Excellency,

In our capacities as Coordinator and Co-Coordinator on Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) of the informal Group of Experts under Amended Protocol II (APII) to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), we are writing to you in the context of preparations for the next meeting of the Group (Geneva, 9 – 10 April 2015).

Building on last year’s Group of Experts discussions, we expect that in 2015 the experts will complement the Group’s work on IEDs. In view of your own preparations, we are pleased to update you on our plans for the upcoming session in accordance with the decision of High Contracting Parties at the 16th Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to APII (see annex 1).

General information exchange

The Group of Experts will further explore the impact of the IED threat, its humanitarian impact as well as its impact on the security of States. We encourage all delegations to express their general views on the IED threat and to provide national updates on the issue.

Questionnaire

You will recall that the Conference of the High Contracting Parties decided that the Group of Experts should consider a one-time questionnaire, which would be voluntary in nature, on national counter-IED frameworks, with a view to enhancing international cooperation and assistance and strengthening national capacities of High Contracting Parties, including through the establishment of a network of national points of contact.

It is our intention to organize a half-a-day session to discuss general issues related to such a questionnaire and to consider its possible wording. Against this background, a preliminary draft questionnaire, which will be the basis for our work, will be circulated in advance of the meeting of the Group of Experts in order to give you sufficient time to consider it. We strongly encourage all delegations to prepare questions, comments and proposals, and to take an active participation in this work.

This questionnaire, if agreed by consensus, would be circulated after the Group of Experts’ meeting with a view to encourage responses from delegations before the 17th Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II, which will be held in November 2015.
Information exchange on national measures and best practices

The Group of Experts will continue, consistent with the decision taken by the Conference of the High Contracting Parties, to exchange information on national measures and best practices on one or several of the following topics:

(i) prevent the diversion of commercial grade explosives for use in IEDs;
(ii) prevent the diversion of commercially-available detonators and other non-explosive materials of elements from being used in IEDs;
(iii) raising public awareness and/or risk education campaigns; and/or
(iv) enhance voluntary information sharing on detection and counter measures techniques, in light of the significance of the CCW framework, its norms and implementation with respect to the IED threat.

We encourage High Contracting Parties and their experts to contribute actively in all of the topics listed above in order to advance the Group’s work on IEDs. If your delegation intends to deliver a presentation on one of those topics, we invite you to let us know in advance.

Possibility of a database, portal or platform

Following the presentations made during the previous meetings of the Group of Experts, we will further explore the possibility of an information exchange database, portal or platform as a tool for improving information-sharing and reducing the threat of IEDs.

Preparation for the 2016 CCW Review Conference

Finally, we would like to dedicate some time to reflect together on the way ahead regarding the issue of IEDs in the framework of the CCW or in a broader context, and looking ahead to the preparation for the 2016 CCW Review Conference. In particular, we would be pleased to hear from delegations on options of possible outcomes or follow-up work that could be envisaged in this area.

A preliminary Programme of Work is attached as annex 2.

Should you require further information on the preparation for this meeting, please do not hesitate to contact either ourselves or the CCW Implementation Support Unit at any time.

We very much look forward to having a fruitful discussion during the Group of Experts meeting in April.

Yours sincerely,

Capt. (N) Erwan Roche
Coordinator on IEDs
CCW APII Group of Experts

Igor Moldovan
Co-Coordinator on IEDs
CCW APII Group of Experts
Excerpt from CCW/AP.II/CONF.16/6

C. Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs)

28. The Conference took note of the report by Ms. Namdi Payne of Australia, Coordinator on Improvised Explosive Devices and Mr. Erwan Roche, Navy Captain, of France, as Co-Coordinator, as contained in CCW/AP.II/CONF.16/4.

29. The Conference decided that:

(a) The High Contracting Parties note the compilation of existing guidelines, best practices and other recommendations aiming at addressing the diversion or illicit use of materials that can be used for IEDs, currently posted on the CCW website¹, and request that the Implementation Support Unit, in consultation with the Coordinator and the High Contracting Parties, maintain and update the compilation on an ongoing basis as new relevant guidelines, best practices, recommendations and other comments are published;

(b) The Group of Experts continue to narrow and sharpen information exchange on national measures and best practices on one or several of the following topics:

(i) prevent the diversion of commercial grade explosives for use in IEDs;
(ii) prevent the diversion of commercially-available detonators and other non-explosive materials of elements from being used in IEDs;
(iii) raising public awareness and/or risk education campaigns; and/or
(iv) enhance voluntary information sharing on detection and counter measures techniques, in light of the significance of the CCW framework, its norms and implementation with respect to the IED threat.

(c) The Group of Experts continue, consistent with the scope of Amended Protocol II, developing best practices aimed at helping to address the diversion or illicit use of materials that can be used for IEDs, including by:

(i) considering a one-time questionnaire, which would be voluntary in nature, on national counter-IED frameworks, which, if agreed by consensus, would be circulated after the Group of Experts meeting with a view to enhancing international cooperation and assistance and strengthening national capacities of High Contracting Parties, including through the establishment of a network of national points of contact; and

(ii) exploring the possibility of an information exchange database, portal or platform as a voluntary tool to improve information sharing, among a network of national and any other agreed points of contact, on the diversion and illicit use of material that can be used for IEDs and other means of reducing the threat of IEDs,

while bearing in mind commercial confidentiality, national security requirements, the legitimate interests in trade of such materials; and taking into account existing and related work of international and regional organisations, including those referred to in the compilation.

¹ See:
**Preliminary Programme of Work**

CCW Amended Protocol II Informal Group of Experts
Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs)
Geneva, April 9 – 10, 2015

**Thursday, April 9 (end of the morning session)**

Introduction
General presentations on:
- The humanitarian impact
- The impact on the security of States
General exchange of views

**Thursday, April 9 (afternoon session)**

Working session on the Questionnaire:
- Introduction
- General exchange of views
- Review of the text, based on the preliminary draft (*)

**Friday, April 10 (morning session)**

Information exchange on national measures and best practices on one or several of the following topics (**):

(i) preventing the diversion of commercial grade explosives for use in IEDs;
(ii) preventing the diversion of commercially-available detonators and other non-explosive materials of elements from being used in IEDs;
(iii) raising public awareness and/or risk education campaigns; and/or
(iv) enhancing voluntary information sharing on detection and counter measures techniques, in light of the significance of the CCW framework, its norms and implementation with respect to the IED threat.

**Friday, April 10 (afternoon session)**

- Discussion on the possibility of a database, platform or portal
- Final consideration of the questionnaire
- Discussion on the way ahead on the question of IEDs (in the framework of the CCW and beyond), and the preparation for the 2016 CCW Review Conference
- Conclusions

(*) to be circulated in advance of the meeting of the Group of Experts
(**) depending on the availability of experts