Statement by Sweden at the 2015 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW

Mr. President,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your appointment as President of our Meeting and by pledging our full cooperation and support. Sweden fully subscribes to the statement by the European Union. I will therefore limit myself to some additional points in a national capacity.

Mr. President,

Sweden believes in an approach to disarmament and international security that puts human beings at the centre of policy. The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) was conceived as an expression of such an approach. Sweden remains firmly committed to the CCW and its protocols. Sweden took an active part to put in place both the Amended Protocol II on the Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices and the Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War, and has had the honour of chairing the work in the Convention on a few occasions, including during the First Review Conference and, more recently, as chair of Protocol V.

We believe that the CCW and its protocols are also an effective means to respond in a flexible way to future developments in the field of weapons technology, in particular as it reflects an essential part of International Humanitarian Law which contributes to both preventing and reducing the suffering of civilians and combatants. In this respect we also look forward to continue working closely with the ICRC. Let me also add that civil society has many valuable contributions to make to our work, and that Sweden attaches great importance to NGO participation in the CCW meetings.
Mr. President,

With regard to Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM) and the protection of civilians, we last year took note of the study by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) on “The Humanitarian and Developmental Impact of Anti-Vehicle Mines”. Discussions continued on this topic last week in an informal meeting co-chaired by UNMAS, UNODA and the GICHD. We believe that further discussions from an IHL perspective on MOTAPM in the framework of the CCW could be valuable.

Mr. President,

Sweden very much appreciated the opportunity at the Expert Meeting in April this year to continue discussions around lethal autonomous weapon systems, LAWS. We believe that humans should always bear the ultimate responsibility when dealing with questions of life and death. As States we have an obligation to assess the legality of new weapons, and we will therefore welcome a continued discussion of LAWS within the framework of the CCW. Sweden fully supports the idea to continue in 2016 discussions on the questions related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems. Like many other Parties we would support a decision to create, at the Review Conference in 2016 if not before, a Governmental Group of Experts to further examine this issue.

Thank you Mr. President.