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The Secretary-General of the United Nations presents his compliments to the Permanent Representative of ... to the United Nations and has the honour to refer to the 1980 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 (CCW).

The Secretary-General of the United Nations would like, in particular, to recall that the Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW, held in Geneva on 13 and 14 November 2008, decided that:

“The Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) will continue its negotiations, taking into account document CCW/GGE/2008-V/WP.1 and other present and future proposals by delegations, to address urgently the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions, while striking a balance between military and humanitarian considerations.

The GGE should make every effort to conclude its negotiations as rapidly as possible and report to the next Meeting of the High Contracting Parties.

The work of the GGE will be supported by military and technical experts.

The GGE will meet for up to two weeks in 2009, from 16 to 20 February 2009 and subsequently, if required, from 14 to 17 April 2009”.

In accordance with the above-mentioned decision, the Secretary-General has the honour to convene the 2009 sessions of the Group of Governmental Experts of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention and to invite the High Contracting Parties to participate in it. The Secretary-General also has the honour to invite States not parties to the Convention to participate in the work of the sessions as Observers.

Pursuant to the established practice the sessions of the Group of Governmental Experts of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention would be conducted in accordance with the Rules of Procedure as adopted by the Third Review Conference in 2006, applied *mutatis mutandis*. Therefore, the Secretary-General takes this opportunity to recall that Rule 16 of the Rules of Procedure provides that “[t]he costs [...] will be met by the States parties to the Convention participating in the [...] Conference in accordance with the United Nations scale of assessment, adjusted to take into account differences between the United Nations membership and the participation of States parties in the Conference. States which are not States parties to the Convention and which accept the invitation to take part in the [...] Conference, will share in the costs to the extent of their respective rates of assessment under the United Nations scale”.

For further information with regard to the sessions of the Group of Governmental Experts, the States are invited to contact:

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S. B.