Mr Chairperson,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your appointment as Chair of our meeting and by pledging our full cooperation and support.

Sweden fully subscribes to the statement by the European Union. I will therefore limit myself to some brief points in a national capacity.

Mr Chairperson,

Sweden is a long-standing champion of international humanitarian law and remains firmly committed to the CCW and its universalisation. We are proud to have taken an active part in the setting up of the protocols annexed to the Convention and we urge all states who have not joined the Convention, or in some cases some its protocols, to do so. Sweden also values the contributions of the ICRC and civil society in the CCW.

The CCW remains important and relevant and well-placed to respond also to future weapons technology developments.

Like others, Sweden welcomes a continued discussion on autonomous weapons systems within the framework of the CCW. While all states are required to respect and uphold international humanitarian law, we have much to gain from analysing the potential challenges of today and the near future.

We, thus, appreciate the discussions in the Group of Governmental Experts over the past year and we join others in commending the skilful work of its chairman, Mr Gjorgjinski, in 2019. The topic is complex and complicated, but significant progress has been made. Sweden welcomes the group’s report, including the important and useful guiding principles, and we support its recommendations.

Mr Chairperson,

Another current and important issue is the question of the use of explosive weapons in urban areas. Along with a large number of other states, Sweden participated in the Vienna Conference on 1-2 October and joined the statement, delivered by Ireland in the First Committee of the UN General Assembly later that month. We stand ready to engage in discussions about how to better protect the civilian population by enhancing compliance with international humanitarian law.

Mr. Chairperson,

We regret that Protocol III issues were removed from the CCW agenda last year, and we would wish to see them back on the agenda at future meetings. Against the background of humanitarian concerns regarding incendiary weapons, Sweden would welcome such a discussion on Protocol
III. Reports of use or possible use of incendiary weapons are a serious concern. As parties to the Convention and its protocols, we need to monitor conflicts and examine such reports. Sweden calls on all parties to strictly implement and comply with Protocol III and encourages those who are not party to this protocol to accede to it.

On a more general note, we would like to add our voice to those who have addressed the financial situation of the Convention. Unfortunately, the problems that we are facing are similar to those in several other fora. This needs to change and the only sustainable solution is simple; that all High Contacting Parties pay their assessed contributions in full and in a timely manner.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.