

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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Agenda item 9

Issues related to the Implementation Support Unit

Report of the Implementation Support Unit

Submitted by the Implementation Support Unit*

I. Introduction

1. The implementation Support Unit (ISU) was established by the 2009 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW).¹ The Unit is housed in the Geneva Branch of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), which supports the ISU through a range of services which include financial, logistical, administrative and personnel management oversight to ensure compliance with the United Nations rules and regulations. The Branch also coordinates and liaises with the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG)'s relevant conference services to facilitate the efficient organization of CCW meetings and conferences.

2. The ISU is funded by the annual assessed contributions of High Contracting Parties and supported by the voluntary Working Capital Fund (WCF). The WCF was established at the 2019 Meeting of High Contracting Parties to provide liquidity during the financial year with a view to ensuring the stability of ISU support to the Convention. However, the ongoing lack of predictable and timely payment of annual assessed contributions by the High Contracting Parties resulted in the partial staffing of the ISU. During the reporting period, the ISU was staffed with a temporary P-3 staff member only. In October 2022, a temporary P-4 staff member was recruited to head the ISU for a period of 6 months. To maximize the efficiency of the ISU staff and operations, sustainable, timely and predictable entry of funds is required. Until such time, the stability of the ISU will remain precarious.

3. The present report summarizes the activities of the CCW Implementation Support Unit from 14 December 2021 to 31 October 2022.

II. Support to the Sixth Review Conference

4. At the Sixth Review Conference of High Contracting Parties to the CCW, held on 13-17 December 2021, the ISU followed up on the preparatory work for the Conference, captured in the 2021 Report of the ISU (CCW/CONF.VI/4), through the facilitation of, and support to, negotiations, meetings and bilateral consultations on the current and future work of the Convention and its mandates. During the Review Conference, the Unit advised the Presidency on procedural matters and supported him in the fulfilment of his duties, including the preparation and revision of the final document of the conference and its annexes. In addition, the ISU organized and contributed to regular meetings with the committees of the

* This document is submitted after the deadline owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.¹ Final report, CCW/MSP/2009/5, paragraphs 34 to 37.

Conference (Main Committee I, Main Committee II and Credentials Committee) to prepare the respective reports. Additionally, ISU prepared all relevant meeting documentation, facilitated the collection and circulation of proposals by the High Contracting Parties and the delivery of statements by participants. The ISU also worked extensively with the Presidency and relevant units and departments of UNOG to provide inputs to draft decisions, notably the drafting, consolidation and negotiation of the consolidated financial measures. Furthermore, the Unit provided procedural guidance to the officeholders, as well as technical, logistical and administrative support to the meeting, such as registration of participants, the collection and validation of credentials and the submission and circulation of official documents.

III. Support to officeholders and 2022 meetings and processes

5. In early 2022, the ISU coordinated with regional groups in relation to nominations to vacant officeholder positions. The ISU briefed officeholders on their responsibilities and supported them in carrying out related tasks. In this regard, the ISU coordinated the drafting and circulation of a joint letter on the timeline of key CCW activities to be held in 2022 and other formal communications. In addition, the Unit assisted the officeholders in their outreach to High Contracting Parties on national annual reporting responsibilities and to non-High Contracting Parties on universalization, including by providing substantive background information and analysis, briefing on past efforts, and preparing letters to Permanent Missions. As part of this assistance, the ISU also accompanied the officeholders to several bilateral meetings with representatives of High Contracting Parties to provide information on the Convention and its Protocols and their relevance to the respective State, national implementation and relevant obligations arising from adherence to the instruments. Furthermore, the ISU coordinated with the relevant UNOG units and departments to allow for timely planning and preparation of the official meetings.

6. For the meetings of the 2022 Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), the ISU ensured timely decision-making by the High Contracting Parties on procedural aspects, including for the designation of a Chairperson in February and briefed the incoming officeholder on the requirements associated with the position. As the substantive secretariat of the CCW, the Unit assisted the Chairperson in preparing official documents, including the provisional agenda, the provisional program of work and supported the Chairperson in drafting the final report. During the official meetings of the Group, the Unit provided the Chairperson with substantive guidance and supported him in the fulfilment of his duties, including through the organization of, and assistance to, numerous informal thematic consultations and procedural matters. The ISU also compiled and circulated proposals submitted by CCW High Contracting Parties on possible measures and other options related to the normative and operational framework on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapon systems and assisted the Chairperson in the analysis and evaluation of the proposals to enable him to fulfil the mandate of the Group to consider proposals and elaborate, by consensus, possible measures. In this regard, the Unit also provided the Chairperson with substantive and logistical support for three sets of informal intersessional discussions on the topics to be considered at the formal session and to provide a platform for High Contracting Parties to present their national proposals submitted to the Chairperson, in line with the mandate given to the Group by the CCW Sixth Review Conference.² In addition, to further understanding on certain elements of potential relevance to the work of the GGE, the Unit contributed to the organization of two webinars on ethics and emerging technologies in weapon systems, and on the legal and ethical implications of algorithmic bias in emerging technologies in the area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) respectively.

7. The ISU provided support to the preparation and organization of the meeting of Group of Experts on Amended Protocol II (20-21 July 2022) and the Meeting of Experts on Protocol V (22 July 2022) by engaging in the following actions: developing and circulating information materials such as the indicative program of work, recommending and contacting panellists and briefing the officeholders and coordinators on their responsibilities and past

² CCW/CONF.VI/11, paragraph 38.

practice. The ISU also conducted and presented an analysis of the national annual reports of the two Protocols. Following the expert meetings, the Unit supported the coordinators of Amended Protocol II and Protocol V in the substantive preparation of reports on the deliberations.

8. For the 2022 Meeting of High Contracting Parties, the 16th Conference of Protocol V and the 24th Annual Conference of Amended Protocol II, scheduled to take place in November, the ISU has coordinated with regional groups for the nomination of officeholders and prepared pre-session documents.

9. Furthermore, the ISU assisted the Chair of the Sixth Review Conference in the preparation of and consultations on the draft General Assembly resolution on the CCW.

10. Following the accession of Malawi to the CCW on 23 September 2022, the ISU met with the Geneva Mission to officially welcome them to the Convention and invite them to take part in the upcoming Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention. The ISU also expressed its readiness to assist Malawi in implementing its obligations under the Convention.

IV. National annual reports

11. According to the final report of the 2009 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention, the ISU is mandated to serve as focal point for submission of information by and to the High Contracting Parties related to the Convention and its Protocols; develop and maintain the CCW website and the CCW databases as directed by the annual Meetings of the High Contracting Parties (CCW/MSP/2009/5, paragraph 36 (c)).

12. Each year, the ISU receives the national annual reports submitted by High Contracting Parties pursuant to paragraph 5 of the decision on Compliance, as adopted by the Third Review Conference of the Convention, Article 13 (4) of Amended Protocol II and Article 10 (2) (b) of Protocol V. When permission is granted by High Contracting Parties, the national annual reports are made available online on their respective databases by the CCW ISU.

13. As of 31 October 2022:

- A total of 58 High Contracting Parties (46%) have submitted their Compliance report, (as compared to 49 Compliance reports submitted in 2021, i.e. 39% of High Contracting Parties);
- A total of 64 High Contracting Parties (60%) have submitted their national annual report under Amended Protocol II, (as compared to 55 national annual reports submitted in 2021, i.e. 52% of High Contracting Parties);
- A total of 54 High Contracting Parties (55%) have submitted their national annual report under Protocol V, (as compared to 49 national annual reports submitted in 2021, i.e. 51% of High Contracting Parties).

14. The ISU is pleased to report the upwards trends in reporting obligations and stands ready to provide further support to High Contracting Parties in the upcoming reporting cycles. Furthermore, to bolster the goals of the CCW Compliance mechanism, the ISU stands ready to support, upon request, any High Contracting Party in the process of drafting annual reports by providing briefings and capacity-building trainings. Subject to the availability of funds, ISU also plans on developing practical tools and information that may assist in the practical implementation of the Convention and its Protocols.

V. Sponsorship programme

15. The ISU played an important role in the reactivation of the sponsorship programme, following two years of inactivity due to COVID-19. The Unit worked closely with the Steering Committee to designate a coordinator, launch a call for applications for all CCW meetings taking place in the second half of 2022 and select awardees, as well as with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) to coordinate with

sponsored delegates. As indicated in the [agreed guidelines for the CCW Sponsorship Programme](#), the ISU also consulted officeholders and the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) on recommendations for sponsorship, in addition to conducting active outreach to States not parties to the CCW and under-represented regions, which resulted in a wide range of sponsorship candidates.

16. The ISU assisted the Steering Committee in the preparation of the report of the Sponsorship Programme, which is submitted to the Meeting of High Contracting Parties.

VI. Finance

17. The ISU continuously monitors the financial situation of the Convention and the availability of funds for the mandated activities. The Unit coordinated with the finance unit of UNOG for the issuance and distribution of the 2022 invoices, the closing of accounts from previous years and the implementation of the consolidated financial measures adopted by the Sixth Review Conference, in particular the five-year budget. The Unit also engaged in efforts to secure funds for 2022 activities in a timely manner, such as official and informal outreaches to High Contracting Parties with arrears and sharing with High Contracting Parties the status of contributions.

18. The Sixth Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW requested the ISU to continue to report annually on the estimated costs and the actual costs of the meetings and conferences of the preceding year.³ The estimated and actual costs of the mandated CCW activities of 2021, comprising both conferencing and non-conferencing costs, are available on the [financial website](#).

19. The Conference also requested the ISU to submit a report on the status of High Contracting Parties' financial contributions to the CCW.⁴ As of 30 September 2022, 91.9% of assessed contributions for the 2022 CCW account was received. Of the US\$ 1,362,200 billed, US\$ 110,027.14 remain as outstanding payment. Outstanding amounts from closed accounts (2018-2021) are US\$ 200,127.58. The ISU urges High Contracting Parties to meet their financial commitments in a timely manner at the beginning of each year to allow for proper functioning of the ISU.

20. The 2019 Meeting of High Contracting Parties established a voluntary Working Capital Fund to provide liquidity during the financial year with a view to ensuring the stability of ISU support to the Convention.⁵ At the time of reporting, the Fund balance amounts to USD 195,238.12 according to the [financial dashboard](#). High Contracting Parties are also encouraged to replenish the Working Capital Fund.

VII. Communication, outreach and coordination

21. The main means of communication with the High Contracting Parties, international organizations and non-governmental organizations are e-mail and the UNODA website. The ISU updates the mailing list and the CCW webpages on a regular basis, to increase its utility not only for High Contracting Parties but also for outreach, awareness-raising and communication to a global audience. In addition, the Unit manages the national annual reports database on compliance, Amended Protocol II and Protocol V, as well as a restricted webpage for voluntary responses to the IED questionnaire. Financial information on the Convention, including the status of contributions and individual invoices, is available on the dashboard and the restricted webpage.

22. The ISU contributed to numerous UNODA and UNOG communication and outreach efforts, including to ODA social media channels, with a view to raising awareness on the CCW and its Protocols and related activities. The Unit regularly updates the CCW and

³ CCW/CONF.VI/11, Part II, paragraph 33.

⁴ CCW/CONF.VI/11, Part II, paragraph 34.

⁵ CCW/MSP/2019/9, paragraph 35.

meeting webpages, which remain the primary repository of documents and information on the CCW and its Protocols.

23. The ISU engages in regular communication with States not parties to the CCW, international and regional organizations, civil society and academia to raise awareness of and provide information on the activities of the Convention. In particular, the ISU briefed new disarmament focal points, disarmament fellows and visiting students.

24. The ISU maintained regular contact with many academic institutions as well as industry and non-governmental organizations on matters related to the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols. The ISU also maintained regular contact with a wide range of international organizations relevant to the Convention and is an active participant in processes, outreach and implementation efforts undertaken by these organizations.

25. The ISU takes part in the monthly meetings of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA) and briefs the Group on relevant developments related to Amended Protocol II and Protocol V.

26. The ISU supported the organization of four meetings with regional groups and three webinars in relation to the Sixth Review Conference follow-up, universalization and emerging issues of relevance to the Convention, in the framework of the European Union Council decision (CFSP) 2021/1694 in support of the CCW. The ISU also contributed to the development of outreach materials on the Convention, as well as the preparation of upcoming events on national annual reports and universalization under the same Council decision.

VIII. Future work

27. In 2023, the ISU will seek to expand its mandated work of supporting the High Contracting Parties, on request, in the implementation of the CCW and its Protocols and contributing to the promotion of the universalization of the CCW and its annexed Protocols, by providing tailored advice and support to High Contracting Parties and developing tools and services to strengthen the practical implementation of the Convention and its Protocols at the domestic, regional and international levels. ISU will also continue to work closely with the officeholders in these areas, in support of their mandates, and will strengthen its work with other United Nations partners, civil society and academia, to support High Contracting Parties in achieving the goals of the Convention and its Protocols. To do so, the ISU will rely on the continuing support of the High Contracting Parties.
