Thank you, Mr. Chair.

At the outset let me thank you for presiding over this Committee, and assure you of New Zealand’s full support.

We welcome this opportunity to reflect on the Convention and all its Protocols, as part of our overarching objective to ensure the CCW remains fit for purpose. We reiterate New Zealand’s strong commitment to both universalisation of the CCW and its protocols, as well as their full implementation.

Under Amended Protocol II, let me first register New Zealand’s thanks to Ambassador Ogasawara of Japan and his team for their efforts to further enhance implementation.

New Zealand also joins others to share our concerns about the ongoing humanitarian harm caused by mines other than anti-personnel mines, or MOTAPM. We acknowledge that delegations hold a range of views on the military utility of MOTAPM. However, as the ICRC has highlighted, it is clear that international humanitarian law contains few rules specifically regulating these anti-vehicle mines. There is no requirement for such mines to be detectable, no specific restrictions on their placement and no limits on their active life. This lack of regulation amplifies our concerns about such mines.

The challenge before us continues to be to find a viable way to proceed with work on this issue within the bounds of our Convention – in a way that does not constrict the military utility of MOTAPM while also reducing the harm caused to civilians by their use. We hope it will be possible for High Contracting Parties to show the flexibility needed to make progress on the issue.

On Protocol III, New Zealand reiterates our grave concern about the ongoing use of incendiary weapons, and their horrific human cost. We condemn any use against civilians or civilian objects, and any other uses incompatible with relevant rules of international humanitarian law (IHL) including this protocol’s provisions. This protocol remains an important component of the CCW, particularly in light of reported use of these weapons since our last Review Conference. Here, I reiterate the message earlier this week from
New Zealand’s Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control: In order to properly discharge our obligations, we must be able to discuss protocols that form part of this Convention.

Protocol III warrants this body’s ongoing attention and consideration. In that respect, New Zealand supports Ireland’s proposal that the incoming President of the High Contracting Parties conduct informal consultations on the implementation and universalisation of Protocol III and report back to the Meeting of High Contracting Parties in 2022.

Thank you, Chair.