STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

Geneva, 13 November 2014

Mr. President,

The Republic of Croatia wishes to congratulate you on your election as the President of the Conference and assure you of our full cooperation and support in your work. As mentioned before, it is truly a great pleasure to see the representative of an EU MS presiding over this important Conference. Our thanks also go to the Coordinators and the Friends of the Coordinators for their excellent work over the past year. Allow me to also congratulate your entire team, notably the Secretariat and the CCW ISU, for the preparation of this event.

Croatia, of course, aligns itself with the EU statement made earlier, but would also like to make an intervention from the national position.

Mr. President,

Croatia was pleased to participate at this week’s CCW Meetings and in doing so submits that the use of weapons that cause unacceptable humanitarian harm and excessive injuries threatens peace, safety, security and stability at national, regional and international levels. These weapons, Mr. President, are actually the “weapons of mass destruction”; they represent relentless force which not only threatens not only the sustainable development of many states around the world, but also undermining the very fabric of our societies.

While Croatia is fully committed to the CCW and the humanitarian principles enshrined in the Convention, we wish to underscore the importance of the full implementation of obligations set by the CCW and its Protocols. We therefore urge States Parties to further demonstrate the political will and mobilize resources necessary to implement these obligations in the bid to achieve clear and tangible results by the 2016 Review Conference.

In this time of global financial and economic uncertainty, many States Parties are finding it difficult to mobilize adequate resources to address a number of important issues. However, this should not stop us in our endeavors to ponder new and far-reaching instruments of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) that could alleviate human casualties in the future. Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) are certainly such an issue on which we will reflect in more detail during today’s afternoon plenary session.
Meanwhile, Croatia would like to repeat its utmost condemnation of the continuous and indiscriminate use of incendiary weapons against civilians in Syria. We find these actions not only unacceptable from a humanitarian perspective, but as well as being in a direct contrast with the provisions of international law. Furthermore, we are deeply concerned by disturbing reports about the alleged use of incendiary weapons in the Ukrainian conflict. Consequently, these recent developments are leading us to the conclusion that the achievements in terms of prohibiting or restricting the use of incendiary weapons should not be taken for granted. We are therefore appealing to all actors for a more focused attention on this issue. Strengthening of Protocol’s definitions and scope by focusing on actual effects of the weapon, and not its intended effects, is certainly a possibility worth exploring.

Regarding Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM), Croatia shares the concern of many States Parties about the humanitarian impact of these mines. At the same time we welcome the progress made within the CCW in addressing the humanitarian risks posed by MOTAPM. Because it is quite clear that we are still seeking for the appropriate balance between humanitarian concerns and military considerations, Croatia is of the opinion that we should keep the topic of MOTAPM on our agenda in the future. We are also looking forward to the presentation of the recently completed study on this issue by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) this afternoon.

To conclude, Mr. President,

Croatia is hopeful that our deliberations on these issues will resonate outside of these walls and be translated into real and concrete actions to end the senseless suffering of so many in the world.

We are looking forward to a productive Conference of High Contracting Parties in support of the effective implementation of the Convention and we remain committed to working with all partners to achieve this goal.

Thank you Mr. President.