
**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**

5 September 2012

Original: English

2012 Session

Geneva, 15–16 November 2012

Item 9 of the provisional agenda

**An Accelerated Plan of Action on Universalization
of the Convention and its annexed Protocols**

**Promoting universality of the Convention
and its Protocols**

Introduction

1. In order to increase the number of High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and thereby strengthen the legal norms and rules set out in the CCW's Protocols, High Contracting Parties at the Fourth Review Conference agreed to 'An Accelerated Plan of Action on Universalization of the Convention and its annexed Protocols'. The CCW Accelerated Plan of Action on Universalization called for this to continue to be a priority issue; efforts to be focused on signatory States, affected States and those regions with low levels of adherence to the CCW; urged High Contracting Parties to promote universalization through their bilateral contacts; the United Nations, CCW Implementation Support Unit, International Committee of the Red Cross and other organisations to promote universalization; the CCW Implementation Support Unit to explore all opportunities for promoting universalization and to support High Contracting Parties in this work; and to establish universalization as a standing agenda item of the annual Meeting of States Parties.¹

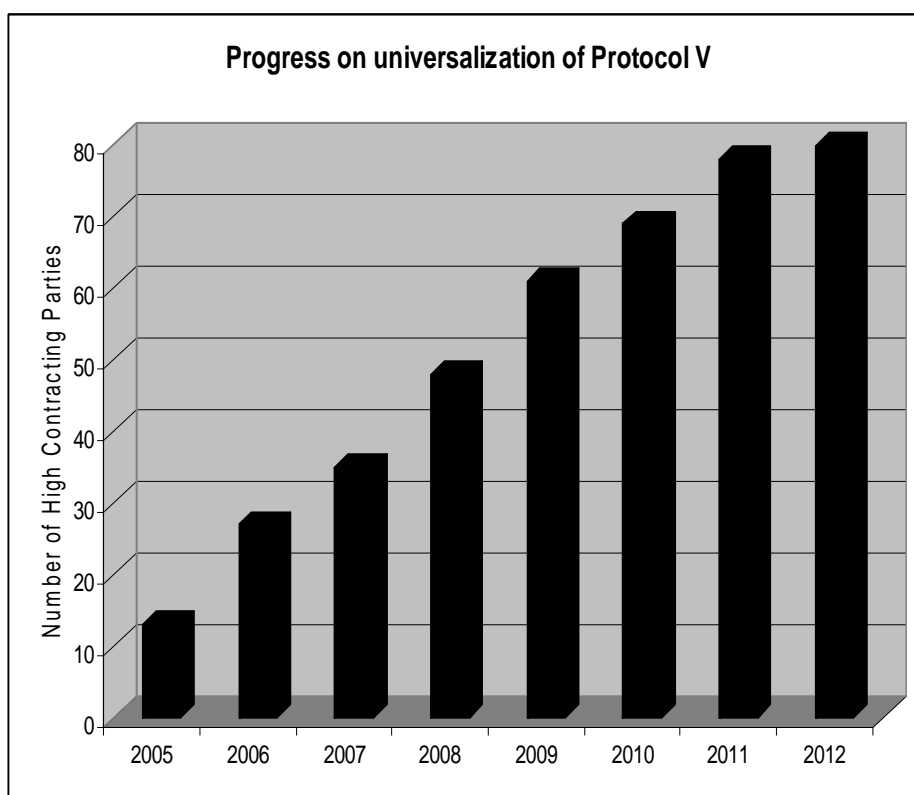
2. This report is in response to the request for 'the CCW Implementation Support Unit to continue to report annually to the Meeting of the High Contracting Parties on the efforts undertaken towards and progress made on universalization'.² The report sets out the progress made on universalization of the CCW and efforts undertaken towards achieving this goal.

¹ 'An Accelerated Plan of Action on Universalization of the Convention and its annexed Protocols' – Annex 1, *Final declaration, Final document of the Fourth Review Conference*, CCW/CONF.IV/4/Add.1, page 11.

² Ibid., paragraph 9.

Progress on universalization

3. Since the Fourth Review Conference, Burundi acceded to the CCW and consented to be bound by Protocol II and Protocol V. This took place on 13 July 2012.
4. The following States joined Protocol V in 2012:
 - Lao People's Democratic Republic – 2 February 2012;
 - South Africa – 24 January 2012; and
 - Turkmenistan – 23 July 2012.
5. South Africa's joining Protocol V means that it is now party to all of the CCW's instruments. The total number of High Contracting Parties to Protocol V stands at 80. The bar graph below sets out the progress made on the universalization of Protocol V since 2005.



Actions to promote universalization

6. The CCW Implementation Support Unit has initiated work on messages to be sent from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, to all States not yet party to urge them to join the CCW. The United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Angela Kane, and other senior officials of the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs continue to support universalization of the CCW.

7. The President of the Fourth Review Conference, Mr. Ganev, Ambassador of Bulgaria, President of the Thirteenth Annual Conference for Amended Protocol II, Mr. Hoffman, Ambassador of Germany and the President of the Fifth Conference for Protocol V, Mr. Khvostov, Ambassador of Belarus will send joint messages to all States not yet party which set out the objectives of the CCW and urges them to join.

8. Mr. Jesus Domingo of the Philippines as President-designate of this year's CCW Meeting of States Parties has organised to meet with member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to discuss the work of the CCW, its relevance to that region and the reasons why States should join.

9. As Coordinator on the operation and status of Amended Protocol II, Mr. Domingo, demarched ten States to encourage them to join Amended Protocol II.³

10. The International Committee of the Red Cross continues to support universalization of the CCW and its Protocols by including this issue in its bilateral discussions with governments and regional seminars on international humanitarian law.

Actions focused on universalization of Protocol V

11. An area of special attention is Protocol V as High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Review Conference 'reiterate[d] the need for further vigorous efforts from High Contracting Parties, United Nations, international and regional organizations, International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations to promote universalization of the Protocol'.⁴ At the Fifth Conference for Protocol V High Contracting Parties agreed 'that the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as Depositary of Protocol V, and the President of the Fifth Conference, on behalf of the High Contracting Parties, exercise their authority to achieve the goal of universality of Protocol V'.⁵ Belarus as the currently elected President for Protocol V has been particular active on promoting universalization. For example, Mr. Khvostov, Ambassador of Belarus, will send messages to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of all States not yet party to the CCW to urge them to join the Convention and Protocol V. Similar messages will be sent to CCW High Contracting Parties that have not yet joined Protocol V. Belarus has been working with the Member States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) to agree on a joint declaration on the importance of the CCW and in particular Protocol V. Finally, Belarus has worked closely with the CCW Implementation Support Unit to identify which States can assist with universalization efforts and which States not yet party to the CCW and Protocol V should be the focus of universalization efforts.

12. In the margins of this year's Meeting of Experts for Protocol V, the President-designate, Mr. Akram, Ambassador of Pakistan, the two Vice-Presidents-designate – Estonia and Sweden, along with several of the Coordinators, spoke with States not yet party to urge them to join the CCW and in particular Protocol V.

³ For a full report on the progress towards universalization of Amended Protocol II see *Report on the operation and status of the Protocol; matters arising from reports by High Contracting Parties according to paragraph 4 of Article 13 of Amended Protocol II; as well as development of technologies to protect civilians against indiscriminate effects of mines*, CCW/AP.II/CONF.14/3, dated 31 August 2012, paragraphs 4 to 6.

⁴ *Final declaration, Final document of the Fourth Review Conference*, CCW/CONF.IV/4/Add.1, page 10.

⁵ *Final document of the Fifth Conference on Protocol V*, CCW/P.V/CONF/2011/12, paragraph 29.

13. As one of the most heavily contaminated States in the world, Lao People's Democratic Republic's consent to be bound to Protocol V was warmly welcomed by the High Contracting Parties attending this year's Meeting of Experts. In turn, Lao People's Democratic Republic has encouraged other States from its region to join the CCW and especially Protocol V.

14. Palau, with support from Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, will hold a workshop on the implementation of the Pacific Islands Forum Regional Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) Strategy. The workshop will take place from 24 to 26 October 2012 in Palau. One of the objectives of the workshop is to 'Increase regional and national level knowledge of the ways and means developed over the past two decades to address the problems caused by landmines, UXO and abandoned explosive ordnance, including through the development of the international legal framework and the evolution of the field of humanitarian demining and explosive ordnance disposal'. The workshop is an important opportunity for Pacific Island countries to learn about the CCW framework and Protocol V and the latter's provisions for dealing with UXO.

The contribution of the CCW Sponsorship Programme to universalization

15. The CCW Sponsorship Programme during the Fifth Conference for Protocol V, Thirteenth Conference for Amended Protocol II, Fourth Review Conference, and this year's Meeting of Experts for both Amended Protocol II and Protocol V sponsored the attendance of the following States not yet party to the CCW: Afghanistan, Armenia, Burundi, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan and Viet Nam. During the CCW Conferences and Meetings of Experts, briefings were held for the sponsored delegates to explain to them the background and obligations of the CCW and its Protocols and how to join. Also, this year the Coordinator of the Steering Committee for the Sponsorship Programme has written to each of the sponsored delegates, which are from States not yet party to the CCW, to ask what progress their governments have made on universalization.

The CCW Implementation Support Unit's work on universalization

16. Universalization of the CCW and its Protocols has been a key priority for the CCW Implementation Support Unit. In addition to facilitating the messages of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and CCW officeholders, drafting briefings and statements on universalization, and organising the regional and bilateral meetings, the CCW Implementation Support Unit has met with ten States not yet party to explain to them the objectives of the CCW and how they can join. During these discussions an issue that has been frequently raised is the possibility of receiving cooperation and assistance for the implementation of the Protocols' obligations, especially the clearance of explosive remnants of war and landmines. The CCW Implementation Support Unit continues to provide information to and work with those High Contracting Parties that are willing to promote universalization through their regional and bilateral contacts. Also, the CCW Implementation Support Unit promotes the CCW and its Protocols at all relevant fora. For example, the Implementation Support Unit spoke at this year's International Meeting of National Mine Action Programme Directors in Geneva.

17. The CCW Implementation Support Unit has been coordinating with the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs' regional centres on CCW universalization. Work is

now underway with the regional centres in Kathmandu and Lima to disseminate information on the CCW and its Protocols.
