Statement

CCW Meeting of Experts on MOTAPM (2-4 April): Humanitarian impact of MOTAPM use (3 April)

-- check against delivery --

Mr Chairman,

The information provided by UNMAS, the ICRC and the GICHD yesterday unfortunately confirm that MOTAPM continue to kill and injure civilians.

The figures presented in the GICHD brief not only illustrate a pattern of higher mortality and casualty rates from accidents involving anti-vehicle mines in comparison to APM incidents – they also show that in some countries, the number of casualties resulting from anti-vehicle mines exceed the number of casualties from anti-personnel mines by more than three times. The information Cambodia provided yesterday about recent incidents resulting from previous MOTAPM use serves as tragic illustration of the problem.

At the same time, the humanitarian impact of MOTAPM goes beyond killing or injuring. By preventing or complicating access to vulnerable populations, MOTAPM do have a significant impact on the ability to provide humanitarian assistance where it is most required. We have heard that operational costs of air delivered assistance can be prohibitive, which more often than not may result in the denial of assistance. The ICRC has repeatedly pointed out that blocked transport routes obstruct the efforts of aid agencies to bring relief to war affected communities and result in the long-term denial of assistance to vulnerable populations of food, water and medical assistance.

Mr Chairman,

When looking at the humanitarian impact of MOTAPM use, we must not ignore associated long-term development factors. MOTAPM contamination may prevent the use of agricultural land, impede the reconstruction of vital infrastructure or obstruct the safe return of displaced populations long after conflicts have ended.
The variety of unintended consequences of irresponsible MOTAPM use places a responsibility on our shoulders which we must not escape. The CCW constitutes an adequate framework to contribute to the protection of civilian populations during and after conflict.

Thank you.