MEETING 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 HAVE INDISCRIMINATE EFFECTS (CCW)

Geneva, 14–15 November 2013

General Statement by Germany

Mr. Chairman,

I warmly welcome you to the Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) in your capacity as the Chairperson, and thank you and the Coordinators for the preparation of this meeting and the excellent work carried out during the past year.

I align myself with the statement of the European Union.

The CCW has been and will remain a landmark treaty in international humanitarian law. Its structure as a framework agreement with special protocols provides us with the possibility to respond in a flexible manner to new developments in the field of arms and defence technologies. It enables us to react to emerging challenges and to strive for a balance between necessary military capabilities and the protection of civilians from the worst effects of conventional weapons in armed conflicts. The role of this unique forum that gathers political, legal, military and technical expertise cannot be underestimated.
Germany remains firmly committed to complying with the CCW and its Protocols. We are concerned about the alleged use of incendiary weapons in attacks by military aircrafts against civilian targets in Syria.

We – the High Contracting Parties – must step up our efforts to promote universalization. We welcome the accession of Kuwait and Zambia in 2013. Unfortunately, the rate of accession remains low in many parts of the world, also in states that are affected by mines and explosive remnants of war.

Mr. Chairman,

we had constructive discussions on Amended Protocol II and on Protocol V this week. Regarding explosive remnants of war, Germany is priviledged to provide substantial humanitarian assistance for mine clearance in over 21 countries, focusing on anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions and other types of unexploded ordnance. A special focus for us in enhancing safety of ammunitions storage facilities – also for Small Arms and Light Weapons – is Northern Africa and potentially the Sahel.

As a member of the Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities, Germany – in the framework of its humanitarian assistance – helps to address the special needs of persons with disabilities, including survivors of explosions. In this context, Germany provides victims assistance in 12 countries.

Mr. Chairman,

we have seen useful contributions to the ongoing discussion on IEDs and would like to thank Australia – the coordinator on this topic – for its valuable report. Sharing the concerns about the growing threat arising from IEDs, we will continue to support the fight against them. The exchange of information is crucial to make this fight a success.
The use of certain conventional weapons which are excessively injurious and have indiscriminate effects on civilians are the core of our Convention. For this purpose, we should continue to consider initiatives to limit the operational life span and to ensure the detectability of MOTAPM. We encourage a continuous exchange of views on how to reduce human suffering caused by the irresponsible use of MOTAPM.

Noting the increasing interest in lethal autonomous robotics (LAR) and the preliminary stage of discussions, Germany believes that a discussion on this category of weapons should take place within the framework of the CCW. We support a mandate for an informal working group next year that could address the issue of an adequate definition of LAR, their legal status, their deployment and the rules of engagement.

Finally, let me express Germany's full support for the efforts of the Chair, the Secretariat, and the High Contracting Parties to find more effective ways to advance our common objectives, to make use of synergies and to reduce costs.

Thank you.