5 March 2012

The Permanent Representatives of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW Amended Protocol II on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and other Devices

Excellency,

We are writing to you in our roles as the Coordinator and Co-Coordinator on Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) of Amended Protocol II on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices (APII) to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), and would like to inform you on the preparations for the consideration of the issue on IEDs at the upcoming meeting of the Group of Experts of the High Contracting Parties to APII (Geneva, 23–24 April 2012).

The Group of Experts has held useful substantive discussions on IEDs since 2009. We very much hope that in 2012 delegates and experts can complement and update the previous work of the Group in this regard. Last year, the High Contracting Parties engaged substantially on this topic and agreed on a four-track process for its work this year, as reflected in the Final Document of the 13th Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II (CCW/AP.II/CONF.13/6, paragraph 26). At that Conference, the High Contracting Parties decided to:

a. Continue information exchange on IEDs, IED incidents, their humanitarian effects, their prevention, as well as on the significance of the CCW framework, its norms and their implementation with respect to the IED threat.

b. Continue to survey existing guidelines, best practices, and other recommendations and compile, for consideration of the High Contracting Parties, guidelines adding to existing work and aiming at addressing the diversion or illicit use of materials which can be used for IEDs.

c. Continue to follow the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) process and exchange views with the IATG technical review panel with a view to, where appropriate, contributing to the review and implementation of the guidelines with the aim of enhancing IED prevention.
d. Continue discussions on victim assistance so that those providing assistance bear in mind the 2008 Plan of Action on Victim Assistance of Protocol V and the principles of age- and gender-sensitive medical care, rehabilitation, psychological support, and adequate assistance for social and economic inclusion in a non-discriminatory manner.

In light of the upcoming session of the Group of Experts, we encourage High Contracting Parties and their experts to contribute actively to one or several of the above sub-topics in order to advance the Group’s work on IEDs. In view of your own preparations, we are more than happy to update you on our preliminary plans for the session, as follows:

There will be an information exchange on IEDs, with presentations of case studies from affected countries and an exchange on national experiences with steps to prevent IED use. We have invited a number of States to share their experience and would encourage other States to make national presentations addressing this issue.

There will be a discussion on IED-relevant existing guidelines, best practices and other recommendations. Ahead of the session, we plan to share with you a compilation of existing guidelines and best practices aimed at addressing the diversion or illicit use of materials which can be used for IEDs. Delegations are also encouraged to present their views on the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) in order to contribute to their review and implementation, with the aim of enhancing IED prevention.

In addition to those topics, we plan to focus on the issue of IEDs and International Humanitarian Law. Experts are encouraged to consider what existing IHL rules provide on IEDs, to whom they apply, whether they are sufficient and how to promote compliance with them.

Finally, on IEDs and Victim Assistance, it is our hope that this session will again highlight useful links to relevant implementation efforts in CCW Protocol V, including the 2008 Plan of Action on Victim Assistance.

Should you require further information on this issue, please do not hesitate to contact either ourselves or the CCW Implementation Support Unit at any time to discuss the issue. We very much look forward to having a fruitful discussion during the Group of Experts meeting in April.

Yours sincerely,

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