Mr. Chairman,

I would like to congratulate you for your designation as President of the Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. I can assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation in ensuring the success of this meeting.

Mr. Chairman,

Brazil attaches great importance to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons. By ratifying all Protocols to the CCW, Brazil has demonstrated its firm commitment to International Humanitarian Law and to the protection of human life and dignity in the context of armed conflicts. We welcome the efforts undertaken by States Parties, the United Nations and office holders to the Convention in promoting adherence to the CCW and its protocols.

Being a key legal instrument in the field of arms control and International Humanitarian Law, the CCW was negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations, which is not the case of other Treaties. The dynamic framework of the CCW has proved to be appropriate for continuous improvement, evolving in accordance with the changing realities and humanitarian concerns of the States Parties. The CCW embodies and builds upon the fundamental principles which are at the core of International Humanitarian Law. The path towards fulfilling this humanitarian goal is undertaken by means of specific prohibitions or restrictions on the use of certain conventional weapons. This is by no means a simple task, since many of these specific weapons have long formed part of armed forces arsenals worldwide.

A fundamental aspect of the CCW is the attempt to balance humanitarian concerns and military needs. In its preamble, the Convention reaffirms the principle, that the right of parties involved in an armed conflict to choose methods or means of warfare is not unlimited. It also enshrines the principle that prohibits the employment in armed conflicts of weapons, projectiles and material and methods of warfare of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering. This is in fact the most delicate aspect of the implementation of the CCW: to strike a balance between legitimate security concerns and the need to limit human suffering to a minimum during an armed conflict.
Mr. Chairman,

We have been unable to overcome the divergence of views regarding mines other than anti-personnel mines (MOTAPM), despite exhaustive discussion since 2001. Brazil considers that anti-vehicle mines (AVMs) are a valid and relevant element of a country’s defense strategy. We reiterate that any future use of these armaments by Brazilian armed forces will be in accordance with International Humanitarian Law, respecting the principles of distinction, proportionality, precaution and humanity, as well as all provisions of Amended Protocol II. At present, Brazilian Armed Forces comply with all these obligations by means of internal regulations, such as the International Law Manual Applicable for Navy Operations, the Mariners Combat Engineering Manual and the Army Field Manual C 5-37. We strongly believe that any new obligations with respect to AVMs must not entail additional costs in terms of financial and technological requirements, which would impact developing countries disproportionately. That is particularly true regarding the key issues of detectability and active life span of MOTAPM. We do not favor the adoption of any requirements that would impose the need of adapting or even replacing existing stocks of AVMs at excessive financial and operational costs.

Brazil has been following with interest the discussions on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) over the last two years, participating actively in informal expert meetings held in Geneva. Brazil acknowledges the complex and ethical implications of the use of these systems, including possible violations of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law. Therefore, Brazil supports the proposal to advance the debate on LAWS in the context of the CCW, while not precluding the treatment of the matter in any other pertinent fora in accordance with their specific mandates, like the Human Rights Council. We look forward to discussing the proposals presented by the chair regarding the work on LAWS next year, in particular during the CCW Review Conference of 2016.

Brazil looks forward to a fruitful exchange of views. We are ready to contribute constructively to the further progress of our work aiming at the CCW Review Conference in 2016. Thank you.