The Secretary-General of the United Nations presents his compliments to the Permanent Representative of ... to the United Nations and has the honour to refer to the 1980 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).

The Secretary-General of the United Nations would like, in particular, to recall that the Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW, held in Geneva from 7 to 13 November 2007, decided that:

"The Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) will negotiate a proposal to address urgently the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions, while striking a balance between military and humanitarian considerations.

The GGE should make every effort to negotiate this proposal as rapidly as possible and report on the progress made to the next Meeting of the High Contracting Parties in November 2008.

The work of the GGE will be supported by military and technical experts. The GGE will meet in 2008 not less than three times for a total of up to seven weeks, as follows:

• 14 – 18 January
• 7 – 31 July
• 1 – 5 September
• 3 – 7 November

The Chairperson of the GGE, in consultation with the regional groups, shall decide on the duration of the second and the third sessions of the Group of Governmental Experts".
In accordance with the above-mentioned decisions, the Secretary-General has the honour to convene the 2008 sessions of the Group of Governmental Experts of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention and to invite the High Contracting Parties to participate in it. The Secretary-General also has the honour to invite States not parties to the Convention to participate in the work of the sessions as Observers.

Pursuant to the established practice the sessions of the Group of Governmental Experts of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention would be conducted in accordance with the Rules of Procedure as adopted by the Third Review Conference in 2006, applied mutatis mutandis. Therefore, the Secretary-General takes this opportunity to recall that Rule 16 of the Rules of Procedure provides that “[t]he costs […] will be met by the States Parties to the Convention participating in the Review Conference in accordance with the United Nations scale of assessment, adjusted to take into account differences between the United Nations membership and the participation of States Parties in the Conference. States which are not States parties to the Convention and which accept the invitation to take part in the […] Conference, will share in the costs to the extent of their respective rates of assessment under the United Nations scale”.

For further information with regard to the sessions of the Group of Governmental Experts, the States are invited to contact:

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10 January 2008

S. B.