CCW PROTOCOL V ON EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR
Preparations for the Meeting of Experts

3 March 2014

The Permanent Representatives of the
High Contracting Parties to CCW Protocol V
Geneva

Excellency,

I am writing to you as President-designate of the Eighth Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V on Explosive Remnant of War (ERW) to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). The purpose of this letter is to outline the Coordinators’ plans and preparations for the Protocol V Meeting of Experts, which will take place from 3 to 4 April 2014 in Geneva. Attached are the recommendations from last year’s Seventh Conference, which form the basis of this year’s work.

Opening of the Protocol V Meeting of Experts

During the opening as President-designate, I will be introducing the Programme of Work and providing an update on universalization efforts. Countries wishing to provide updates on their progress towards joining Protocol V are welcome to speak during the opening session. There will not be an opportunity for general statements.

Article 3 on the surveillance, clearance and destruction of ERW

The work on surveillance, clearance and the removal of ERW and Article 4 will be led by the Coordinator, Mr. Ivan Grinevich of Belarus.

The focus of the work under the surveillance, clearance and removal of ERW is on the implementation of the key elements of Article 3. In order to gain a baseline understanding of the progress being made towards implementing Article 3, affected countries are encouraged to speak on:

- Who is the national authority responsible for ERW?
- What has been done to implement ERW awareness raising and educational programmes?
- What progress has been made on the surveillance, clearance and destruction of ERW?
- Are there any further updates on capacity building in the areas of surveillance, clearance and destruction of ERW?
Article 4 on recording, retaining and transferring information on the use and abandonment of explosive ordnance

Article 4 requires militaries to record, retain and following the conflict to transfer information on their use or abandonment of explosive ordnance to the party in control of the affected territory or to a third party. Implementation of these provisions can be crucial to expediting the work of clearance organisations. All High Contracting Parties that have recently developed or updated their procedures for fulfilling the requirements of Article 4 are strongly encouraged to make a presentation on this matter. There will also be presentations from clearance operators on the type of information they require to facilitate their work.

International cooperation and assistance

The work on international cooperation and assistance will be led by the Coordinator, Ms. Marketa Homolkova of the Czech Republic. Updates from both donor countries and affected countries would be most welcome during this session. Also, affected countries that have very specific needs are strongly encouraged to present their requests for assistance. This year there will be a special focus on the priorities and challenges of donors. Therefore, donor countries and organisations are encouraged to speak on the priorities of their cooperation and assistance programmes and the challenges they have encountered in this area.

The small group meeting with affected countries and invited donor countries will take place following the formal session. This is an opportunity for countries to speak frankly and provide feedback on their experiences.

National reporting

The work on national reporting will be led by the Coordinator, Major Aviateur Lode Dewaegheneire of Belgium. All High Contracting Parties are strongly encouraged to submit their national annual reports by the deadline of 31 March 2014. High Contracting Parties requiring assistance are most welcome to contact either the Coordinator or the CCW Implementation Support Unit.

Last year there was a discussion on merging Form E on “Steps taken to implement Article 7 of the Protocol: assistance with respect to existing explosive remnants of war” with Form F “Steps taken to implement Article 8 of the Protocol: cooperation and assistance” of the National Reporting Form. A new reporting template will be presented for discussion during the Meeting of Experts. All High Contracting Parties are urged to participate in this discussion.

The Coordinator with the support of the CCW Implementation Support Unit will be making a presentation on the reporting under Article 3.

Victim assistance

The work on victim assistance will be led by the Coordinator, Ms. Maria Victoria Picazo and, Friend of the Coordinator, Mr. Fernando Guzman of Chile. This year victim assistance will focus on implementation of the key elements of the Protocol V Plan of Action on Victim Assistance and Article 8(2).

- What is the level of understanding within your government on the situation of victims and
the challenges they face? For example, what statistics are available on victims in your country?

- What national laws and policies are in place to promote the rights of victims? And what processes or mechanisms have been established to consult with victims on the development and implementation of laws and policies which affect them?
- What medical care, rehabilitation services and psychological support is available to victims in your country? Also, how accessible are these services to the victims? For example, are the services free of charge and available throughout the country?
- What programmes, resources and services are available to victims to support their social and economic integration, especially in educational matters?
- Does your country have special education programmes for victims?
- If there is a framework to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities in your country? And if so, are victims of ERW included in that framework?

Generic Preventive Measures

Information on the Generic Preventive Measures session will be forwarded to delegations very soon.

I look forward to working with all delegations to ensure that we advance the objectives and implementation of Protocol V. If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact either my own delegation or Ms. Hine-Wai Loose, CCW Implementation Support Unit.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

The President-designate of the Eighth Conference of the High Contracting Parties to CCW Protocol V

Katerina Sequensova
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic