General Exchange of Views

Mr Chair,

Australia congratulates you on your election as Mr Chair of this meeting of High Contracting Parties and may I assure you of our full support. We look forward to constructive discussions throughout the meeting with all stakeholders present.

As a High Contracting Party to the CCW and party to all of its protocols, Australia attaches great importance to the CCW as a key treaty of international humanitarian law. The CCW continues to play an important role in limiting the injurious impact of a broad range of conventional weapons.

We are committed to the universalisation of the Convention and its protocols and encourage all States who have not become States Parties to do so.

Mr Chair,

Australia recognises the primary intent of the CCW is to protect civilians and combatants, in situations of armed conflict, from excessive suffering not necessitated by a legitimate military objective. It is for this reason that all of us as States Parties to the CCW, have agreed to the prohibition on the use of weapons which have indiscriminate effects and the prohibition on weapons which are “of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering.”

We are concerned, Mr Chair, by any allegation of use of weapons contrary to international law, including recent allegations of incendiary weapon use. We understand investigations into alleged breaches of international law in conflict zones are continuing, and call upon all participants in conflict – whether state or non-state actors – to abide by international law.

In accordance with international law, Australia ensures any use of force by its armed forces abides by the requirements of distinction, precautions in attack and proportionality. We are confident, compliance with international humanitarian law will go a long way to address concerns raised by the international community about the use of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA) and the injurious weapons regulated by the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its protocols.

Mr Chair,

Australia supports continued discussion of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, and actively participates in the Group of Governmental Experts on this matter.