Geneva, 12 February 2013

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 (CCW)
Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW)
Clearance, removal or destruction of ERW, pursuant to Article 3, and Article 4 Generic Electronic Template

Excellency,

I am writing to you in my capacity as Coordinator for Clearance, removal or destruction of ERW, pursuant to Article 3 of CCW Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW), and Article 4 in preparation for the Meeting of Experts, which will take place from 10 to 12 April.

At the Sixth Conference of CCW Protocol V held in Geneva on 12-13 November 2012, on the issues of clearance and Article 4 High Contracting Parties decided:

To continue the consideration of clearance, removal or destruction of ERW in the context of meetings of experts and the conferences of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V;
To address capacity building in the areas of surveillance, clearance, removal and destruction of ERW at the national and community levels;
To encourage High Contracting Parties to include information in reporting forms B and H on steps taken by them to implement the provisions of Article 4 concerning the recording, retaining and transmission of information, and the steps taken to issue appropriate instructions and operating procedures and to provide training to its personnel pursuant to the provisions of Article 11; and
To further encourage High Contracting Parties to share their practices and experiences on how they give effect to their obligation to record, retain and transmit information on the use or abandonment of explosive ordnance, including such practices and experiences when participating in coalitions or alliances.

The Permanent Representatives of the High Contracting Parties to CCW Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War, Geneva
All High Contracting Parties to Protocol V and CCW, Signatory States and Observers are invited to participate in the session of the Meeting of Experts on clearance, removal or destruction of ERW and Article 4.

**Information and updates on the implementation of Article 3 – clearance, removal or destruction of ERW**

The objective of Protocol V is to prevent the humanitarian suffering through the clearance and destruction of ERW. Article 3 sets out the responsibilities of States in control of contaminated territory and users of explosive ordnance and the measures to be carried out to facilitate clearance operations. States and organizations are encouraged to provide information and updates on their progress towards fulfilling the objectives of Article 3 and any challenges they have experienced in carrying out the clearance and destruction of ERW.

**Special focus on capacity building for surveillance, clearance, removal and destruction of ERW**

This year there will be a special focus on capacity building in the areas of surveillance, clearance, removal and destruction of ERW at the national and community levels. Capacity building can include the provision of financial, managerial and technical support in order to enable governments and communities to manage and carry out their clearance programmes in the long term and for these operations to be sustainable. Both affected and donor States are encouraged to share their experiences on capacity building. What capacity building activities have been carried out? Have these been successful? If not, what challenges have been encountered? Has there been follow-up on the capacity building exercises? And what lessons have been learnt?

**Addressing existing ERW**

While the key focus of Protocol V is to establish a framework to prevent humanitarian harm from ERW in the future, the discussions on clearance would not be complete without considering how States are dealing with ERW from past conflicts (otherwise known as “existing ERW”). In order to stimulate debate on this matter, a Food-for-thought paper has been prepared on existing ERW.

**Advancing the implementation of Article 4 – recording the use and abandonment of explosive ordnance during an armed conflict**

On Article 4 of Protocol V, States and organization are invited to share information on the following:

- Measures taken to record and retain information on the use of explosive ordnance or abandonment of explosive ordnance during an armed conflict and transmission of information pursuant to the provisions of Article 4;
- Steps taken by States to issue appropriate instructions and operating procedures to their armed forces and to provide training to their personnel pursuant to the provisions of Article 11;
- Practices and experiences on how the High Contracting Parties give effect to their obligation to record, retain and transmit information on the use or abandonment of explosive ordnance, including such practices and experiences when participating in coalitions or alliances.

Taking into account the scope of the subjects, proposed for discussion and exchange of information, the participating States are encouraged to include military experts in the composition of their delegations.
National annual reporting

In the process of preparation to the Meeting of Experts, one of my tasks as Coordinator is to analyze reporting forms A, B and H of the Protocol V national annual reports which have been submitted by High Contracting Parties. To that end, the High Contracting Parties of CCW Protocol V are encouraged to update information in reporting forms A, B and H and submit their national annual reports within the respective deadline of **31 March 2013**.

Should you require further information on these issues, please do not hesitate to contact me or the CCW Implementation Support Unit.

Yours sincerely,

Ivan Grinevich

CCW Protocol V Coordinator on Clearance, removal or destruction of ERW, and Article 4