

Annual Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW

Geneva, 21-23 November 2018

Statement by India

Mr President,

The delegation of India warmly congratulates you on assuming the Presidency of the 2018 Annual Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau upon their election. We assure you of the full support of the Indian delegation to you in arriving at a successful outcome at this meeting.

2. India aligns itself with the statement delivered by Venezuela on behalf of the NAM.

3. Within the UN Framework, the CCW is an important instrument that seeks to uphold International Humanitarian Law. The Convention and its Annexed Protocols, while stipulating measures to mitigate humanitarian concerns arising from the use of specific weapons and weapon systems also take into account the military necessity of such weapons, thus striving to strike a balance between the two concepts. Over the years, the Convention has evolved dynamically and demonstrated its continued relevance through the successive adoption of its five Protocols.

4. India is party to the CCW, all its five Protocols as well as its Amended Article 1. We are committed to ensure the full implementation of our obligations under the CCW and its Protocols, including Amended Protocol II and Protocol V, and the humanitarian principles that they embody.

5. Universalisation of the CCW remains critical for the success of the Convention and its Annexed Protocols. We note with satisfaction the steady progress towards this goal with the number of States parties rising to a noteworthy 125. Since our meeting last year, we welcome the accession of the State of Palestine and Mauritius to Protocol V to the CCW, making them as the 94th & 95th High Contracting Parties to the Protocol. India supports the Plan of Action on Universalization as well as the Sponsorship Programme, and has made regular financial contributions to it over the last few years.

6. India has regularly submitted its Annual Report on Compliance every year since 2008. We support measures aimed at encouraging submission of compliance reports by all States.

7. Like other High Contracting Parties, we remain concerned about the precarious financial situation of the CCW and call on all States to make their financial contributions in time. We support the efforts that have been made by you, Mr President, for ensuring greater predictability and stability in the financial resources of the Convention and hope that we can arrive at a sustainable solution.

8. We are pleased that the 2018 session of the GGE on LAWS, under the chairmanship of India, was successful in adopting its report by consensus, including the Emerging Commonalities, Conclusions and Recommendations. Owing to the constructive engagement of all States, the GGE was able to have a detailed substantive discussion on the characterization of the systems under consideration; as well as on the human element in the use of lethal force and aspects of human-machine interaction; review the potential military applications of related technologies in the context of the Group's work; and explore possible options for addressing the humanitarian and international security challenges posed by emerging technologies, without prejudging policy outcomes. The Possible Guiding Principles agreed to by all High Contracting Parties reiterate that IHL continues to apply fully to all weapons systems, including the development and use of lethal autonomous weapons systems. We remain convinced that the CCW is the relevant forum to address this issue, not least because of the fine balance the Convention seeks to strike between humanitarian concerns and military necessity but also because it provides a dynamic and adaptive platform bringing together multiple stakeholders. Further, we believe that addressing this issue within the framework of the CCW strengthens the Convention and underlines that it is capable of responding meaningfully to evolving new technologies applicable to armed conflict in the 21st century. We support continuation of the mandate of the GGE on LAWS with the participation of all relevant stakeholders for taking forward this important subject within the CCW context.

9. Mr. President, while we regret that the stand alone item on 'Consideration of how developments in the field of Science and technology relevant to the Convention may be addressed under the Convention' was not retained on the Agenda last year, we look forward to having a discussion on S&T issues relevant to the CCW context under the agenda item on 'Emerging Issues in the context of the objectives and purposes of the Convention'. We believe that the accelerating pace of technological change necessitates a thorough assessment of the potential impact of developments in science and technology on international security and disarmament in general, including in the context of the CCW. It was with this objective in mind that India tabled its resolution on the 'Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament', which was adopted by consensus at the 73rd session of the First Committee this year. The UNSG's report on 'Current developments in Science and Technology', as mandated by this

resolution, provides a number of relevant and valuable insights with regard to our work in the CCW and merits the consideration of all High Contracting Parties. To draw the attention of all relevant stakeholders towards this aspect, India, in collaboration with Switzerland, has submitted a Working Paper at this meeting on 'Consideration of developments in Science & Technology that may be relevant to the work of the CCW', which we hope would prove to be a useful aid for our discussions.

10. Mr. President, we are pleased to share that in collaboration with the ICRC, India hosted an International Conference on the CCW in New Delhi in December 2017. This was the first Conference focused on the CCW to be held in Asia in the last decade. The goal of the Conference was to further the understanding of the scope and content of the CCW with the aim of facilitating increased adherence to the Convention and to discuss current issues on its agenda. The Conference drew more than 83 participants from 24 States covering Asia, the Gulf region and East Africa, as well as experts from international organizations. A range of legal, military and humanitarian perspectives were deliberated, including the impact of Landmines and Explosive Remnants of War, CCW's work on IEDs, Anti-Vehicle Mines, Incendiary Weapons and LAWS. We believe that this Conference would make a valuable contribution towards the efforts being made for universalization of the CCW and promoting its adherence among the wider international community. A copy of the report on this Conference has been made available for interested delegations at the back of the room.

11. Mr. President, in keeping with India's commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation objectives, we have instituted an Annual Disarmament and International Security Fellowship Programme for young foreign diplomats commencing from January, 2019. This initiative is a reflection of our commitment to support the goal of "disarmament and education" of the UNSG's Disarmament Agenda. The Programme has modules dedicated to conventional weapons and shall cover the CCW in a comprehensive manner. We believe that it shall make a valuable contribution in disseminating information about the CCW and the objectives that it seeks to achieve, including its universalization.

Thank You, Mr President.
