



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**

**Statement by Sri Lanka
21 November 2018**

Mr. President,

At the outset, let me join in congratulating you on your appointment as the President of the Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW this year, and appreciate the extensive consultations conducted in preparations for this meeting. We extend a warm welcome to the State of Palestine for its accession to CCW and for Mauritius for becoming a Party to Protocol V and amended Protocol II. We hope all non-States Parties too would consider taking appropriate action to follow suite to realise the universalisation goal of the Convention and to adhere to the humanitarian principles enshrined in Protocol II.

Sri Lanka attaches great importance to the CCW, as one of the key instruments advancing humanitarian disarmament, which addresses the concerns on maintaining the balance on military necessity and mitigating humanitarian concerns arising from the use of certain conventional weapons or weapons systems. The Convention has guided Sri Lanka during its protracted internal armed conflict, in particular, addressing the humanitarian challenges associated with use and clearance of land-mines, and dealing with IEDs and other unexploded ordnance. Today we join a group of 164 States who are a Party to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (Ottawa Treaty) and in our broader commitment to pursue humanitarian demining objectives we have already become a State Party to the Cluster Munitions Convention.

We believe that the extensive preparations underway to present our first transparency report under Ottawa Convention later this month will pave way for Sri Lanka to provide necessary reporting under amended Protocol II (Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices). As a country that has a depth of experience on the consequences on the use of landmines, Sri Lanka is on a firm path towards making Sri Lanka a country that is landmines free by 2020. We have already made considerable headway in determining the extent of contaminated area which is now limited to 26km² and a robust mine risk education programme involving the affected community which has resulted in a drastic reduction of mine related casualty for e.g. in year 2017 there had been only 2 reported incidents. Sri Lanka will be in a position to share its experience and innovative methodologies used as well as programmes adopted in its mine action endeavours with those other interested parties.

Mr. President,

Following the mandate received from the fifth review conference on establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), which held two expert level meetings in April and August 2018 resulted in identifying possible guiding principles and recommending to continue discussions in the GGE in 2019. We take this opportunity to commend Ambassador Amendeep Singh Gill for his leadership in conducting this work of the GGE. We also appreciate the role played by Civil Society in furthering the debate on LAWS into a GGE and their continued engagement in this process. Sri Lanka recommends that the Programme of Work of the next session of the GGE be structured to facilitate policy – oriented deliberations among States, which will lead to concrete outcomes next year, including agreement on a possible international regulatory framework on LAWS.

Mr. President,

With regard to the discussion on **Mines other Than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM)**, Sri Lanka welcomes the objectives of the current discussion on reducing the indiscriminate and injurious impact of these weapons. However, MOTAPMs have been used as affordable legitimate defensive weapons by a majority of countries. Financial pressure on developing countries that may arise from the adoption of alternatives or options as appropriate for their security should be seriously looked into, and a credible mechanism for providing technological and financial support for countries to upgrade their MOTAPMs could also be considered in this regard. Thus we request that further discussions on exchanging best practices on managing MOTAPM be considered by the High Contracting Parties as to encourage developing countries to actively contribute to the cause, with a financial and technical support system in place.

Mr. President,

Financial challenges we are mindful that the threat posed by financial constraints continues, and may affect our deliberations in 2019 as well. In this context, we take note of the proposals by the Chair to address the long and medium term funding issues and to ensure the sustainability of the Convention. We appreciate the commitment and the support extended by the UNODA and in the interest of maintaining institutional memory of the Secretariat and its ability to dedicate time for supporting individual State Parties a sustainable solution reached with consensus of all parties is of crucial importance.

Finally Mr. President,

We wish you success in the conduct of the meeting, and assure you the full cooperation of my delegation.

I thank you.