Netherlands Statement

concerning Amended Protocol II,

Meeting of the High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2019

by His Excellency Ambassador Robbert Gabriëlse

Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

to the Conference on Disarmament
Mr. President,

Please allow me first to congratulate you on your election as President of the Meeting. We are very pleased to cooperate with you and you can count on the full support of my delegation.

In addition to the statement by the European Union the Netherlands would like to make the following remarks.

The Netherlands continues to attach great importance to the implementation of Amended Protocol II. We welcome your non-paper that raises a number of timely and important questions concerning the operation and implementation of APII. In particular, to the issues of reporting and universalization the Netherlands attaches great value.

Mr. President,

The threat of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) remains of alarming concern to the Netherlands. The growing use of these devices by non-state actors such as terrorists continues to bring harm to civilians, as well as to armed forces and peacekeepers – including our own forces deployed on missions abroad. We reiterate that every use of IEDs is indiscriminate.

We therefore continue to stress the importance of strict measures – both national and global – to prevent the supply of weapons and explosive precursors to terrorists, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2370. We welcome the work conducted by the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) on the development of a voluntary self-assessment tool, which will help identify effective policies and regulations in that regard, as well as possible gaps.

We need to continue addressing the issue of IEDs, in all different forums, such as CCW, First Committee, and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. The Netherlands, together with Austria, Canada, and Colombia, organized a side-event in the margins of this years’ First Committee on the place of victim-activated IEDs under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention to demonstrate the relevance of this convention to the issue of IED’s.

At the same time, we need to continuing our work on IEDs in the CCW. This needs to be placed on a firm knowledge base and with the involvement of all stakeholders in order to take account of various aspects, including counter-IED, force protection but also as part of humanitarian mine action, once hostilities have ceased. Therefore, we welcome the proposal by Colombia and France in their role as IED-coordinators to renew the mandate for 2020. Continuing work on this important issue, will ensure that the CCW remains relevant by being responsive to new challenges, which could also help attract new High-Contracting Parties.
Turning to the issue of MOTAPM, the Netherlands is of the view that the High-Contracting Parties should continue to consider the issue and share policies and practices on a voluntary basis. Therefore, we can support the proposal by Ireland to continuing to consider this issue in 2020.

We are delighted to see that the current framework of the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), guiding humanitarian mine action is better equipped to address the current international security developments related to mine action, of which IED clearance. However, we still want to stress the importance of continued improvement of these guidelines to ensure humanitarian organizations know how to deal with these IEDs. The Netherlands is therefore pleased to support the important work of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining in this regard.

When it comes to international cooperation and assistance regarding mine action, the Netherlands is doing its part. We run a programme of 45 million Euros for humanitarian mine action and cluster munition clearance over the period 2016-2020. Our partners are Mines Advisory Group, the Halo Trust and Dan Church Aid. These operators are working on projects in Afghanistan, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Kosovo, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, the Palestinian Territories, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, and Yemen. We are in the process of designing a new program that will start in September of 2020. In addition, we have made a one-time contribution to UNMAS Iraq of EUR 3 million alongside our annual unearmarked core funding to UNMAS of EUR 3 million.

We encourage all states that have not yet done so to become a party to this important Protocol, while also encouraging those High-Contracting Parties to the original Protocol, to accede to the Amended Protocol.

Thank you.