

CCW MEETING OF HIGH CONTRACTING PARTIES

November 21-23, 2018 – Geneva, Switzerland

GENERAL STATEMENT - CANADA

Thank you President,

On behalf of Canada, I would like to express our appreciation for the manner in which you have prepared the work of this Meeting of High Contracting Parties.

Canada is committed to the universalization of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its protocols, and believes that its capacity to balance security needs and humanitarian concerns allows it to function as a core instrument of the disarmament machinery.

Canada recognizes the CCW as the most appropriate forum for discussions on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) and we support the continuation of the Group of Governmental Experts' work in 2019, with our preference being for another agenda based on two five-day meetings.

Canada's believes that the debate on legal questions related to LAWS should centre on compliance with International Humanitarian Law, including the obligation for all States to ensure the lawfulness of their weapons, means and methods of warfare.

The achievement of a [2018 consensus document](#) is a testament to the leadership of Ambassador Singh Gill, while also reflecting the collaborative spirit with which states engaged in discussions. In this light, "Emerging Commonalities, Conclusions and Recommendations" is a fitting title. It is our hope that discussions in 2019 will be equally collaborative while keeping pace with the unrelenting advance of technological innovation that defines our time.

With regards to explosive weapons in populated areas, Canada remains troubled by their indiscriminate use which is occurring with increasing frequency.

We note with alarm the figure [reported by the Secretary General this year](#) that civilian casualties from the use of explosive weapons increased by 38% between 2016 and 2017, with civilians representing 92% of casualties in populated areas.

At First Committee in October, we took positive note of the collective statement, joined by many states here present, expressing similar concerns in relation to the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

The indiscriminate use of explosive weapons in populated areas is a question of compliance with International Humanitarian Law, as opposed to a problem inherent to a type of weapon. It is an issue that must be addressed by the international community, and we are seized of the urgency to continue discussions on how to ensure IHL compliance and the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure in these contexts. We recall that past successes of the CCW have relied on narrowly defining the weapons to be considered for prohibition.

We thank you for your tireless efforts to find solutions to address ongoing financial issues within the Convention and improve the stability of the Secretariat's support. We agree that we must collectively ensure that the CCW has both the financial and human capacity to fulfill its mandate –

- To protect the Convention's long-term financial stability, it is essential that any new institutional arrangements include provisions to guarantee that all High Contracting Parties pay their assessed contributions on time.
- We are also of the opinion that the integrity of the Convention's work, in particular as it pertains to emerging issues such as LAWS, depends on having specialized and dedicated staff.

Given these considerations, Canada could support the general option proposed in your [report to this Meeting](#), whereby the roles and responsibilities of the High Contracting Parties and UNODA in relation to the ISU could be clarified through a new set of agreed principles that address persistent problems. We see the proposed creation of a CCW Voluntary Reserve as a useful complementary measure to such arrangements.

Finally, at the GGE in August, we were pleased to host a conversation on the gender dimensions of LAWS. It was based on the premise that non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control have fundamental gender dimensions and perspectives that must be systematically accounted for. We encourage High Contracting Parties:

- To increase the meaningful inclusion of women in peace processes, and ensure that they are full partners in security, disarmament and arms control processes.
- To prioritise a gender-responsive and evidence-based approach to humanitarian assistance supported by sex-disaggregated data, in particular as it pertains to mine action and our obligations under Amended Protocol II and Protocol V.
- And to recognize that the effectiveness of our policies and programs requires that we address the reality that women, men, girls and boys are differentially impacted by weapons and conflict.

Thank you President.