The Permanent Representatives of the High Contracting Parties
Signatory States and Observers States
To CCW Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War

Excellency,

In our capacities as the Coordinator and the Friend of the Coordinator on Victim Assistance pursuant to Article 8 (2) of Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War of the Convention on Prohibition or Restriction on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects, we kindly draw your attention to the next Meeting of Experts, which will take place in Geneva from 10 to 12 April 2013.

As the President-designate of the Seventh Conference for Protocol V recalled in his letter of 25 January 2013, the Sixth Conference for Protocol V in November 2012 decided "To amend national reporting template F (cooperation and assistance) by Form F bis "Steps taken by States which have ERW victims to implement the relevant provisions of Article 8(2): Victim Assistance". We strongly encourage all States that have victims of explosive remnants of war to make use of the new reporting template and share information on the state of implementation of their victim assistance measures. In accordance with the recommendations by the Sixth Conference, we particularly encourage States to include information on data collection, needs assessment as well as social and economic integration of victims in their reporting. The new template provides an opportunity for affected States to outline their priorities, challenges and needs regarding the assistance that they provide to victims.

The Sixth Conference of High Contracting Parties of 2012 recommended the Meeting of Experts in 2013 to focus on several specific challenges in the area of victim assistance. In accordance with these recommendations, we invite all delegations participating in the Meeting of Experts in April 2013 to prepare their contributions to the session on victim assistance along the following guiding questions:

- How could assistance to victims in accordance with Art. 8 (2) of Protocol V and the Plan of Action on Victim Assistance be further improved?
- How could victim assistance in the area of social and economic integration be strengthened?
• What challenges do states that have victims and/or provide assistance face in the area of social and economic integration?
• What more can be done to promote the Plan of Action on Victim Assistance across the CCW regime?

When ERW survivors acquire a disability, they fall under the scope of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). We encourage States to pay attention to the framework for assistance provided by that Convention, which indeed supplements and complements the victim assistance provisions of the CCW.

If you have any questions or seek further information, please feel free to contact the Coordinator on Victim Assistance, Mr. Fernando Guzman of Chile, Friend of the Coordinator, Ms. Caroline Wörgötter of Austria, or the CCW Implementation Support Unit.

We look forward to your active participation in the Meeting of Experts’ session on victim assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Fernando Guzmán
Coordinator on Victim Assistance

Caroline Wörgötter
Friend of the Coordinator