Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)

Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War

Geneva, 6 May 2019

Excellency,

It is my great honor to serve as the President-designate of the Thirteenth Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V and it is my pleasure to inform you of upcoming meetings as agreed in the Meeting of the High Contracting Parties in 2018.

I plan to convene an informal preparatory meeting on 14th June 2019 at 10.00 in Room XXV at the Palais des Nations in order to inform you on the proposed structure of the meeting of the Group of Experts as well as on the Annual Conference. Additionally, the meeting will provide an update on the rate of national reporting under Protocol V in 2019 as well as inform about the universalization efforts taken to increase awareness and adherence to this life-saving instrument.

As decided by the 2018 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW, the Meeting of Experts of the High Contracting Parties of Protocol V will take place on 23rd August 2019 and the Thirteenth Conference of the High Contracting Parties on 11th November 2019.

Protocol V is the first multilateral agreement to deal with the problem of unexploded and abandoned ordnance. The strict adherence and implementation of Protocol V by States could significantly reduce the number of civilians killed and injured by ERW during and after conflicts. The obsolete explosive remnants remaining in the field and in storages after hostilities have ended serve no purpose. They are hazardous waste, which must be cleared away as soon as possible.

The Technical Annex of the Protocol is a useful voluntary tool for improving best practices and promoting better dissemination of information. The Annex could be more frequently utilized to improve record keeping as well as the speed and accuracy of information being shared, which is of key importance in saving lives. I look forward to hearing from High Contracting Parties on their experiences and practices in this regard. We should also make every effort to implement and promote the 2008 Plan of Action on Victim Assistance.

While the Protocol is a stand-alone arrangement with its own membership, it is important to remember that it does not function in a vacuum. The intertwined nature of contemporary arms control measures means that no single instrument can bring lasting results on the ground. Finally, I would like to encourage all delegations to think of ways to further strengthen the work of this important Protocol. I look forward to your continued cooperation and commitment.

Please accept Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Terhi Hakala
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Finland