I am pleased to send greetings to delegates attending this week of conferences under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, Amended Protocol II and Protocol V.

I congratulate CCW States Parties for taking up the challenge of examining lethal autonomous weapons systems. CCW States Parties have an opportunity to take stock of the increasing automation in conventional weapons and to ensure that these developments respect the key principles and rules of international humanitarian law. I urge you to place this important issue on your 2015 agenda and to foster an inclusive dialogue allowing for full engagement by United Nations actors, the International Committee of the Red Cross and civil society.

A number of other challenges similarly warrant a response from CCW States Parties. These include further exploring ways to ensure that anti-vehicle mines no longer harm civilians, impede the delivery of humanitarian aid or obstruct social and economic development; the short-term and long-term impact of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas; and the low rate of States implementing legal weapons reviews for the development or acquisition of new weapons in accordance with Article 36 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions.

The ongoing relevance of the CCW will be determined not only by States Parties response to new developments in conventional weapons and armed conflicts, but also in their collective will to implement the obligations set out in the existing Protocols.

Amended Protocol II is an important instrument for addressing the indiscriminate damage caused by landmines and booby-traps. I call on all States Parties to make progress and report on their implementation of Amended Protocol II’s key provisions.

The increasing use of improvised explosive devices continues to be a matter of grave concern. Amended Protocol II remains the only legal instrument to address these weapons. I urge States to continue to exchange experiences and lessons learnt and to bring greater clarity and focus to the work on preventing the development of these weapons.

While significant progress is being made towards clearing anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions, the global challenge posed by explosive remnants of war will require far greater attention and effort. I urge States Parties to support all efforts to implement the surveillance and clearance of explosive remnants in accordance with Article 3 of Protocol V.
The provisions under Article 4 are critical to facilitating the work under Article 3 and ultimately protecting civilians. Further work is needed to ensure that all armed forces are able to record and retain information on the use of explosive ordnance during an armed conflict.

This year I have again followed up with all States not yet party to the CCW to urge them to join the regime. Universalization strengthens the CCW’s prohibitions and restrictions. With only 118 States Parties, much greater effort is needed.

Experience with this Convention shows that progress is possible, that it can evolve to respond to new security situations and that multilateral disarmament and arms control processes can have a positive impact on human security.

Thank you for your commitment to helping build a safer world for all.