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Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)

Meeting of High Contracting Parties

General Debate statement, 16 November

Thank you, President.

At the outset, let me congratulate you on your election as chair of this important Conference. We assure you of our full support.

Australia is proud to be a State Party to the CCW and its five annexed Protocols. Together, they play a vital role in balancing military necessity with humanitarian considerations in conflict. We urge all States yet to join these instruments – particularly States in our own region – to do so.

As we convene on a topic of international humanitarian law, we cannot ignore the devastation wrought by Russia's unlawful and immoral invasion of Ukraine. Russia's reported use of anti-personnel mines and victim-activated booby-traps are deeply concerning. We also condemn Russia's deliberate shelling of civilians.

We hope the political declaration on strengthening the protection of civilians from the humanitarian consequences arising from the use of EWIPA, to be adopted in Dublin this week, will meaningfully contribute to improved IHL compliance and enhanced civilian protection.

President,

Australia has been encouraged by work undertaken in the LAWS GGE this year. We commend Ambassador Damico for the skilful way in which he has guided us.

Although difficult at times, my delegation remains of the view that the CCW is the appropriate forum for these discussions. Through focused discussion on specific proposals, the GGE has made important progress and common understandings are emerging. While we

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remain to be convinced of the need for new law, we are ready to engage constructively with all proposals and consider there is much more to discuss. Therefore, we hope this Meeting of High Contracting Parties will provide a clear mandate for the GGE to intensify its work next year.

President

Australia is gravely concerned about the ongoing global threat of IEDs and we are redoubling our commitment in this area. We are also proud of our ongoing contribution to broader international mine assistance, which totalled over \$5.8 million last year.

Allow me to conclude by urging consideration of the gendered aspects of conventional arms use as an integral part of our work. We also champion full and effective participation of both men and women in these fora so that our disarmament machinery can operate to its full potential.

Thank you, President

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