



**Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW)**

**Meeting of High Contracting Parties**

**General Exchange of Views – 13 November 2019**

**Statement by Sri Lanka**

Mr. President,

It is with great pleasure and warmth that Sri Lanka welcomes you to Geneva and joins in congratulating you on your appointment as the President of this year's Meeting of High Contracting Parties to the CCW. We commend the leadership provided by Pakistan to the CCW process in the run up to this Meeting, as it did during the CCW Review Conference of 2016 as well. We also take this opportunity to applaud Benin on acceding to Protocols II, IV and V in 2019, further strengthening its commitment to the cause of the CCW.

Mr. President,

As a country successfully emerging from the effects of long-term conflict, Sri Lanka appreciates and underlines the pronounced need for humanitarian disarmament and arms control. Norms of humanity and related principles of international humanitarian law, including proportionality, inform discourses on regulation, control and eventual elimination of weapons that are excessively injurious. Following years of humanitarian demining work that was undertaken even as the conflict was raging, we are now inching closer to making Sri Lanka landmines-free in the near future. Through sustained national efforts at mine risk education, we also succeeded in bringing civilian casualties of landmines, to zero by 2018.

Sri Lanka stands ready to further continuing its work towards achieving the principles and objectives of the CCW and its protocols, and we consider this Meeting as an important platform for all stakeholders to reaffirm their commitment to steering the spirit of the CCW forward through today's fast-evolving technological and security landscapes.

Mr. President,

We support the discussions within the GGE on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), and encourage the continuation of the GGE process. While being aware of the challenges that need to be overcome, including issues such as a working definition of LAWS, the accepted degree of autonomy, predictability, reliability and attribution of

accountability, which need to be addressed through careful and objective analyses, we support the proposal to undertake negotiations on a legally binding instrument on LAWS within the international legal frameworks of human rights and humanitarian law. Pending the finalisation and operationalisation of such an international legal instrument, we urge States to put in place national moratoria on the development or use of LAWS.

In conclusion, Mr. President, we acknowledge the need to address the issue of explosive weapons in populated areas - broadly known as 'urban warfare' - which often leads to extensive humanitarian consequences. While appreciating the voluntary international commitments that are being initiated in this regard, we wish to highlight the importance and relevance of exploring the applicability of the overarching framework of the CCW to this growing concern.

Thank you.