

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

20 September 2023

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Agenda item 10

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's (UNOG) 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. At the time of writing, the ISU is fully staffed (with one temporary P-3 and one temporary P-4 post). For the ISU to remain fully staffed and functional and to maximize its efficiency and operations, sustainable, timely and predictable entry of funds is required.

3. The present report summarizes the activities of the CCW Implementation Support Unit from 1 November 2022 to 15 September 2023.

II. Support to officeholders and 2022 meetings and processes

4. During the reporting period, the ISU continued the substantive and logistical preparations for the 16th Annual Conference of Protocol V (14 November 2022), the 24th Annual Conference of Amended Protocol II (15 November 2022) and the 2022 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties (16-18 November 2022). During those meetings, the ISU advised the officeholders on substantive and procedural matters and supported them in the fulfilment of their duties; supported the officeholders in preparing the final documents of the two Annual Conferences and of the 2022 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties; supported and facilitated informal consultations and negotiations and bilateral meetings; and provided technical, logistical and administrative support to the three meetings. This included the registration of participants and preparation of the list of participants; maintenance and updating of the websites of the meetings; circulating messages to High Contracting Parties regarding the organization of the meetings; the submission and circulation of official

¹ Final report, CCW/MSP/2009/5, paragraphs 34 to 37.



documents; liaising with delegations regarding their working paper submissions and responding to all queries related to the meetings; coordination of side events for all meetings and liaising accordingly with the UNOG Division of Conference Management (DCM); liaising with UNOG Financial Resource Management Service (FRMS) regarding the invoices and other financial matters relating to assessed contributions; among others.

III. Support to officeholders and 2023 meetings and processes

5. In early 2023, the ISU coordinated with regional groups in relation to nominations for vacant officeholder positions, briefed incoming officeholders on their responsibilities and supported them in carrying out their duties and functions. The ISU organized a meeting among all officeholders at the beginning of the year to enhance their communication and facilitate their coordination of plans and activities and prepared a joint document containing an overview of key CCW activities to be held in 2023, to further aid coordination.

6. 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 accompanied the officeholders to bilateral and other types of meetings with representatives of High Contracting Parties and non-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 and assisted in the organization of universalization workshops.

7. For the meetings of the 2023 Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on emerging technologies in the area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), the ISU provided substantive and organizational support to the Chairperson and to the High Contracting Parties. As the substantive secretariat of the CCW, the Unit assisted the Chairperson in preparing documents, including the provisional agenda, the indicative timetables and supported the Chairperson in drafting the final report. During the official meetings of the Group, the Unit provided the Chairperson with substantive and procedural guidance and supported him in the fulfilment of his duties, including through the organization of, and assistance to, numerous informal substantive consultations, as well as consultations on procedural matters. At the request of the Chairperson, the ISU also produced a non-exhaustive compilation of definitions and characterizations of LAWS put forward by CCW High Contracting Parties over the years (CCW/GGE.1/2023/CRP.1). The ISU further assisted the Chairperson in the analysis of the proposals submitted by CCW High Contracting Parties to enable him to fulfil the mandate of the Group to intensify the consideration of 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 2022 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties.² In addition, to further the understanding of certain elements of potential relevance to the work of the Group, the Unit contributed to the organization of a webinar on novel approaches to the notion of “meaningful human control.”

8. The ISU provided support to the preparation and organization the Informal Open Consultations on Protocol V (8 November 2023) and of the meeting of the Group of Experts on Amended Protocol II (9-10 November 2023) by 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 practice.

9. For the 2023 Meeting of High Contracting Parties (15-17 November), the 17th Conference of Protocol V (13 November) and the 25th Annual Conference of Amended Protocol II (14 November), the ISU prepared all pre-session documents, liaised with relevant UNOG entities for the organization of meetings and coordinated with regional groups for the

² CCW/MSP/2022/7, paragraph 32.

nomination of officeholders. The ISU also assisted the Chair of the 2023 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties in the organization and holding of consultations with regional groups and States aimed at preparing the nomination of officeholders for 2024, preparing the work of the Meeting and the negotiation of the 2024 mandate for the GGE on LAWS.

10. Furthermore, the ISU assisted the Chairperson of the 2022 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties in the preparation of, and consultations on, the draft General Assembly resolution on the CCW.

11. During the reporting period, the ISU also prepared universalization letters that were signed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, calling on non-High Contracting Parties to join the instruments. The letters were sent to States not parties to the Convention by the Office of the Secretary-General.

IV. National annual reports

12. 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 and 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)).

13. 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.

14. As of 15 September 2023:

(a) A total of 55 High Contracting Parties (43%) have submitted their Compliance report, (as compared to 58 Compliance reports submitted in 2022, i.e. 46% of High Contracting Parties);

(b) A total of 52 High Contracting Parties (49%) have submitted their national annual report under Amended Protocol II, (as compared to 64 national annual reports submitted in 2022, i.e. 60% of High Contracting Parties);

(c) A total of 46 High Contracting Parties (47%) have submitted their national annual report under Protocol V, (as compared to 54 national annual reports submitted in 2022, i.e. 55% of High Contracting Parties).

15. The ISU 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

16. The Unit took an active role in continuing the activities of the Sponsorship Programme. In early 2023, the Unit worked closely with the Steering Committee to designate a Coordinator and then launched a call for applications for all CCW meetings taking place in 2023 and supported the selection of awardees. The Unit coordinated closely with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) to liaise with sponsored delegates and to organize briefings for them on the CCW. As indicated in the [agreed guidelines for the CCW Sponsorship Programme](#), the ISU also consulted officeholders, coordinators 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.

17. The ISU assisted the Steering Committee in preparing the report of the Sponsorship Programme, which is submitted to the Meeting of High Contracting Parties (CCW/MSP/2023/3).

18. The ISU assisted the Coordinator of the Steering Committee in drafting and circulating a letter to encourage High Contracting Parties to contribute to the Sponsorship Programme's fund.

VI. Finance

19. 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 2023 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 2023 activities in a timely manner, such as official and informal outreach to High Contracting Parties with arrears and regularly sharing with High Contracting Parties the status of contributions.

20. 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 2022, comprising both conferencing and non-conferencing costs, are available on the [financial website](#).

21. 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 31 August 2023, 90.5% of assessed contributions for the 2023 CCW account was received. Of the US\$ 1,362,200 billed, US\$ 128,757.97 remain as outstanding payment. Outstanding amounts from closed accounts (2018-2022) are US\$ 173,934.81. 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.

22. 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 US\$ 227,221 according to the [financial dashboard](#). All High Contracting Parties are encouraged to contribute to the Working Capital Fund to ensure the continuity of the ISU.

VII. Communication, outreach and coordination

23. The main means of communication with the High Contracting Parties, international organizations and non-governmental organizations are e-mail and the [UNODA meetings 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 and the relevant restricted financial pages containing financial information on the Convention, including the status of contributions and individual invoices.

24. 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.

25. 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 and responded to requests for tailored briefings on the Conventions and its Protocols from external partners.

26. 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.

27. The members of the ISU were invited to participate in the 2023 Edition of the Disarmament Orientation Course co-organized by the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), as speakers. The aim of this course is to introduce new delegations to Geneva-based disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control matters and mechanisms.

28. The ISU took part in coordination meetings with other Geneva-based ISUs (Biological Weapons Convention, Convention on Cluster Munitions, Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention) to identify possible synergies and common approaches to procedural issues and possible areas of cooperation.

29. The ISU also 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.

30. The ISU continued supporting the organization and holding of regional universalization workshops in the framework of the European Union Council decision (CFSP) 2021/1694 in support of the CCW. The ISU further contributed to the development of outreach materials on the Convention under the same Council decision.

VIII. Future work

31. In 2024, 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. The 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.
