

Statement by India at the 16th Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V of the CCW, 14 November 2022, Geneva – delivered by Commodore Nitin Parvataneni, Director(Military Affairs), Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi

Please accept congratulations from the delegation of India on your appointment and we assure you of our cooperation and support.

India remains fully committed to the CCW and the humanitarian principles enshrined therein. India has ratified all five Protocols of the Convention. India held the presidency of the CCW in 2002-03, when Protocol V was negotiated and was among the first signatories to the protocol in May 2005. We therefore attach special importance to Protocol V of the CCW on Explosive Remnants of War.

India presently does not have any Explosive Remnants of War. India remains committed to implementation of obligations under Protocol V, including timely submission of national reports. Further, India has institutionalised mechanisms for effective implementation of the Protocol. Our Military Engineers are well trained and equipped for clearance and destruction of the ERW. Detailed standard operating procedures are in place for marking and clearance of the ERW which includes, prioritisation of areas requiring clearance, identification of risk zones, liaison with civilian authorities, educating the civil populace, providing medical support and provision of fencing with posters and danger signs, in ERW risk zones. Further, the issue of victim assistance also holds great importance and India's ratification of the Convention of Rights of Persons with Disabilities underscores the same.

India attaches importance to cooperation and assistance in the implementation of Protocol V and has provided assistance in capacity building, victim assistance and rehabilitation upon request, and is prepared to consider additional request in the future. We would like to highlight the need for efforts by all member States in the area of sharing new technologies which can be deployed for removal or deactivation of ERW. In addition, adherence to basic procedures to include voluntary reporting, mapping of contaminated areas, dynamic updating of the database and maintaining real time sanitisation record of the clearance efforts would also help in mitigating the threats of ERW.

India believes that it is important to achieve universalisation of Protocol V and strengthen its implementation. This would make a meaningful difference in addressing the humanitarian impact of Explosive Remnants of War. At this point, we wholeheartedly welcome Philippines to the Protocol and I thank you Mr. President.