

Fifth Review Conference 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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**Review of the scope and operation
of the Convention and its annexed protocols**

Report of the Sponsorship Programme

Submitted by the Steering Committee of the Sponsorship Programme

Summary

Since the beginning of 2012, 39 States and three organisations have benefited from the Sponsorship Programme. The Sponsorship Programme is a key tool for promoting universalization and implementation of the CCW and its Protocols. It is a challenge to ensure a diverse range of States are invited to participate in the Sponsorship Programme and to manage those being strategically selected for reasons concerning universalization and implementation versus those States voluntarily seeking sponsorship. In the next review cycle, it is anticipated that with further work on lethal autonomous weapons systems, more funding will be needed for the Sponsorship Programme.

I. Introduction

1. 2016 marks ten years of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons' Sponsorship Programme. The mandate of the Sponsorship Programme was agreed to at the 2006 Third Review Conference. At that time the objectives of the Sponsorship Programme, which remain in place today, were: (i) to strengthen the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols; (ii) to promote universal observance of the norms and principles enshrined in the Convention and its Protocols; (iii) to support the universalization of the Convention and its Protocols; and (iv) to enhance the cooperation, the exchange of information and the consultations among the High Contracting Parties on issues related to the Convention and its Protocols.¹ The Sponsorship Programme is governed by a Steering

¹ Decision 5 of the final document, CCW/CONF.III/11 and annex IV, 7-17 November 2006.



Committee, whose work is led by the Coordinator.² The administration of the Sponsorship Programme is shared between the CCW Implementation Support Unit and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).

2. In successive reports of the annual CCW Meeting of High Contracting Parties, "the value and importance of the Sponsorship Programme for promoting universalization and strengthening the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols," has been recognised.³ Each year the Steering Committee is required to report on its activities, including on the beneficiaries of the Programme.⁴ This report reflects on the operation and implementation of the Sponsorship Programme over the past review cycle (January 2012 to the date of submission of this report).

II. Participation in the Sponsorship Programme

3. When the Sponsorship Programme was established it was recognised that participation by States from all regions, in particular developing countries and countries impacted by conflict, was important to ensuring that the CCW's work was informed by a range of experiences and relevant to the entire United Nations membership. The Steering Committee has prioritized the participation of sponsored delegates in the Amended Protocol II, Protocol V and lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) meetings of experts. The meetings of experts provide an opportunity for sponsored delegates to make statements on universalization and to speak of their own governments' experiences in areas such as countering the development and use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), clearing landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) and managing munitions sites. Since the beginning of 2012, 39 States and three organisations have benefited from the Sponsorship Programme.

4. The following States and organisations have participated:

Afghanistan: meetings of experts 2015.

Albania: meetings of experts 2013, conferences 2013.

Algeria: conferences 2013.

Armenia: meetings of experts 2012, meetings of experts 2013.

Bangladesh: meetings of experts 2012.

Belarus: meetings of experts 2012, conferences 2012, meetings of experts 2013.

Burundi: meeting of experts 2014

Cambodia: meetings of experts 2012, meetings of experts 2014, meetings of experts 2015, meetings of experts 2016.

Colombia: meetings of experts 2012, meetings of experts 2013 and meetings of experts 2016.

Cuba: conferences 2012 and conferences 2016.

² Serving as Coordinators of the Steering Committee over the past review cycle have been Mr. Artūras Gailiūnas of Lithuania, Ms. Marketa Homolkova of the Czech Republic and now, Ms. Riia Salsa of Estonia.

³ For example, see final document, CCW/MSP/2015/9, paragraph 30.

⁴ Decision 5 of the final document, CCW/CONF.III/11 and annex IV, 7-17 November 2006, paragraph (v).

Democratic Republic of the Congo: meetings of experts 2012, conferences 2012, meetings of experts 2013.

Ecuador: meetings of experts 2012.

Ghana: meetings of experts 2013, conferences 2013, meeting of experts 2015.

Indonesia: meetings of experts 2012, meetings of experts 2013.

Jordan: meetings of experts 2013, meeting of experts 2014 conferences 2016.

Kazakhstan: conferences 2015.

Latvia: meetings of experts 2015.

Lao People's Democratic Republic: meeting of experts 2012, conferences 2012, meetings of experts 2013, meetings of experts 2014, meetings of experts 2015, meetings of experts 2016.

Lebanon: meetings of experts 2014.

Mali: conferences 2013, meetings of experts 2014, meetings of experts 2015.

Mongolia: meetings of experts 2015.

Montenegro: meetings of experts 2012, conferences 2012, meetings of experts 2013, conferences 2014.

Mozambique: meetings of experts 2014.

Myanmar: meetings of experts 2015.

Nepal: meetings of experts 2012.

Nicaragua: meetings of experts 2012.

Nigeria: meetings of experts 2012, meetings of experts 2013, meetings of experts 2014.

Peru: meetings of experts 2012.

Philippines: conferences 2012, conferences 2013, conferences 2015, meetings of experts 2016.

Senegal: meetings of experts 2012.

South Sudan: meetings of experts 2012, conferences 2013.

Sri Lanka: meetings of experts 2013, conferences 2013.

Togo: meetings of experts 2016.

Tunisia: conferences 2015.

Uganda: meetings of experts 2013, meeting of experts 2016.

Ukraine: meetings of experts 2012, conferences 2012, meetings of experts 2013, meetings of experts 2014, meetings of experts 2015.

Viet Nam: meetings of experts 2014.

Yemen: conferences 2012.

Zambia: conferences 2013, meeting of experts 2014.

Action on Armed Violence: Amended Protocol II meetings of experts 2015.

Centre for Land Warfare Studies: LAWS meeting of experts 2015.

Clear Ground Demining: Protocol V meeting of experts 2016.

5. Over the past review cycle, on average 66 High Contracting Parties and 20 States not yet party to the Convention have participated in the Amended Protocol II and Protocol V meetings of experts. The Steering Committee has endeavoured to invite a more diverse range of States. However, there have been difficulties for invited States to respond in sufficient time to allow for a Schengen visa to be obtained prior to the meeting or conference. Another challenge has been to ensure that different States are invited and at the same time manage the voluntary requests for sponsorship. The Steering Committee has started to discuss setting a list of priority States to be invited, which ensures a diverse range of States participating in the meetings of experts, and for them to be approached three months in advance of the meeting or conference.

III. Promoting universalization

6. A key priority of the Sponsorship Programme over the past review cycle has been promoting universalization of the CCW and its Protocols. Two sponsored States went on to join the CCW – these were Algeria and Zambia. On 6 May 2015, Algeria joined the CCW, Protocols I, III and IV and Amendment to Article 1 of the Convention. On 25 September 2013, Zambia joined the CCW, Protocols I, II, III, V, Amended Protocol II and the Amendment to Article 1 of the Convention. An additional two sponsored States, which were already CCW High Contracting Parties, joined Protocol V: Laos People's Democratic Republic in 2012 and Montenegro in 2016. Amongst other States that have been sponsored: two States not yet party have followed up on joining the CCW and discovered that the instruments of accession they submitted to the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs required further clarification; one other State has completed its internal procedures for joining the CCW, but has not yet acceded; and four States have made statements on their progress towards joining Protocol V. The work of the Sponsorship Programme has complimented the efforts of the officeholders to promote universalization and individual States own efforts to join the CCW.

7. During each meeting of experts, the sponsored delegates are invited to a briefings on the CCW and the benefits of membership. The participants are invited to speak on their respective Governments' progress and challenges towards accession of the CCW. Different Coordinators of the Steering Committee have met with individual sponsored representatives to discuss their progress on joining the CCW and followed-up in writing. Also, the Steering Committee has held focused discussions on how to better promote universalization of the CCW. This resulted in the Implementation Support Unit producing a booklet on the CCW in 2014. Information from the sponsored delegates on their respective governments' positions on acceding to the CCW informs the briefs maintained by the Implementation Support Unit on each State not yet party to the CCW.

IV. Contribution to implementation, enhancing cooperation and assistance, and the exchange of information

8. The participation of sponsored delegates has made an invaluable contribution to understanding how different States are implementing the CCW and its Protocols. Since the beginning of 2012, sponsored delegates from the following States have made presentations on IEDs: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Colombia, Indonesia, Latvia, Mali, Nepal, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Ukraine and Uganda, and the non-governmental organization, Action on Armed Violence. These contributions have assisted in providing an overall picture on the actions being taken by States at the national level on countering IEDs.

9. For the same timeframe, the following sponsored States have made presentations on Protocol V: Albania, Belarus, Cambodia, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo,

Ghana, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Mali, Montenegro, Mozambique, Peru, Philippines, Senegal (expert on victim assistance), South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Togo, Uganda, Ukraine and Zambia. During the 2016 Protocol V meeting of experts, the non-governmental organisation, Clear Ground Demining, made a presentation on ERW in the Solomon Islands. Along with a presentation from a representative of the Solomon Islands' Permanent Mission, this provided an invaluable insight into the problems posed by ERW in Pacific Island countries, which are an under-represented regional group within the CCW's membership.

10. Specific work has been carried out with sponsored delegates on the issue of cooperation and assistance and national reporting under Protocol V. Over the past review cycle, Coordinators on cooperation and assistance and national reporting have held small group meetings in these two areas. These meetings have assisted in gauging the needs of affected States and in explaining to new High Contracting Parties the process of national reporting. Two sponsored States that were sponsored to attend the 2013 Meeting of Experts, Albania and Senegal, went on to submit Protocol V national reports in the same year.

V. Financial support to the Sponsorship Programme

11. States that have contributed to the Sponsorship Programme are:

Australia: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015

China: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015

Croatia: 2016

Estonia: 2016

Finland: 2015

France: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015

Germany: 2013

India: 2014

Lithuania: 2012

Spain: 2012

Turkey: 2012, 2013, 2014

Switzerland has provided in-kind support to the Sponsorship Programme through its ongoing support for the GICHD.

12. Each Coordinator has had to dedicate time to fundraising. The Coordinators have followed-up in writing with High Contracting Parties and urged those in a position to do so to make a financial contribution and have met with individual States. In the recommendations agreed at the 2016 informal Meeting of Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) there is a specific reference to the Sponsorship Programme, which states: "The widest possible participation of all High Contracting parties is to be promoted in accordance with the goals of the CCW Sponsorship Programme." Responding to calls for wider representation of High Contracting Parties at future meetings on LAWS will require increased funding for the Sponsorship Programme.