

16/11/11 AM

## 4<sup>th</sup> Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

### Statement of Canada on Review of the Meeting Schedule

Mr. President,

Canada believes that the CCW is an important disarmament framework with real potential to make a humanitarian impact on the ground; it offers High Contracting Parties a unique forum in which to come together to deliberate and negotiate instruments designed to restrict or prohibit the use of those weapons which truly are "excessively injurious" or "have indiscriminate effects".

Opportunities for the negotiation of such instruments have been plentiful; by the end of this Conference, the CCW, in one forum or another will have met for 265 days over the last ten years, more than a full year of working days. Unfortunately, results have not always met the expectations of many High Contracting Parties. Canada is convinced that the CCW has adequate meeting time.

However, we think the CCW is lacking in a clear understanding of what its meetings are capable of achieving and possibly how to go about realizing our common objectives. To that end, Mr. President, Canada believes that the Non-Paper we tabled at the 3<sup>rd</sup> GGE in August may help us to focus our thoughts on outcomes for those meetings that we do hold. At your request, Mr. President, that paper was converted into a Working Paper, now identified as CCW/GGE/2011-III/WP.4.

In our experience the decisions taken regarding future meetings of the CCW are done so automatically, without very much regard for need or rationale for such a meeting. In the past, the key question seems to have been "*When will the conference facilities be available?*" and not "*What is the desired outcome?*" To address a possible weak spot in this approach, the Working Paper proposes a number of factors – varying in importance – that High Contracting Parties may wish to consider in the scheduling of future meetings, in order to determine the merit of any particular meeting. Canada does not envision that such factors would necessarily be applied against negotiation sessions where a clear mandate has been agreed.

For example, in addition to reflecting upon the desired outcome of a particular meeting, other factors that High Contracting Parties might like to consider before scheduling a meeting could include the following:

- Meetings should focus on compliance, implementation and universalization of the Convention, while providing sufficient flexibility to undertake new work.
- Meetings should be scheduled for the minimum time necessary to achieve their objectives.
- Review Conferences should be scheduled for the minimum time necessary to achieve their objectives. The frequency of such Conferences must be commensurate with the need to address interrelated issues;
- Further consideration should be given to the role the Implementation Support Unit may be able to play in the implementation of the Convention.

In essence, High Contracting Parties should be asking themselves the following questions, *inter alia*, before agreeing to schedule meetings:

- *What are we trying to achieve at this meeting?*
- *How long will it take to achieve it?*
- *Do we need a Review Conference to take key decisions or can a shorter annual meeting achieve the same outcome?*
- *Conversely, if the current Annual Conferences cannot take key decisions, how frequently should those conferences occur?*
- *Is there a way to better use the expertise provided by the ISU in carrying out our work?*

Only once we answer these questions, should we then move on to the original question of "*When will the conference facilities be available?*"

Mr. President, Canada believes that we must take a rational look at why we schedule meetings and what we expect to achieve from them. A successful example of that sort of review was the 1st Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention – where that Convention reduced the frequency of meetings by a third and the number of days devoted to those meetings by thirty-five over the last seven years.

Thank you.