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Opening Statement

Ambassador Stephan NELLEN
Director GICHD

Third Review Conference
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Mr President

Let me first congratulate you on your election. I can assure you that we will support you in your work in the coming weeks and months. The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) looks forward to a productive Third Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)).

We strongly welcome tangible and concrete results of the High Contracting Parties' deliberations over the next two weeks. A strong commitment to the humanitarian principle of regulating and restricting the use of Mines Other-Than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM) and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW), including cluster weapons, would constitute a major achievement for the years to come.

It is the overall objective of the GICHD to continue to contribute through technical inputs to a discussion, on an objective level, with regard to the humanitarian impact of conventional weapons and munitions. In particular, we recall, that **MOTAPM** present a serious obstacle to post-conflict recovery for returning refugees and other civilians, as well as humanitarian workers and the landmine clearance sector. Therefore we hope that CCW States Parties will strive to adopt a strong legally binding instrument addressing all humanitarian concerns posed by this type of mines.

The GICHD is ready to contribute to the discussions, in particular on the two important issues remaining open which must be part of a solution.

The first issue regards **detectability**. Based on our broad experience, we think that for mine detection “*commonly available methods and equipments*” remain today the metal detector, the prodder and to limited extent the use of dogs.

In terms of new technologies to improve detection of buried MOTAPM, there is very little in the inventory. The requirement whereby MOTAPM have an eight gram piece of iron in a single coherent mass, would make them detectable, when buried to the depth of five centimetres, under the vast majority of soil and environmental conditions in the world today.

The second issue regards the **active-life** of MOTAPM. From a humanitarian point of view, it remains relevant that MOTAPM

are provided with a self-destruction or a self-neutralization mechanism, with a back-up self-deactivation feature in both cases.

In **conclusion**, for the MOTAPM issue, if a new protocol should be adopted – what is our hope -, the content must have a clear added value to Amended Protocol II. If the High Contracting Parties would regrettably not reach an agreement, they should consider focusing their attention in the years to come on the implementation of Amended Protocol II, in particular in relation to MOTAPM.

With regard to **ERW**, the GICHD hopes that the entry into force of Protocol V during the Third Review Conference on 12 November 2006 will be a first step to address the danger of unexploded ordnance and abandoned explosive ordnance after conflicts.

Sustained efforts are still needed to bring more States to ratify it. The GICHD is ready, if requested, to assist the States in implementing Protocol V, and to make it a strong instrument.

Coming to the issue of **compliance**, the GICHD would like to remind delegations that similar mechanisms have been established for the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, which might serve as an inspiration to the CCW and its Protocols. The CCW certainly needs a strong compliance mechanism to ensure its effectiveness on the ground.

Let me conclude by mentioning the draft decision paper – in Addendum 8 - on a possible **CCW Sponsorship Programme**. For the GICHD, the draft decision provides a sound basis of the general principles, the basics goals, the operational purposes, and the operational modalities. Our experience in the context of the Anti Personnel Mine Ban Convention has shown that such a program can be effective. The GICHD is ready to play an effective role in a newly established program, if so requested.

Mr. President, I wish all of us a fruitful CCW Third Review Conference. Be reassured, that the GICHD will do its utmost to support your work and of the Presidents of the Two Main Committees.