Excellency,

I would like to draw your attention to the following issues in relation to the Second Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) to 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 (CCW):

Time and venue

The Second Conference will be held on November 10 and 11, 2008 in Conference Room XIX of the Palais des Nations, United Nations Office at Geneva.

Agenda


Thematic discussions

Pursuant to the Provisional Agenda a General exchange of views will be held at the beginning of the Conference, focusing on all substantive items.

The key task for this Conference is to review and evaluate the experience of the Protocol’s implementation during its first year. In this respect, you will recall that the First Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V took a number of important decisions on matters related to the implementation of Protocol V aiming at establishing a comprehensive framework to facilitate the exchange of information and cooperation, and to facilitate assistance among the States parties in addressing the effects of ERW. As you are aware, the core of this framework is the Meeting of Experts and its work and outcome encapsulates to a certain degree all the different aspects of the Protocol’s implementation.

You will also recall that the first Meeting of Experts took place from 2 to 4 July 2008 and addressed the following issues:

(a) Clearance, under the overall responsibility of the Coordinator, Ms Dijana Plestina of Croatia;

(b) Cooperation and Assistance and Requests for Assistance, pursuant to Article 7 and 8 of the Protocol, under the overall responsibility of the Coordinator, Mr. Gyula Somogyi of Hungary;
(c) Article 4 Generic Electronic Template, pursuant to paragraph 34 of the Final Document, and national reporting pursuant, to Article 10 (2) (b) of the Protocol, under the overall responsibility of the Coordinator, Mr. D.B. Venkatesh Varma of India;

(d) Generic Preventive Measures, pursuant to Article 9 and the Technical Annex of the Protocol, under the overall responsibility of the Coordinator, Col. Marcel Mulder of the Netherlands;

(e) Victim Assistance, pursuant to Article 8 (2), under the overall responsibility of the Coordinator, Mr. Markus Reiterer of Austria, who has been replaced by Mr. Michael Schoiswohl also of Austria.

I would, therefore, like to seek the views of the Conference by focusing its attention on the above topics and organizing separate thematic discussions on each topic, respectively. These thematic discussions will constitute the bulk of our work.

Organization of work

I would like to propose the following organization of work for the Conference:

The main substantive items are agenda items 9, 10, 11 and 12. Therefore, following the opening formalities, my intention is to first invite delegates during the general exchange of views to address these agenda items altogether, as well as the issue on the universalization of the Protocol.

Once we have exhausted the list of speakers under the general exchange of views, we will move on to the thematic discussions and will consider topic by topic the outcome of the work of the Meeting of Experts. Procedurally, these thematic discussions will be chaired by me, however, each topic will be introduced by the respective Coordinator who will present for approval his/her report and recommendations for future work. Delegates will then have the possibility to take the floor and express their views on the issue under consideration. All recommendations, as adopted by the Conference, will be included in its Final Document and will constitute the outcome of our work thus providing a pragmatic roadmap for the future of the CCW Protocol V implementation process.

In the second half of the second day of the Conference, after the completion of the thematic discussions, we will go through and conclude with the consideration of all the above-mentioned substantive items. Hence, delegations wishing to make separate statement under any of these agenda items may do it then. We will conclude our work with the adoption of the Final Document of the Conference.

For your ease of reference, I have prepared a Provisional Programme of Work which outlines the organization of the Conference. It is noteworthy that this Programme will remain open for changes and amendments, leaving it to our discretion to adjust it depending on the progress made and the need to devote more time to one or another topic. Nevertheless, it is my hope that it provides us with a good picture of the organization of work of the Conference and will be helpful in preparing for the session.

ERW database

I am pleased to call your attention to the fact that a preliminary version of the ERW database, as decided by the First Conference, has been established and is available on the CCW Protocol V website. The first requests for assistance have already been posted on the web.
National Reporting

You will recall that the First Conference last year took a decision, *inter alia*, on the establishment of a Protocol V database, consisting of national reports and their annual updates. National reporting is an important confidence building and transparency measure. It is also of paramount importance for creating a specific Protocol V culture and maintaining the profile of this Protocol high on our national agendas. Most of the States parties to the Protocol have promptly met their reporting obligations. Some have even done it ahead of time. However, some States still have missed the deadlines established by the First Conference. I take this opportunity to call upon those States to make an effort and submit their national reports as soon as possible.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Edvardas Borisovas
Ambassador
President-designate of the Second Conference of the High Contracting Parties to CCW Protocol V