

**Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW
13-15 November 2019 – Geneva, Switzerland**

General exchange of views (agenda item 7)

CANADA

Chair,

On behalf of Canada, I would like to express our appreciation for the manner in which you have prepared the work of this Meeting of High Contracting Parties.

Canada is committed to the universalization of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its protocols, and believes that its capacity to balance security needs and humanitarian concerns allows it to function as a core instrument of international disarmament.

Canada recognizes the CCW as the appropriate forum for discussions on **Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS)**, and we support the continuation of the Group of Governmental Experts' work in 2020 and 2021, as agreed at the Group's last meeting in August.

Canada believes that the debate on legal questions related to LAWS should centre on compliance with International Humanitarian Law, including the obligation for all States to ensure the lawfulness of their weapons, means and methods of warfare.

The achievement of a 2019 [consensus document](#) is a testament to the leadership of the Chair, Mr. Gjorgjinski [GEE-OR-GIN-SKI] of North Macedonia, while also reflecting the collaborative spirit with which states engaged in discussions. Among other things, we see the formal endorsement of the 2018 guiding principles as a very positive achievement of this report. Regarding the two elements that were left in brackets in this document, we call on all High Contracting Parties to work constructively at this meeting to find reasonable common ground in order to make a decision on these points. We expect that discussions up to the 2021 Review Conference will be equally collaborative while keeping pace with the unrelenting advance of technological innovation that defines our time.

Chair,

Canada remains troubled by the indiscriminate use of **explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA)**. Such attacks have a devastating impact on civilians, causing death and injury as well as destruction and damage to infrastructures that are essential to the survival of civilians.

The indiscriminate use of these weapons is a question of compliance with International Humanitarian Law, as opposed to a problem inherent to a type of weapon. It is an issue that must be addressed by the international community, and we are seized of the urgency to continue discussions on how to ensure IHL compliance and the protection of civilians in these contexts. We recall that past successes of the CCW have relied on narrowly defining the weapons to be considered for prohibition.

Chair,

We thank you for your tireless efforts to find solutions to address ongoing **financial issues** within the Convention and improve the stability of the Secretariat's support. We agree that we must collectively ensure that the CCW has both the financial and human resources to fulfill its mandate.

To protect the Convention's long-term financial stability, it is essential that all High Contracting Parties pay their assessed contributions in full and on time, and this must remain the focus of our efforts.

We are also of the opinion that the integrity of the Convention's work, in particular as it pertains to emerging issues such as LAWS, depends on having specialized and dedicated staff providing secretarial support.

Given these considerations, Canada can support the proposed financial measures in your paper submitted to this meeting. We see the proposed creation of a Working Capital Fund (WCF) open for voluntary contributions as a useful tool to help ensure the stability of a dedicated Implementation Support Unit (ISU). In our view, it is fundamental that funds may only be withdrawn from the WCF to provide short-term liquidity to finance the contracts of the CCW ISU staff. However, regardless of the potential benefits of establishing a WCF, such a measure must not replace other efforts to address the core issue of non-payments.

This remains essential to ensure the functioning of this international legal instrument and will contribute to its objective of protecting the civilian population against the effects of hostilities.

Thank you.