CCW STATEMENT BY SOUTH AFRICA TO THE MEETING OF HIGH CONTRACTING PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON CERTAIN CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

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Chairperson,

At the outset allow me to congratulate you on assuming your post as Chair of the 2014 Meeting of High Contracting Parties of the Convention on the Prohibition or Restriction on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW). My delegation wishes to assure you of its full support and cooperation as we work towards the successful outcome.

Chairperson,

South Africa is fully committed to the CCW and the humanitarian principles enshrined in the Convention. South Africa attaches great importance to this framework Convention having ratified all Protocols annexed to the Convention and remain committed to taking all necessary steps to fully implement our obligations under the CCW and its Protocols, including Amended Protocol II and Protocol V.

My delegation firmly believes universalisation of the CCW is of utmost importance for our common goals and we welcome efforts to this end by past and present Presidents and the various chairs to help us achieve universalisation of this Convention. South Africa wishes to congratulate Iraq on becoming the newest member of the CCW family. With so many States affected by these weapons, that are not party to the CCW especially those affected by mines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW), we realised that our job is far from complete. South Africa welcomes actions taken by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Ban Ki-moon and Ms Angela Kane, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs to priorities the universalization of this Convention.

Once States have committed themselves to be bound by the Convention, they bear the responsibility for their national implementation of the obligations undertaken by them under the Convention and its protocols and for submitting their national reports. South Africa has submitted all its national reports as required by the Convention and strong encourages States Parties and Signatories to do the same, thereby strengthening the Convention. South Africa calls on all States Parties to fully implement their commitments in terms of Protocol III.

We are fully aware of the increasing threats posed by the use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), and the growing humanitarian impact caused by IED incidents which mainly affect civilian populations and we wish to encourage further discussion on this. In term of Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM), that has been a recurring item within this body, but there are still differing views on this matter but these weapons pose a humanitarian threats, with this in mind South Africa is supportive of this item remaining on the agenda.

Chairperson

My delegation participated in the informal meeting on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) and supports further discussion within the CCW on these emerging technologies. Although we gained a greater insight into what we could expect there still many questions that remain unanswered. Since our discussions the question of autonomy has still not been answered and now the question of what is meaning human control? has been raised. One of the key questions in this regard that should be of concern to all of us is whether these new technologies of warfare would be compliant with the rules of International Humanitarian Law,
including those of distinction, proportionality and military necessity, as well as their potential impact on human rights. South Africa is therefore supportive of continued discussions.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank civil society for their tireless efforts in assisting to keep a spotlight on these issues so that the victims of these weapons are never forgotten.

Chairperson,

Finally, we should never forget the CCW is a key instrument in maintaining the the principles of international humanitarian law.

I thank you.