Statement by the Head of the Delegation of the Russian Federation at the Sixth Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons on the agenda item 7 «Election of the Vice-Presidents of the Review Conference, Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the main Committees, the Drafting Committee, and the Credentials Committee»

(Geneva, 13 December 2021)

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to outline the issue faced by the Eastern European Group (EEG) when considering the organizational issues of the Sixth Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW).

In view of the lack of response of the EEG members to the request made by the President of the Sixth Review Conference to nominate candidates for the vacancies in the Bureau of the Sixth Review Conference as soon as possible, the Russian Federation has proposed its candidates for the positions of Vice-President of the CCW Sixth Review Conference and Vice-Chairman of Main Committee II. However, our initiative, made in good faith, given the extraordinary circumstances, has been blocked by one of the EEG delegations. As we assume, this has been done solely for political reasons, which have nothing to do with the CCW. Following common diplomatic practice, we will not name this state. Although, I believe, everyone understands who we are talking about.

We regard such actions not simply as an attempt to settle a political score, which is absolutely unacceptable within international organizations, but as a direct infringement of the inalienable right of any state to be nominated and participate in the work of CCW bodies, in our case - as a member of the CCW RC-6 Bureau. There is also an attempt to diminish Russia's constructive contribution to the Convention.

All the steps taken against us, regardless of their motivation, lead to the undermining of the authority and effectiveness of EEG and the CCW as a whole.
Maybe someone hoped that we would be forced to take a mirror response and block alternative nominations proposed at the last minute.

We will not fall victim to such cheap provocations. Furthermore, we will once again confirm our position of principle.

We have not blocked other EEG candidates in order to ensure the continuation of the work of the CCW. We believe that for us, as well as for the other High Contracting Parties to the CCW, unlike the mentioned country, it is important not to follow narrow political ambitions, but to hold the Review Conference in a productive manner and reach agreement on a consensus-based final document.

In this regard, we inform you of the decision of the Russian Federation to withdraw from the CCW EEG and to form a new regional group under this Convention, consisting (following the example of China) of one country - the Russian Federation. We would ask the High Contracting Parties as well as the CCW Implementation Support Unit to take it into account in organizing further work under the Convention.

We would like to emphasize that our withdrawal from the CCW EEG does not set a precedent, concerns only the work within the Convention and has no consequences with regard to the work of UN bodies or our membership in the EEG within the UN. We would ask that this decision, as well as the other understandings we have indicated in this regard, be reflected in the Final Document of the Sixth Review Conference.

Thank you.