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 2012 Meeting of Experts of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V (Geneva, 25 to 27 April).

In accordance with the decisions of the 5th Conference of the High Contracting Parties of CCW Protocol V in 2011, the discussion will be structured around the following topics:

a) **Clearance, removal or destruction of ERW:**
   Continuing consideration and exchange of information on national experience.

For many ERW-affected States, significant challenges in relation to clearance still 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 the need for assistance.

States that made presentations on their clearance programmes in previous meetings are invited to provide an update on these activities. Furthermore, I strongly encourage 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) **Practical methods to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in ERW clearance programmes.**

Previous discussions during the Meetings of Experts highlighted the need to incorporate priority-setting and quality management of clearance programmes as essential elements into national ERW clearance programmes.
This year, the focus will be to further explore *appropriate* practical methods to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in ERW clearance programmes. High Contracting Parties and observers are invited to contribute to the discussion through providing information about practical methods or steps that have been implemented in order to enhance efficiency and effectiveness, including methods that have been developed in cooperation with or with support from United Nations organisations (e.g. UNMAS, UNDP) or non-governmental organisations.

A key question concerning efficiency and effectiveness is how High Contracting Parties are ensuring a coordinated approach between the different actors working on clearance in the field. How are affected States coordinating with donor States, the United Nations, and other organisations in the planning, organizing and carrying out clearance programmes? The experiences of both affected States which have established national mine action programmes and donor States would be most welcome.

c) **Recording, retaining and transmission of information:**

Detailed information on the implementation of the provisions of Article 4 and the Technical Annex in Reporting Form B, including through using the Generic Electronic Template.

Last year 45 High Contracting Parties submitted reports of the 2010 period for the Protocol V database. The information provided about steps taken to implement Article 4 varied greatly from those that provided detailed information to those which stated it was not applicable to them. Further, some High Contracting Parties, which are part of peace enforcement operations of a multilateral character, referred in their reports to regulations and procedures that apply to that particular operation.

Given the variety of approaches and answers in Form B, renewed focus on the basic intentions of Article 4 would be useful.

High Contracting Parties and observers are invited to contribute to the discussion through sharing their understanding of and practises concerning Article 4.

**d) Information sharing on methods of recording and retaining information on the use or abandonment of explosive ordnance.**

The Meeting of Experts further provides an opportunity for all countries to contribute and to share information and experience in practical methods of recording and retaining data. All participants in the meeting are invited to share their experience and national practices of recording of information on explosive ordnance.

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

Yours sincerely,

Gerfried Elias
Colonel (GS)

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