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 (CCW)

Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW)

Clearance, removal or destruction of ERW, pursuant to Article 3,
and Article 4 Generic Electronic Template

Geneva, 17 March 2011

Excellency,

I am writing to you in my capacity as Coordinator for Clearance, removal or destruction of ERW, pursuant to Article 3 of CCW Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War, and the Article 4 Generic Electronic Template and with a view to the consideration of these issues at the 2011 Meeting of Experts of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V (Geneva, 6 to 8 April 2011).

In accordance with the decisions of the 4th Conference of the High Contracting Parties of CCW Protocol V, the discussion will be structured around the following topics:

a) Clearance, removal or destruction of ERW: exchange of information on national experience

For many ERW-affected States, significant challenges in relation to clearance remain. In addition to the information provided through national reporting, the Meeting of Experts provides an opportunity to share information on clearance activities and to draw attention to needs for assistance.

States that made presentations on their clearance programmes in previous meetings are invited to provide an update on these activities. Furthermore, I take this opportunity to encourage those ERW-affected States that have not yet done so to consider providing information on their current ERW situation, actions taken and challenges that remain, including possible needs for assistance.

b) National procedures and experience in the implementation of Article 4, including the adequacy of the generic electronic template and possible improvements to the template

Recording, retaining and transmission of information on the use or abandonment of explosive ordnance as stipulated in Article 4 of the Protocol are of critical importance for
the implementation of ERW clearance obligations under Article 3. The close linkage
between Article 4 implementation and clearance was reinforced by the decision of the 4th
Conference of the High Contracting Parties to merge the deliberations on these topics.

I invite High Contracting Parties, in particular those that have not yet done so, to consider
providing information on the action they have taken to establish national systems,
regulations and procedures for implementing Article 4. States that have not established
their own national system for recording and retaining information on the use of explosive
ordnance are encouraged to provide information on action taken in making use of the
Article 4 Generic Electronic Template. I hope that many States will use the opportunity
of the Meeting of Experts to share their views on the adequacy of the template and to
make suggestions for possible improvements. In this regard, it is worth recalling
Discussion paper No. 2 of 2009 titled “Elements for Consideration on article 4 generic
electronic template” (available on the Protocol V website, www.unog.ch/ccw/ProtocolV)
which provides a set of questions that may be helpful in preparing the discussion.

c) Priority-setting for clearance and review of clearance activities plan
implementation

Previous Meetings of Experts addressed priority-setting and the topic of evaluation and
achieving results as essential parts of the ERW clearance programme life cycle
(presentations available on www.unog.ch/ccw/ProtocolV). This year, presentations
provided by experts of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
(GICHD) will focus on quality management. Specific attention will be given to enhanced
efficiency and effectiveness of ERW programmes through the adaptation of the concept
of quality management to priority-setting.

High Contracting Parties and observers are invited to contribute to the discussion through
providing information on their national structures and procedures in defining priorities for
ERW clearance, including quality management.

d) Potential environmental consequences of ERW clearance

The Meeting of Experts shall further focus on the responsibility to ensure that ERW
clearance activities are carried out in a manner that minimises negative impact on the
environment. The International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) provide guidelines for
environmental protection measures that should be complied with.

All participants in the meeting are invited to share their experience on environmental
management policies in ERW clearance practices.

Should you require further information on these issues, please do not hesitate to contact
me or the CCW Implementation Support Unit.

Yours sincerely,

Petra Drexler

CCW Protocol V Coordinator on Clearance, removal or destruction of ERW,
and the Article 4 Generic Electronic Template