



CCW Meeting of High Contracting Parties

General Debate

Geneva, 21 November 2018

H.E. Ms. Sabrina Dallafior
Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the Conference on Disarmament

Mr. Chair,

At the outset, let me congratulate you on the confirmation of your nomination as Chair of this year's Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). I wish to thank you for your excellent preparatory work.

In the area of conventional weapons, just like in the other areas relevant to arms control disarmament and nonproliferation, the preservation and strengthening of the rule-based international order is a priority for Switzerland and should underpin our common work. Notably due to its membership, the CCW is an important forum to set appropriate standards in terms of international humanitarian law and to contemplate the development of practical measures to foster better implementation of IHL.

Mr. Chair,

Before addressing issues of substance, I would like to underline our enduring concerns regarding the **financial situation** of the Convention. We continue facing challenges on a number of fronts, even if we adopted several measures at our last Meeting. First, we will not be able to tackle this challenge if parties do not pay their dues or pay them late - we urge all States with outstanding dues to swiftly pay their arrears and encourage all future contributions to be made in time. Second, we remain particularly concerned by the lack of clarity regarding the issue of the implementation support unit (ISU) which was disbanded early this year. This

situation raises a number of fundamental questions and it is our expectation that this Meeting will take decisions on the way forward. Finally, the issue of liquidity also needs to be addressed for the Convention to be on a sound footing and will require that we take action.

Mr. Chair,

Switzerland welcomes the results of the 2018 CCW GGE on **lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS)**. Significant progress has been made on a number of substantive points, notably about the need to retain human responsibility for decisions on the use of weapons systems. However, the GGE also showed that there are still diverging views on this subject and that further concrete results are much needed. It is therefore of great importance that the CCW finds a constructive and effective way to address the issue of LAWS, including the relevant policy options for the way forward. We hop the GGE will continue its work next year, as proposed by the GGE. We will address this subject in more detail during the thematic statement.

Mr. Chair,

Science and technology (S&T) develops at an accelerating pace and is fundamentally changing key aspects of social and economic life. While many of these advances are positive in nature, some of them may also pose certain risks and threats for international peace and security. The international community is now gradually paying increasing attention to these developments. The CCW Review Conference in 2016 and the 2017 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties saw discussions on S&T developments in the context of the CCW on how developments in the field of S&T may affect the Convention and how they could be addressed. This year, the UN Secretary-General (UNSG) presented a report on current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts pursuant to resolution A/RES/72/28. The SG's report contains a number of pertinent points for the CCW's discussion. Also this year, the UNSG has circulated his disarmament agenda, in which S&T developments and their security implications also figure prominently. In the hope to facilitate discussion in the CCW context, Switzerland, together with India, has tabled a working paper for this Meeting to inform discussions we will have on this matter later this week, including on how the CCW could approach S&T in its future deliberations. (I would also like to invite all delegations to participate in a Side Event today at lunch time, organized jointly by UNODA, Article 36 and Switzerland.)

Mr. Chair,

The increasing urbanization of conflicts and their direct and indirect effects on the civilian population and infrastructure is an increasing concern, as illustrated by the joint declaration on EWIPA in the 1C73 supported by 50 States including my own. Switzerland is gravely concerned about the devastating humanitarian impact when such ordnance is used in urban areas without due consideration/without complying with the key IHL principles of proportionality, distinction and precautions in attack. We welcome the different initiatives taken with a view to ensuring respect for IHL in the use of explosive ordnances within a concentration of civilians or civilian objects. We also believe that the CCW has a key role to play in addressing this challenge in view of its objective and purpose, notably in the identification of concrete measures to ensure and improve compliance with IHL when conducting hostilities in urban areas. We welcome efforts by Germany on this issue over the past year and welcome the Working Paper submitted to this meeting, which contributes to raise awareness and our understanding of the issue. Switzerland believes that a structured dialogue on this matter within the convention is necessary and would be worthwhile in view of its broad membership and hence supports the proposal put forward in the German Working Paper to establish an open-ended informal working group on this matter under the CCW.

Last year we saw encouraging discussions about **Protocol III and incendiary weapons**. Concerns were raised by a large number of High Contracting Parties (at the 5th Review Conference) over the reports of use of such weapons, notably in concentrations of civilians, and their humanitarian impact. While Protocol III constitutes an important acquis that needs to be preserved, the concerns expressed in this area warrant a discussion about humanitarian considerations, military necessity and legal questions raised by the use of incendiary weapons.

Mr. Chair,

Last but not least, regarding Mines other than Anti-personnel Mines (MOTAPM), we welcome the consultations conducted by the Chair on this matter and the report he submitted to this meeting. For our part, we continue to express our support for further work on this issue in the CCW.

Thank you, Mr. Chair