UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND

STATEMENT

on Amended Protocol II
to the

Meeting of Experts of the CCW

7 - 8th April 2016
Thank you Mr President,

At the outset, please allow me to thank you for your preparations for this Meeting of Experts, and assure you of the United Kingdom’s continued support.

The UK greatly appreciates the work done by the CCW under Amended Protocol II, and supports all efforts towards its universalisation. We encourage all states not yet party to the Amended Protocol to take the necessary steps to enable ratification.

The UK recognises the humanitarian threat posed by the indiscriminate and illegal use of mines, booby traps and IEDs, and values the work of the CCW under Amended Protocol II in reinforcing and increasing compliance with the basic principles of International Humanitarian Law.

Humanitarian Aid

The UK remains committed to providing substantial support to address the humanitarian consequences of the use of these weapons. In 2015 alone, the UK’s mine action work in developing countries resulted in the removal of over 22,000 landmines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW); and released over 37 million square metres of land which resulted in people having better access to basic services, increased economic opportunities and improved safety. The UK’s projects reached over an additional 115,000 people through mine risk education activities. The UK also worked in Mozambique, Sri Lanka,
Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Iraq and the Ukraine to strengthen the ability of national authorities to manage their own landmine and ERW programmes.

IEDs

I would also like to express the UK’s support and gratitude for the work of the co-coordinators of our discussions on Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). The UK’s national figures indicate that over recent years IEDs have been responsible for over 60% of the total casualties from explosive weapons world-wide. This amounts to almost 30,000 casualties per year. Of these, over 80% were reported to be civilians. Such figures remain deeply concerning.

Throughout all countries and conflicts, IEDs remain the predominant explosive weapon type used by illegal armed groups, terrorists and other unauthorised recipients. International cooperation is an important means of tackling the criminal and terrorist networks which are using IEDs. The UK remains committed to developing practical approaches that aim to reduce the use and availability of IEDs, as well as the harm caused when IEDs are deliberately targeted against civilians. In particular, the UK remains convinced that an effective, informed network across the international community is an important element in combating those networks dealing in the illicit trade in components and the illegal manufacture and use of IEDs. That is why the UK continues to work with partners in the development and implementation of such data sharing. The UK completed the IEDs questionnaire and looks forward to discussion on the responses. We also supported the first ever UNGA First Committee Resolution last year sponsored by Afghanistan and look forward to the UN Secretary General’s report on this issue.

The CCW plays a valuable role in coordinating our work on this issue. With regards to the CCW Review Conference and beyond, the UK believes greater distinction should be drawn between efforts to combat IEDs during ongoing conflict or when hostilities remain live, and activities that occur as part of
humanitarian mine action when hostilities have ceased. We believe greater distinction will allow the CCW to better focus its future discussions.

In closing, Mr President, please allow me to assure you of the United Kingdom’s full cooperation in, and support for, the discussions ahead.

Thank you.