

Statement by the Republic of Lithuania

Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

Geneva, 14 November 2013

Mr. President,

Let me begin by congratulating you upon your appointment as President of our Meeting and by pledging full cooperation and support of the Lithuanian Delegation in your endeavors.

Lithuania aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union. Allow me now elaborate on some matters of particular importance to Lithuania.

Lithuania remains firmly committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its Protocols as essential means to strengthening international humanitarian law. We regard CCW as a unique forum to gather diplomatic, legal and military expertise to address both the ongoing and the emerging issues.

The universalization of CCW is an issue of utmost importance. We welcome the accession of Kuwait and Zambia to the Convention and to all its annexed Protocols this year, thus making the CCW a community of 117 members. Despite this progress towards universal adherence, we note that almost half of the UN Member States have not yet ratified or otherwise acceded to the CCW and its Protocols. We welcome Mr. President your engagement and hard work vis-à-vis the universalization of the Convention and its Protocols, Lithuania has consistently supported international efforts addressing the security, humanitarian and socio-economic impact of conventional weapons and their indiscriminate use on civilian populations. Therefore, we are deeply concerned about the reported use in Syria of cluster munitions and the alleged use of incendiary weapons against civilian targets which have unacceptable humanitarian consequences. We call to refrain from using the weapons that have indiscriminate impact.

We do also take note of the emerging debate related to lethal autonomous weapon systems. We recognize that the development of such fully autonomous weapons could raise substantial questions. This debate is a complex one. We need to improve our understanding, bearing in mind that those technologies are still under development. We

see value in a common discussion on this matter in the framework of the CCW, which is the best-suited forum gathering the diplomatic, legal and military expertise needed. Such a discussion could aim to explore and provide clarity on the different aspects of the topic. In our perspective, it could help to better understand what we are talking about, what the perspectives are and what is at stake. Therefore, Lithuania welcomes the idea to convene a three-to five days informal meeting of experts in 2014 to discuss the questions related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems and to report its' outcomes to the to the 2014 Meeting of High Contracting Parties to the Convention.

In conclusion, we are looking forward to the results of this annual meeting to further discuss the ongoing and future topics and to advance our common objectives.

Thank you Mr. President.