THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
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MESSAGE TO THE ELEVENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
OF THE HIGH CONTRACTING PARTIES TO AMENDED PROTOCOL II
TO THE CONVENTION ON CERTAIN CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS
Geneva, 11 November 2009

It gives me pleasure to send greetings to the Eleventh Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

Last year marked the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of this important legal instrument. I look forward to another decade of continued efforts to eliminate the scourge of landmines, booby-traps and other explosive devices.

I commend your decision to strengthen implementation of the Protocol by re-establishing the Group of Experts. The Group has already made considerable efforts to improve our understanding of the impact of improvised explosive devices on civilians and combatants alike. I urge you to continue to make use of this valuable informal mechanism.

The universality of the Protocol remains of vital importance. I congratulate the 93 States that have consented to be bound by the Protocol. More efforts are needed to expand the number of signatories, especially among developing countries and States affected by landmines or States in conflict. I call upon those countries that have not yet done so, to ratify the Protocol as soon as possible.

I also take this opportunity to call upon all States that have not yet done so to ratify the other international treaties in the field of mine action, namely CCW Protocol V, the Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the new Convention on Cluster Munitions, which is expected to enter into force in the near future.

I also wish to draw your attention to the grave threats to civilians posed by mines other than anti-personnel mines, which in many regions are another serious obstacle to the delivery of humanitarian aid, the return to normal civilian life after hostilities, and economic development in general. Although CCW States Parties have not yet found agreement on this topic, I consider it my duty to bring this issue to your attention yet again, since the grave effects of such mines continue to be felt.

I wish you every success in your deliberations.