

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

--

**MESSAGE TO THE THIRD REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE  
CONVENTION ON CERTAIN CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS (CCW)  
Geneva, 7 November 2006**

*Delivered by Mr. Tim Caughley, Director,  
Conference on Disarmament Secretariat and Conference Support Branch  
and Deputy Secretary-General, Conference on Disarmament*

I am pleased to send my greetings to all the participants in this Third Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which seeks to ban or restrict the use of weapons that cause excessive injury or unnecessary suffering to combatants, or affect civilians indiscriminately.

With 100 parties, the Convention is still short of universal membership. I welcome the steps you are about to take to promote more accessions, especially by developing and least developed states that are suffering from the effects of mines and explosive remnants of war. I am also encouraged to know that, during this session, you will continue your efforts to address the avoidable destruction of lives by mines other than anti-personnel mines. I urge you to articulate strong legal commitments that will reinforce the Convention's humanitarian norms.

As we are about to mark the entry into force of Protocol V on explosive remnants of war, I welcome your interest in addressing the disastrous impact of cluster munitions. I have repeatedly called upon States to comply fully with international humanitarian law. However, recent events show that the atrocious, inhumane effects of these weapons – both at the time of their use and after conflict ends – must be addressed immediately, so that civilian populations can start rebuilding their lives. I urge States Parties to the CCW to make full use of this framework to devise effective norms that will reduce and ultimately eliminate the horrendous humanitarian and development impact of these weapons.

In particular, I call on you to freeze the use of cluster munitions against military assets located in or near populated areas. At the same time, we should all remember that placing military assets in such areas is illegal under international humanitarian law. I also urge you to freeze the transfer of those cluster munitions that are known to be inaccurate and unreliable, and to dispose of them. And I challenge you to establish technical requirements for new weapons systems so that the risk they pose to civilian populations can be reduced.

I am encouraged that progress is being made on an effective compliance and cooperation mechanism for the Convention and its Protocols. Completing other unfinished business, for example on laser weapons, would also show the world that States parties are taking their responsibilities seriously. Indeed, your work will continue to have a direct impact on the lives of millions of civilians currently in harm's way. As the Convention faces these and other tests, I offer you my best wishes for the success of your deliberations.