STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

Geneva, 12 November 2015

Mr. President,

The Republic of Croatia wishes to congratulate you on your election as the President of the Conference and assure you of our full cooperation and support in your work. Our thanks also go to the Coordinators and the Friends of the Coordinators for their excellent work over the past year. Allow me to also congratulate your entire team, notably the Secretariat and the CCW ISU, for the preparation of this event. We warmly welcome Palestine and Algeria as new States Parties to the CCW.

Croatia, of course, aligns itself with the EU statement made earlier, but would also like to make an intervention from the national position.

Mr. President,

The indiscriminate use of certain conventional weapons and their indiscriminate effects on civilian populations as well as on combatants are at the core of the humanitarian objectives of this Convention. We would like to urge all High Contracting Parties to the CCW to remain committed to the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols. Croatia was pleased to participate at this week’s CCW Meetings and in doing so submits that the use of weapons that cause unacceptable humanitarian harm and excessive injuries threatens peace, safety, security and stability at national, regional and international levels.

In this regard, we would like to note that we do recognize issues with regard to the implementation of the Protocol III on incendiary weapons. Croatia would like to repeat its utmost condemnation of the recent use of these weapons, including in Syria and Ukraine, as well as allegations of use in Libya and Yemen. These developments are leading us to the conclusion that the achievements in terms of prohibiting or restricting the use of incendiary weapons have unfortunately fallen short in alleviating human suffering. In light of the Fifth Review Conference of the CCW in 2016, we are calling on all actors to increase efforts to strengthen the rules governing incendiary weapons, thus invigorating Protocol’s effectiveness and deterring further use of these horrendous weapons.

Croatia welcomes substantive discussions on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) held in April this year under the competent leadership of Germany and Ambassador Michael Biontino. We will reflect on this issue in more detail during today’s afternoon plenary session.
Regarding Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM), Croatia shares the concern of many States Parties about the humanitarian impact of these mines because it is quite evident that unlawful deployment of MOTAPM outside of the existing International Humanitarian Law (IHL) framework directly causes civilian populations unnecessary suffering and has long-standing consequences for socio-economic development. Notwithstanding the widespread appeals for striking an appropriate balance between humanitarian concerns and warfare usefulness when considering MOTAPM, we see the value in continuation of our important and substantive considerations of this issue under the CCW framework. We are also grateful to the GICHD and SIPRI for their interactive heat map of anti-vehicle mines.

To conclude, Mr. President,

We warmly welcome the fruitful deliberations that have been taking place since the beginning of this week and we are convinced that this Conference will be the starting point to an extensive analysis of all questions related to conventional weapons and the implementation of the CCW and its Protocols. Through regularly strengthening the Convention and its Protocols, and by ensuring our associated work is meaningful and productive, we have the unique opportunity to maintain the CCW as a relevant and robust IHL and arms control instrument.

Thank you Mr. President.