Mr. Chair,

The Norwegian government is strongly committed to humanitarian disarmament. Weapons, and irresponsible use of weapons, that cause unnecessary human suffering and unacceptable harm should have no place in today’s international security environment. Norway believes that this should be a guiding principle in our approach towards conventional disarmament and related processes. Strengthened efforts in the area of humanitarian disarmament will contribute to the reduction and prevention of armed violence, and thereby human suffering. Having said this, we are well aware that in addition to the humanitarian perspective the reduction and prevention of armed violence has important security and development aspects.

Mr. Chair,

The successes we have seen through the adoption and implementation of the Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions must inspire all of us. We should be proud that through working in multilateral fora with a determined focus and a common strategic objective, we have been able to achieve concrete results of great consequence to ordinary people. The Mine Ban Convention has led to thousands of hectares of land being cleared of landmines, huge stockpiles being destroyed and thousands of survivors having claimed and received their rights. In this connection Norway urges all states to support the draft annual resolution on the Implementation of the Mine Ban Convention tabled by Albania, Cambodia and Norway. As for the Convention on Cluster Munitions, a total of 111 states have so far either signed, ratified or acceded to the Convention. The Second Meeting of States Parties held in Lebanon in September

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was an important milestone. The meeting was very well organised and a great success that met all our expectations. It confirmed that implementation of the Convention is well underway with destruction and clearance being undertaken in many countries. Progress is undisputable.

What IS disputable is the effort of some states to go against progress.

What IS disputable is the effort of some states to abuse existing instruments of international humanitarian law to move backwards and to regress existing standards.

What IS disputable is to attempt to take steps that would diminish the protection already afforded to civilians through another established international instrument.

It is not only disputable, it is unacceptable to adopt a new protocol on cluster munitions in the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons that does not provide an added humanitarian value that states and significant humanitarian organisations can vouch for. It is unacceptable to adopt a new protocol on cluster munitions in the CCW that the ICRC, the guardian of international humanitarian law, has stated may perpetuate, rather than prevent, the civilian suffering caused by cluster munitions. The current draft protocol as presented by the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts is not an acceptable response to address the humanitarian impact on cluster munitions.

We recognize and value the wish of states not parties to the CCM to take intermediate steps with respect to the humanitarian problems caused by cluster munitions. We urge them to continue to take national steps in order to address the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions. However, we would not find it acceptable to adopt new norms that would contradict and attempt to undermine the Convention on Cluster Munitions and core principles of IHL.

Mr. Chair,

Norway attaches great importance to the ongoing negotiations on an Arms Trade Treaty. Our goal is to reach a strong and robust ATT, which contributes to preventing illicit or irresponsible arms trade through responsible and effective regulation of all international trade in conventional arms. By achieving this we will establish an instrument that contributes to reducing and preventing armed violence and human suffering. This should in our opinion be the overall objective of the ATT. Norway is a country that exports most of its production of conventional arms and ammunitions and also relies on imports both for defence and civilian use. We see no contradiction between this fact and the importance we attach to humanitarian disarmament and the prevention and reduction of armed violence.

The chair of the ATT, ambassador Moritan, presented us at the July prep com with a comprehensive ATT draft paper. We would in this connection like to commend his efforts as chair of the negotiations. Norway’s views on important questions such as ammunition and explosives, human rights and international humanitarian law, on including language on victims and being firm on the principle that the ATT represents a threshold not a ceiling etc., should be well known. We still think the text need further strengthening and improvement but we are
satisfied that the draft paper contains many of the elements that are vital in order to reach a strong and robust ATT. Norway therefore views the chair’s text as the platform for further work in the ATT negotiations.

Mr. Chair,

2012 will be an important year for the UN in the area of conventional weapons. In addition to the conference on the ATT, there will be a review conference pertaining to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects. Norway views the Programme of Action as an important instrument. However, the implementation of the Program needs to be strengthened. Norway stands ready to contribute in this process in order to revitalize the Program of Action for the years to come.

Mr. Chair,

In any effort by states to address humanitarian concerns, we must acknowledge and respect the knowledge and competence of humanitarian actors. The UN field-based organisations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the numerous non-governmental organisations that work every day to alleviate human suffering have built up a high level of expertise. In our work we must build on the facts and realities on the ground – facts and realities that no-one is better placed to communicate than those who actually work on the ground.

Thank you