Statement by the Head of the Chinese Delegation

During the General Debate at the

Fifth Review Conference of CCW

Geneva, 12th December 2017

Madam President,

At the outset, please allow me to extend, on behalf of the Chinese Delegation, our congratulations to you on your election to the presidency of the conference. I am confident that with your rich experience and outstanding skills, you will surely guide the conference to a positive outcome. My delegation will fully cooperate with you and other delegations in a joint endeavor to make this conference a success.

Madam President,

At present, the international and regional security situations are undergoing profound and complex changes. International arms control and non-proliferation efforts are faced with new challenges. Against this background, the international community is paying greater attention to the conventional arms control issues which are closely linked to humanitarianism. The Convention on the Prohibition of Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), as an important legal instrument in the conventional arms control area, has been playing an irreplaceable role in addressing humanitarian concerns caused by the indiscriminate use of conventional weapons.
Looking back, we are heartened by the fact that the purposes and principles of the Convention have gained increasing recognition in the international community. The universality of the Convention and its additional protocols has continuously improved. National implementation efforts have become more in-depth and pragmatic. International cooperation within the framework of the Convention has made steady headway. Work in the relevant IEWGs has been fruitful: discussions on new topics such as IEDs and LAWS are proceeding in depth, which bodes well for solving the relevant problems within the framework of the Convention. All these have laid a good foundation for our efforts to move forward the Convention process and to find appropriate solutions to the questions of certain conventional weapons.

Looking to the future, we cannot but see that there is still a long way to go and difficult tasks ahead in terms of enhancing the effectiveness of the Convention and realizing its purposes and principles. As developing countries’ level of participation remains low, the universality of the Convention and its Protocols awaits further strengthening. There is a visible and growing disparity among countries in terms of national implementation capacity. International cooperation fails to produce real impact as “criteria setting” has been over-emphasized at the expense of “assistance”. As countries have divergent views on the agenda, the direction of the Convention’s subsequent development is unclear.

Madam President,

China hopes that through this Review Conference, we will conduct a comprehensive deliberation on the implementation of the
CCW and its Protocols, clearly identify the direction and thinking of our future work, unswervingly move forward the relevant CCW processes, and promote continuous progress in the various works within the framework of the Convention. In order to ensure the success of the Review Conference, China would like to propose the following:

First, upholding multilateralism. We must encourage more countries to take part in the Convention process, especially promote the broad participation of the developing countries, and work continuously to increase the Convention’s universality.

Secondly, persevering in equal consultation. We must give full consideration to the realities in different countries and regions, respect diversities in security environment, military strength, and implementation capability, and rally consensus on this basis.

Thirdly, maintaining a balance between addressing humanitarian concerns, and meeting legitimate military and security needs. When considering a specific issue, while seeking a sound solution to the humanitarian concerns caused by the weapons in question, we must also fully take into account the legitimate military and security needs of various countries, and respect their reasonable concerns.

Madam President,

The Chinese government has always been committed to the conventional arms control process, and pays attention to resolving the humanitarian concerns caused by the abuse of conventional weapons. As a full member of the Convention and its 5 Additional
Protocols, China has supported the work in various field under the Convention. We have made a huge amount of human and material input, faithfully implemented the obligations under the Convention and related protocols, submitted our national implementation reports on time, effectively participated in expert group meetings under the protocols, and actively taken part in international exchange and cooperation. China has always supported enhancing the universality of the Convention, and has made donations every year to the Support Unit, to help developing countries participate in Convention-related meetings and activities.

In recent years, China has been actively engaged in international humanitarian demining assistance. Since 1998, through providing demining equipment, holding training programs on demining techniques and other means, the Chinese government has given humanitarian assistance worth more than 90 million RMB to nearly 40 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and has trained nearly 500 demining professionals. In September last year, at the Peacekeeping Summit of the 70th Session of the UNGA, China’s President Xi Jinping declared that in the coming 5 years China will carry out 10 demining assistance programs. Now China is actively fulfilling the commitment and implementing relevant programs. Last month China hosted a training course on demining techniques for Cambodia, and donated demining assistance funds as well as equipment for mine detection and clearance. China also donated demining assistance funds and humanitarian materials to Egypt. This year, we will provide to Laos humanitarian assistance materials also.

Madam President,
The Governmental Group of Experts on Anti-Vehicle Landmines under the Convention conducted 5 years of negotiations, but failed to conclude a protocol. This shows that views are divergent on this issue and that it is difficult to find points of common interests. We must clearly recognize the above facts and adopt a prudent attitude towards the resumption of negotiations to avoid impairing the Convention’s authority due to fruitless negotiations.

The Chinese government pays attention to the humanitarian concerns caused by non-state-actors’ abuse of IEDs. We support further discussions of IEDs within the framework of the Amended Protocol on Landmines and at the same time believe that strict implementation of provisions of relevant protocols is conducive to resolving the humanitarian concerns caused by IEDs.

Madam President,

While science and technology bring benefits, their military use pose great potential risks and threats to the safety and even the survival of mankind. The international community should follow the concept of universal security on the basis of existing international law, carry out preventive diplomacy, check the trend of an arms race in the high-tech field and maintain international peace and stability.

China has actively participated in the discussions on LAWS within the framework of the Convention in recent years, and commends the ambassadors of France and Germany for their work. It is our view that this issue touches upon many fields such as politics, economy, military, technology and law, and is rather complex. The international community should study and explore in depth issues such as relevant definitions, scope and legal application, to further deepen
understanding and gradually reach common understanding. On the basis of consensus, China is willing to follow the model of the Protocol on Laser Weapons and conclude a legally binding protocol on issues such as the use of LAWs. At present, we support further relevant discussions within the framework of the Convention.

Madam President,

China is willing to work with the international community to continuously enhance the authority and effectiveness of the Convention, in a common effort to achieve new progress in the work of various fields under the Convention and make positive contribution to resolving the humanitarian concerns caused by the abuse of conventional weapons.

Thank you, Madam President.