ZAMBIAN STATEMENT ON CCW PROTOCOL V MEETINGS OF EXPERTS: COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE, THURSDAY 3 APRIL, 2014

COORDINATOR,

Since am taking the floor for the first time, allow me on behalf of the Zambian delegation to express our pleasure in participating in the meeting of experts for the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) specifically on Protocol V.

Zambia acknowledges the great value and importance that the CCW attaches to Cooperation and Assistance. We are alive to the fact that affected countries, Zambia included, continue to grapple with how to carry out ERW, AXO and UXO Clearance and Victim Assistance as well as ensuring that our national programmes can be sustained in the long term. We are also mindful that most of our donor countries and cooperating partners are currently faced with a challenging financial environment.

COORDINATOR,

You will recall that Zambia successfully cleared mines in known contaminated areas in 2009 well ahead of schedule. This clearance followed a conducted survey of the suspected areas by both the Zambian Government and the Norwegian Peoples Aid between 2005 and 2009. However, it is important to state that although the survey for landmine contamination was conducted in the six suspected Provinces, the survey did not encompass ERWs and other unexploded ordinances and was not exhaustive due to several factors which included, among others, excessive flooding and inaccessibility to suspected hazardous (ERW) areas and lack of funding and appropriate equipment and machinery for detecting UXOs or ERWs.
In this regard, the problem of ERWs and other unexploded ordinances remain unresolved to a large extent in our country hence the need for cooperation and assistance.

COORDINATOR
In the last two years, reports to the National Authority of discoveries of ERWs or Unexploded ordinances have increased resulting in the government feeling the need for a Technical Survey to be conducted in the known suspected hazardous areas in order to establish the extent of contamination by ERW and other unexploded ordinances and consequently clear these areas.

COORDINATOR
The Zambian government has shown commitment to the clearance of ERWs by ensuring that the known affected areas are cleared and made safe for human habitation. To this end, efforts have been made by responding decisively to all reports of ERWs and other unexploded ordinances by conducting on the spot destruction. Where there have been known victims of ERWs, the Zambia Mine Action Centre has worked closely with other relevant stakeholder Ministries to ensure that victims are assisted accordingly at government expense. Mine Risk Education has also been conducted in these areas. However, due to budgetary constraints, government on its own is not able to deal with the problem totally.

Given the above, it is clear that the problem of ERWs is real and there is need for a Technical Survey. Areas such as Sioma -Ngwezi National Park, Sioma District, the Zambia-Namibia (Imusho) border in Sesheke District of the Western Province and the Zambia-Angola border in Chavuma District, North - Western Province have been identified as Suspected Hazardous Areas which need surveillance and possible clearance. You may need to know that in areas such
as Sioma, communities are not using certain access roads because of reports of suspected unexploded ordinances.

Zambia is; therefore, keen to learn from other countries with similar problems on how they have dealt with issues of survey and clearance of ERWs. To our cooperating partners, we call for assistance in order to resolve the outlined problems. The assistance required include reliable transport to reach outlying border and rural areas and equipment and machinery to conduct a Technical Survey in order to establish the extent of ERW contamination in the suspected hazardous areas. In addition, there will be need to train Officers in data collection, Monitoring and Evaluation and general capacity building in the department responsible. Zambia requires appropriate software and hardware for collecting, compiling and managing ERW and Victim data.

In conclusion, Coordinator, We look forward to the exchange of views on best practices

I THANK YOU