Distinguished Mr. President,

At the outset, allow me to begin by congratulating you on your appointment as President of this meeting. I wish to assure you of my delegation’s full cooperation and support in your work. Finland is fully aligned with the statement made by the European Union.

Mr. President, Dear colleagues,

During the past year, we have witnessed intensified international tension and unease. The current situation makes disarmament and non-proliferation more challenging, but nevertheless, also all the more urgent as we, the international community, need to find ways to increase transparency and build confidence.

Finland remains strongly committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its Protocols. Universalization and compliance with the Convention and its annexed Protocols are important. The CCW is a forum that brings together expertise from many different fields and enables us to address a wide variety of issues - both long standing and newly emerging.

Landmines, improvised explosive devices and other explosive weapons continue to be a grave and longstanding threat around the world.

The Amended Protocol II is, together with the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, an important legal tool. Finland is fully committed to its obligations under both of these conventions and we support their full implementation, as this
helps both to limit the devastating effects of these weapons on civilian populations and to improve the security of military personnel in the field.

On this note, it is a great pleasure for me to be able to inform you today, that Finland has as of the 18th of August 2015, one year ahead of the preset timeline, completed the stockpile destruction of its anti-personnel mines and that we thus now fully comply with our obligations under article 4 of the Ottawa convention.

We will, in accordance with Article 3 of the Convention, leave 16 500 anti-personnel landmines for training purposes in the areas of mine detection, mine clearance and mine destruction. We estimate that this will serve our educational needs for several years.

We have also been actively supporting countries with severe mine problems for many decades. During recent years, we have focused our support on Humanitarian mine action in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Laos, Angola, South-Sudan and Somalia. Despite severe cuts to our national budget foreseen for the coming year, we will continue our support to the crucially important field of humanitarian mine action also in the future.

We strongly encourage States Parties to adhere to the norms of the Convention and non-States parties to join both the Amended Protocol II as well as the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention towards their full universalisation.

While we need to keep up the pace in order to tackle the issues of a longstanding and previously well-known nature, we also need to be ready to look over the horizon.

States have an obligation to assess the legality of new weapon systems and, therefore, we welcome more focused discussions on lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS) within the framework of the CCW.

We look forward to intensified, in-depth deliberations on this most important, complex and intriguing issue during the upcoming year, with the aim of taking the process forward in the CCW Review Conference next year.

Thank you Mr President.