



General Statement

by

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**Meeting of the High Contracting Parties of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions
on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively
Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects**

Geneva, 20.-24. November 2017

Mister Chair,

Thank you for giving me the floor. I would like to start by congratulating you on your appointment to chair this important conference. Let me assure all parties of the full cooperation of Germany in the successful conclusion of this meeting.

We align ourselves with the statement of the European Union. In order to keep it short, let me just highlight orally some key issues from a German point of view. The complete statement will be made available at the CCW website. Besides, we will take the floor with some more detailed interventions later during this conference.

The CCW remains highly relevant for us as an important forum to discuss the consequences of the use of certain conventional weapons including the effects of technological developments and humanitarian implications. The possibility to address new challenges to IHL has proven highly valuable.

That is the reason why Germany is a strong proponent of universalization of the convention. We welcome Afghanistan and Lebanon as new High Contracting Parties and acknowledge with appreciation the accession of Benin to the amended Article 1.

We are concerned about reports of the use of incendiary weapons in recent conflicts and call upon all states to accede to Protocol III of the CCW.

The CCW's work on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) has been extremely useful over the past years. We thank the Indian chair for making the First Meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts an open forum and for bringing the expertise of science, technology and industry into the discussions. We strongly recommend extending the GGE into next year with at least two sessions of one week each in 2018. With our joint Franco-German paper on the GGE we have made concrete proposals for taking the GGE forward with a political declaration, transparency measures, the creation of a CCW expert group on LAWS, and a code of conduct as a second step. We strongly believe, that we should focus the second session in 2018 on developing concrete policy recommendations as outlined in the mandate. As technology continues to make great leaps we need to make sure that the GGE delivers its recommendations in time in order to steer developments in the joint interest of all High Contracting Parties.

Germany stands ready to give its full support to this process.

At last year's Review Conference Germany suggested to include an item on the use of Explosive Weapons with wide area effects in an urban areas (EWIPA) on the agenda of this meeting. This is an urgent matter that should be discussed within in the CCW context with the view to improving compliance with International Humanitarian Laws in urban warfare i.e. in the use of explosives in populated areas. *In August the ICRC together with Germany held a seminar on some key challenges from a humanitarian, technical, legal and military point of view. It became clear that further in-depth consideration would be needed.* For that reason

we are looking forward to the discussion under the Item “Emerging issues of relevance to the Convention” and *On the issue of Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM) we would encourage further exchange between High Contracting Parties. The workshop in August jointly organized by UNODA, UNMAS and GICHD underscored the further need for exchange between experts. The discussion on different views on military utility and the protection of civilians were very useful and should be explored further. Two aspects could make a real difference. Those are detectability and lifespan limitations.*

One area where the CCW has substantively contributed to the international community’s response to an increasing threat is its work on Improvised Explosive Devices (IED). We believe the exchange of information and best practices could still be strengthened and synergies between different international fora should be explored.

In light of recent financial problems the Review Conference mandated the Chair to suggest specific actions that would help remedy the difficulties and would help to avoid a reoccurrence in the future. The inclusion of an item dedicated to the financial situation of the convention is an important step and we fully support the Chair’s proposals in his non-paper regarding “A common approach to address the funding crisis in the arms control and disarmament conventions not funded from the UN’s regular budget”.

We call on all high contracting parties to pay their contributions in full and as early as possible. We need to avoid by all means a similar situation as in this year when several meetings had to be cancelled for lack of funding. In our opinion we should use the next year to work further on making sure the CCW can do its work. For that reason we should explore further measures such as a Working Capital Fund to create a possibility to hold meetings in the first half of the year in keeping with the UN’s financial rules.

We see the CCW as a highly relevant forum for addressing conventional arms and ammunition control issues and look forward to working with all high contracting parties in addressing the pressing issues on our agenda.

Thank you Mister Chair.