Statement on MOTAPM by

Colonel Jim Burke
Irish Defence Forces

at the

Group of Experts of the High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II to the
Convention on Conventional Weapons

Geneva, 22 August 2019
Mr President,

The issue of MOTAPM has been discussed continuously within the framework of the CCW for many years. In the view of my delegation the protection of civilians from the effects of weapons used during armed conflict is a paramount concern. Ireland views the question of MOTAPM as one of continuing humanitarian urgency and this conclusion is borne out by the facts. According to GICHD, there has been an 18% year-on-year increase in Anti-Vehicle Mine incidents in 2018, with 569 reported casualties, of which 53% were civilians, across 23 States and territories.

In 2018, we welcomed the decision of the States Parties to Amended Protocol II to mandate the chair of the 2019 Meeting of High Contracting Parties to conduct consultations on possibilities to include discussions on good practices in the implementation of the protocol with respect to MOTAPM in particular with regard to the protection of civilians. We would like to thank you for organising informal consultations on MOTAPM, in keeping with the mandate agreed by High Contracting Parties at their 2018 Meeting. These informal consultations provided a useful opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the Protocol in protecting civilians.

Mr President,

All mines are by definition victim-operated and therefore maximum care in their use is required to avoid exposing civilians to unacceptable risks. In additional to physical injuries and fatalities the use of anti-vehicle mines can have significant humanitarian impact by cutting humanitarian supply routes and disrupting recovery of societies impacted by armed conflict. Evidence of continuing harm is constantly being brought to our attention by international organisations, mine clearance organisations and affected states and we are particularly grateful to the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) for their continuous monitoring since 2014 of AVM incidents and the resulting humanitarian and development impact. Ireland is
pleased to sponsor a side event (at lunchtime today) on “Protecting Civilians from MOTAPM” as part of our efforts to continue to raise awareness of the humanitarian harm.

Mr President,

While the use of MOTAPM is regulated by the customary rules of International Humanitarian Law, Amended Protocol II remains the only source of specific regulation on the use of MOTAPM.

Mr President,

Ireland remains committed to promoting an expert exchange of views on MOTAPM within the APII framework. At the 2018 Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Ireland proposed that the APII Group of Experts consider the implementation of Amended Protocol II with respect to MOTAPM and discuss best practices in ensuring compliance with the provisions of Amended Protocol II, in particular with regard to the protection of civilian populations.

Amended Protocol II is now more than 20 years old and we believe it is timely that High Contracting Parties should consider best practices in implementing its provisions with respect to MOTAPM. Most articles of the Protocol are applicable to MOTAPM and considerable value can be gained by High Contracting Parties from expert work on the matter. My delegation and others will continue to work on maximising the protections that the Protocol provides for civilian activities and international missions form the effects arising from MOTAPM use.

Thank You.

ENDS.