Preparatory Committee of the Fifth Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties 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

Main Committee I: Consideration of key issues to be addressed by MC I


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Mr. Chair,

Thank you for circulating a Draft Final Declaration in advance of the meeting. At this point, I would like to limit this intervention to three issues, which in our view should be appropriately reflected in the Final Declaration:

First, with changing conflict patterns and scientific and technological developments, HCP have the shared responsibility to make sure that the CCW remains credible, effective and a living instrument that can respond to such developments. We therefore suggest to reflect in the final document the need to monitor challenges posed by existing means of warfare as well as those arising from new developments in the field of science and technology (S&T) relevant to conventional weapons. Switzerland suggests that the Final Declaration would address these issues, and particularly contain specific language to establish under this Convention, a flexible process to monitor and address relevant S&T developments relevant to the Convention and its Protocols.

Second, since the last Review Conference, additional evidence has underlined the significant humanitarian impact of Mines other than anti-personnel mines (MOTAPM), whether on
civilian populations, peacekeeping missions or humanitarian activities. The final document should reflect the widespread concerns with regard to MOTAPM. In our view, the CCW, striking a balance between the humanitarian imperative and military necessity, remains the appropriate forum to explore all possible avenues for ensuring that these weapons no longer harm civilians, impede the delivery of humanitarian aid or hamper development. Switzerland therefore supports the proposal to establish an open-ended meeting of experts in 2017 as proposed by the delegation of Ireland a moment ago. Like other delegations, we are open to look at different avenues or formats to take this issue forward.

Third, with regard to Protocol III and incendiary weapons, against the background of reports on the use of such weapons, we think the Final Declaration should not only note concerns expressed, but should also call on all parties to armed conflicts bound by Protocol III of the CCW to respect their obligations, and more generally call on all parties to armed conflicts to respect international humanitarian law. Our delegation is of the view that the Review Conference should (at least) acknowledge the need to ensure that Protocol III can adequately protect civilians as well as combatants from the severe effects of weapons with incendiary effects, taking into account on the one hand the development of means and methods of warfare since Protocol III was negotiated, and, on the other hand, developments in the field since the last Review Conference,

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair