



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

**MESSAGE TO THE CONFERENCES OF THE
HIGH CONTRACTING PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON CERTAIN
CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS AND ITS PROTOCOLS**

I am pleased to send greetings to all attending this important gathering. Your meeting comes as we mark the 30th anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. This is an opportunity to reaffirm the timeless nature of the principles embodied by this important instrument of international humanitarian law, which are not affected by technological transformation, new developments in weapon technologies, strategic security realignments or new ways of waging war. I am pleased that the High Contracting Parties have succeeded in safeguarding this understanding.

At the same time, you must remain vigilant in addressing the implications of new and emerging weapons and their technologies. I particularly encourage you to further engage in dialogue on all aspects of the issue of autonomous weapons systems, to better understand their potentially grave humanitarian impact and to consider their implications in the context of international humanitarian law and the Convention.

I also urge the High Contracting Parties to continue to explore avenues for reducing the impact of anti-personnel landmines, anti-vehicle mines and explosive remnants of war which continue to harm civilians long after hostilities have ended. Explosive remnants of war can impede the delivery of humanitarian aid, the return of refugees and displaced persons and undermine development. Avoiding these consequences must be at the forefront of the work carried out under Protocol V. I welcome efforts to further clarify understanding on the requirements of recording and transferring information on the use and abandonment of explosive ordnance. Toward that end, I commend the work carried out by the International Committee of the Red Cross on Article 4. I also urge High Contracting Parties to continue to consider how to ensure that all countries understand the need for effective controls over the management of ammunition.

I reiterate my strong concern at the appalling humanitarian impact of using explosive weapons in populated areas. Although different technical features dictate their precision and scale, these weapons generally create a zone of blast and fragmentation that fosters indiscriminate effects. I appeal to the High Contracting Parties to seriously consider this issue in a more focused manner.

The United Nations will also continue to support efforts towards the elimination of booby-traps and other explosive devices which are being employed with greater frequency by various groups. I welcome ongoing work to address the challenges of affected States in dealing with the prevalent use of improvised explosive devices. Amended Protocol II is an essential element of this process. I call for greater efforts to address the diversion or illicit use of materials that could be used for these devices, and to engage with those who employ them to improve compliance with international humanitarian law.

The United Nations continues to fully support the implementation of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Please accept my best wishes for a successful week of conferences.