



Council Joint Action in support of the convention on
prohibition or restriction on the use of certain conventional
weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or
to have indiscriminate effects

OPENING REMARKS BY

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Regional Seminar for South East Asia and the Pacific

Kathmandu, 17-18 December 2008

Check against delivery.
Seul le texte délivré fait foi.
Es gilt das gesprochene Wort.

Honourable Minister, Excellencies, distinguished participants, dear colleagues,

I am taking part in this opening ceremony on behalf of the Head of my Office, Ms. Annalisa Giannella, who was appointed by the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU, Mr. Javier Solana, his Personal Representative for non-proliferation issues in 2003.

Let me, as we start our work today, express my gratitude on behalf of the EU High Representative, Mr. Javier Solana, to all those who have made possible this seminar today and in particular to the Government of Nepal, within the framework of the EU Joint Action adopted last year to support the CCW (Convention on prohibition or restriction on the use of certain conventional weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects). A Joint Action is an instrument of EU foreign policy. It allows the European Union to take action and allocate financial resources to a specific objective. You are certainly more aware of the community programmes financed and implemented by the European Commission. Our work here today is a differentiated element of the work done by the European Union under its Common Foreign and Security Policy. I thank our colleague from the European Commission delegation in Kathmandu for his presence.

This is the sixth and last of a series regional seminars which like this one, the EU has financed for different regions of the world (Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia, the Pacific, Middle East and the Mediterranean). These regional seminars aim at increasing the membership of the CCW and are organised by the UNODA. The EU is very grateful for the support of UNIDIR, UN-MAS and UNDP, as well as to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Five seminars have already taken place in Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic), Lome (Togo), Almaty (Kazakhstan) and Rabat (Morocco) earlier this year.

The regional seminar for Latin America and the Caribbean served as a platform for countries in the region to underline their commitment to international peace and security. They perceived the CCW as the appropriate forum in which to channel this existing commitment.

In Africa we were confronted with the difficulties encountered by national administrations: lack of human and material resources and expertise, to deal with the ratification process.

The seminar in Almaty revealed the need for a better understanding of the real disarmament issues linked to the CCW. As regional conflicts made Governments perceived disarmament obligations under a very specific light. The balance between humanitarian and military concerns is one of the distinctive elements of the CCW. Humanitarian, arms control and disarmament provisions lay jointly at the core of the Convention.

In Rabat the role of States parties to the CCW, in particular the military, to educate their armed forces in the provisions of IHL and to outreach to State non parties was fundamental. In this respect I welcome the presence among us today of Australia and China as States parties to the CCW. Two committed and vocal States parties whose experience and know-how will be most valuable for our work these two days.

The CCW is relevant for all States regardless of their size or history.

This Joint Action on support to the universalisation and the full implementation of the CCW was adopted under the Portuguese Presidency of the Council and has been implemented throughout Slovenian and French Presidencies. France which about to complete its term as Presidency of the Council of the EU held the Chairmanship of the Review Conference of the CCW in November 2006, and was one of the leading forces behind the preparation and adoption of the Joint Action.

The EU is developing a **Common Foreign and Security Policy** and is committed to play a role on the international scene in support of international peace, stability and security. The EU is active in the field of civil and military crisis management (ESDP), and also in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The aim of the EU is to concentrate in the promotion of the CCW as a valid multilateral instrument within our underlining commitment to

Effective Multilateralism contained in the European Security Strategy adopted in December 2003. Concerning the full implementation of the CCW at national level, the EU Joint Action serves to channel a substantial contribution to the **Sponsorship Programme** adopted by States Parties in November 2006. This component of the Joint Action is implemented by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining which manages the voluntary contributions from States Parties to the **Sponsorship Programme**, including from EU Member States and the EU. The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining is also our counterpart in the implementation of a new Joint Action in support of the Ottawa Convention (universalisation and full implementation) adopted this year.

The EU has made an important financial effort to design and implement this project and gather all of us here in Nepal during two days. Our experience shows that seminars like this allow countries to see and understand the benefits of acceding to new multilateral instruments from the point of view both of their national security and in terms of international cooperation. Acceding to the CCW constitutes as well an important political signal sent to the international community on the commitment of a country with International Humanitarian Law (IHL), arms controls and disarmament.

The seminar will allow all of us to learn more about the CCW and the work carried out by its States Parties and the opportunities and challenges that it represent for each of your countries. This better understanding should lead to an increased number of ratifications in the region, which will allow your countries to be part of the discussions

in Geneva in the framework of the CCW and to benefit from its provisions; including on victim assistance and clearance (Protocol V).

Indeed the future accession by your countries to the CCW, a Convention, which aims at minimising the effects of armed conflict on both the civilian population as well as on combatants is the ultimate aim of our efforts.

As a concluding remark, let me share with you some of my experiences from previous seminars. Be bold. Don't be shy and dare to ask. The expertise which is at your disposal is unique and very valuable. More than to the presentations by my colleagues from UNODA (Geneva Branch), UNMAS, UNDIR and ICRC I look forward to listening to your questions and doubts. It is your active participation which will make a difference.

Thank you
