Mr President,

Australia would like to express its appreciation to the coordinators, France and Colombia, for their report on improvised explosive devices.

Mr President,

Mines, IEDs and booby traps pose a disproportionate threat to the civilian population, both during and after hostilities. These weapons cause indiscriminate death and suffering, prevent displaced people from returning home, and hold back economic development long after conflicts have ceased. As such Australia considers their use is a clear affront to international humanitarian law and the common values on which it is founded.

Australia considers clearing of mines and IEDs to be a humanitarian imperative for the successful distribution of aid and safe return home of thousands of displaced residents. We also support efforts by states parties to pursue work on stockpile management and encourage cooperation in capacity building and establishing best practice. We commend UNODA’s website on IEDs as an important portal for existing guidelines, best practices and other recommendations on combatting IEDs.

Mr President, Australia continues to strive for innovative responses to the IED threat.

Australia has invested $7.3 million to equip elements of the Afghanistan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF) with 3,000 improvised explosive device (IED) electronic counter measure units called REDWING. The REDWING System inhibits threats posed by specific radio-controlled IEDs. REDWING require little training, are low cost and robust, and can be either mounted on vehicles or carried by personnel.

Mr President,

Australia takes a comprehensive approach to reduce the suffering caused by indiscriminate use of explosive weapons. Australia is a strong supporter of not only Amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, but also of Protocol V, and of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

In doing so we urge states that have not acceded to these conventions to take concrete steps towards doing so and fulfil their obligations. The harms posed by these weapons in conflict situations – and by their remnants, post-conflict – rarely occur in isolation. By addressing explosive hazards in a complementary manner across conventions and protocols, we believe the international community can reduce the impact of these indiscriminate and malicious weapons.