anti-personnel mines (MOTAPM) remain an important issue for the CCW’s agenda and supports further discussions on this topic, provided that there is support for this amongst all States Parties to the Convention.

Mr. President

Through regular strengthening of the CCW and its Protocols, we have the opportunity to ensure that the Convention remains a relevant and effective instrument of international humanitarian law now and into the future.

I thank you Mr. President.