

CCW Meeting of the High Contracting Parties 14 – 15 November 2013

General Exchange of Views

Statement by Norway

Thank you Mr Chair,

On behalf of Norway, I would like to congratulate you with your election as chair and I assure you of Norway's full support.

When the CCW was negotiated in the late 1970s it was against the background of the widespread indignation over the use of certain types of weapons in recent conflicts that had caused massive harm to civilians as well as excessive injury to combatants. In other words, it was the humanitarian realities that guided our efforts and prompted us to start developing international law in order to enhance the actual protection against the effects caused by certain specific weapons.

Since then, our understanding and knowledge has continued to grow. The nature of conflicts has changed, the international acceptance of the limitations of choice of means of warfare has grown, and the importance of protection of civilians is on top of our agenda. 'Today, thanks to modern communication technology, including the near-universal use of social media, together with dedicated and relentless work done by humanitarian organisations and civil society, we may follow a conflict in real time.

Norway would like to commend organisations like Human Rights Watch and others who make the most out of these opportunities that exist to bring the horrific realities to our attention. The presence and active participation of civil society in the CCW, both in the plenary meetings, and in side-events, is highly appreciated. This week we have learned about the horrendous effects of the use of incendiary weapons in Syria, we have learned about the dilemmas surrounding the use of autonomous weapons systems, and we have heard about the indiscriminate effects of explosive weapons and the impact when used in populated areas.

As we, the High Contracting Parties of the CCW, move forward, we need to remember the rationale of this instrument's existence – to protect human beings from the indiscriminate effects or the excessive injury caused by certain weapons. In our view, one lesson that we have learned since the 1970s is that in order to achieve this objective, we must focus on the actual effect of certain weapons, not their design or intended effect. The added value of the CCW may be determined by how we implement our obligations and by how we respond to new information. If we base our work on facts and realities, if we include those partners with the most expertise and competence in our deliberations, and we have a common humanitarian objective, we believe that we can achieve progress.

Finally, we would like to thank you Mr Chair as well the Chairs of the meetings of Protocol V and Amended Protocol II for the letter sent to all High Contracting Parties on 30 August. We very much support the ideas put forward with regard to rationalization of our work, and the proposals to reduce costs and administrative procedures, specifically with regard to suspending the Rules of Procedure requiring summary records as well as the rules on the requirement for credentials. Norway welcomes all proposals that aim to render our work and efforts more cost-effective.

Thank you.