

# Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the 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

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**An Accelerated Plan of Action on Universalization of the Convention and its annexed Protocols**

## Promoting universality of the Convention and its Protocols

**Submitted by the Implementation Support Unit**

### Introduction

1. In 2015, Algeria and the State of Palestine joined the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) taking its total number of High Contracting Parties to 121. The 2011 Fourth Review Conference agreed to “An Accelerated Plan of Action on Universalization of the Convention and its annexed Protocols”<sup>1</sup>. Universalization remains a priority for CCW officeholders, High Contracting Parties and the Implementation Support Unit. The Accelerated Plan of Action called for actions in support of universalization, such as urging High Contracting Parties to promote universalization through their bilateral contacts; the United Nations, CCW Implementation Support Unit, International Committee of the Red Cross and other organisations to promote universalization; the CCW Implementation Support Unit to explore all opportunities for promoting universalization and to support High Contracting Parties in this work; and to establish universalization as a standing item of the annual CCW Meetings of High Contracting Parties. This report is in response to the call for, “the CCW Implementation Support Unit to continue to report annually to the Meeting of the High Contracting Parties on the efforts undertaken towards and progress made on universalization”<sup>2</sup>.

### Actions to promote universalization

2. The Presidents-designate of the 2015 CCW Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Mr. Ravinath Aryasinha, Ambassador of Sri Lanka, Seventeenth Annual Conference of Amended Protocol II, Mr. Raimonds Jansons, Ambassador of Latvia, and Ninth Conference

<sup>1</sup> An Accelerated Plan of Action on universalization of the Convention and its annexed Protocols, annex I, final declaration, final document of the Fourth Review Conference, CCW/CONF.IV/4/Add.1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, paragraph 9.



of Protocol V, Mr. M. Shameen Ahsan, Ambassador of the Bangladesh, have sent joint messages to all States not yet party urging them to join the CCW.

3. Sri Lanka, as President-designate of the 2015 CCW Meeting of High Contracting Parties, has met with States not yet party to the CCW and held meetings with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the League of Arab States. Following these two meetings, Ambassador Aryasinha wrote to the members of each regional group to reiterate the key messages conveyed and to urge them to join the CCW. As it was not possible for the Chair to meet with the African Union, Sri Lanka is in the process of organizing bilateral meetings with States from that regional group. At the South Asian Regional International Humanitarian Law Seminar, which was co-organized by Sri Lanka and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in May 2015, Sri Lanka's Senior Legal Advisor from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs spoke on the role of the CCW and its Protocols and urged States not yet party to join without delay.

4. Latvia, as President-designate of the Seventeenth Conference of Amended Protocol II, met with Kazakhstan, Mexico, Uzbekistan to urge them to join Amended Protocol II and Brunei Darussalam and Lebanon to join the CCW and its Protocols.

5. Bangladesh, as President-designate of Ninth Conference of Protocol V, met with Afghanistan, Cambodia, Mongolia and Myanmar to urge them to join the Protocol. In its meetings, Bangladesh emphasized that Protocol V is critical to reducing civilian casualties that all too often due to the dangers posed by explosive remnants of war following the end of a conflict. Bangladesh is continuing to conduct bilateral meetings to encourage States not yet party to join Protocol V. Lithuania as Vice-President-designate met with Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mozambique and Singapore to urge them to join the CCW and in particular Protocol V. Kazakhstan informed Lithuania that they started Parliamentary procedures to join Protocol II and Protocol V.

6. The United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. BAN Ki-moon, hosted the "Treaty Event" from 28 September to 1 October 2015 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. This event is held to encourage States to sign and accede to the multilateral treaties deposited with the Secretary-General. The CCW and its Protocols was included as one of the "Highlighted Treaties".

7. In December 2014, the former High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Angela Kane, wrote to all Permanent Representatives of States not yet party to the CCW to urge them to join the Convention and its Protocol V. Included with the message was the CCW booklet. The current Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. KIM Won-soo, has promoted CCW universalization in his meetings with regional groups and individual States.

8. The Russian Federation held the International Conference on Demining and Counter Improvised Explosive Devices, from 29 June to 1 July 2015, in Moscow. The CCW Implementation Support Unit participated in the Conference, which provided an invaluable opportunity to emphasize the importance of Amended Protocol II and Protocol V and to speak directly with States not yet party, such as Armenia, Egypt and Indonesia on joining the CCW.

9. The CCW Sponsorship Programme financed the attendance to the 2014 Eighth Conference on Protocol V: Montenegro and the Philippines, which are both CCW High Contracting Parties, but have not yet joined Protocol V. The attendance to the 2015 Amended Protocol II, Protocol V and Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems Meetings of Experts was financed for the following States not yet party to the CCW: Afghanistan and Ghana. Mongolia, which has not yet joined Protocol V, was also sponsored to attend the Meetings of Experts. The sponsored delegates attended breakfast briefing and those that have not yet joined the CCW were asked about the prospects of their doing.

10. The International Committee of the Red Cross continues to support universalization of the CCW and its Protocols by including this issue in its regional meetings and bilateral discussions with governments and regional seminars on international humanitarian law. This year the International Committee of the Red Cross participated in the briefings for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the League of Arab States, which were organized by CCW Chair-designate and the CCW Implementation Support Unit.

11. The Implementation Support Unit's work on universalization included drafting and sending messages to States not yet party from the 2015 Presidents-designates, drafting briefs on universalization, when necessary organizing and attending bilateral meetings for the officeholders, providing advice on joining the CCW and its Protocols and briefing visiting delegations and groups to the United Nations Office at Geneva.

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