Statement by the Republic of Belarus in its capacity of the President of the Fifth Conference of the States Parties of the Protocol V to the CCW delivered by Mr Aleksandr Ponomarev

I’m taking the flour in the capacity of representative of the President of the Fifth Conference for Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW).

The Final Document of the 5th Conference of Protocol V held last year in Geneva suggested the Presidency to consider reporting to the sixty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly on its endeavors to promote universality of the 5th Protocol.

Furthermore the UN GA Resolution 66/62 Emphasizes the importance of the universalization of the Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War (Protocol V). We look forward to successful adoption of this year resolution on CCW submitted traditionally by Sweden and stand ready to further contribute to its implementation.

Explosive remnants of war are the explosive devices, which cause the greatest number of casualties around the world each year.

Protocol V works to both prevent and minimize the humanitarian impact of the explosive remnants of war. It establishes a clear rule that the abandoned and explosive ordnance must be cleared once a conflict has ended. There are also provisions on measures for the protection of civilians, victim assistance and cooperation and assistance.

Protocol V takes a comprehensive approach to prevent the humanitarian suffering caused by explosive remnants of war. It commits High Contracting Parties to record the use and abandonment of explosive ordnance and release this information, which is essential for clearance efforts, as soon as possible after the cessation of active hostilities.

Further, Protocol V encourages High Contracting Parties to carry out a range of technical measures on design, production, storage, transportation and use of munitions in order to ensure their safety and prevent them from becoming unexploded ordnance. In this regard, it’s worth mentioning the extensive discussion which took place in April in this year’s Meeting of Experts of Protocol V, highlighting the problem of safe storage of munitions to prevent them from accidental explosions which might have disastrous consequences for civilians.

As part of our responsibilities as President of the Fifth Conference, we have continued to work on the promotion the universality of Protocol V. This included addressing all Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the States not yet Parties to the Protocol to urge them to join Protocol V. We have also been working regionally in the framework of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) to promote there understanding and importance of the CCW and Protocol V in particular.

This year we welcomed four new High Contracting Parties to Protocol V, which were Burundi, Laos People’s Democratic Republic, South Africa and Turkmenistan. Given the extensive contamination in Laos PDR, its joining Protocol V was especially encouraging. However much remains to be done to address the challenges of clearance of explosive remnants, assisting victims and providing cooperation and assistance.

The total number of High Contracting Parties to Protocol V now stands at 80. We urge all States which have not yet done so to join Protocol V.