

**Eighteenth Annual Conference
of the High Contracting Parties to
Amended Protocol II to the Convention
on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use
of Certain Conventional Weapons Which
May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious
or to Have Indiscriminate Effects**

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Summary record of the 1st meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 30 August 2016, at 10 a.m.

Temporary President: Ms. Soliman (Acting Director of the Geneva Branch of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs)

President: Mr. Kārkliņš (Latvia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Opening of the Conference

1. **The Temporary President**, speaking as Acting Director of the Geneva Branch of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, declared open the Eighteenth Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects.

Confirmation of the nomination of the President and other officers

2. The Temporary President recalled that, according to rule 3 of the rules of procedure (CCW/AP.II/CONF.15/7), as amended on 13 November 2013, “The Conference shall elect from among the States parties participating in the Conference a President and three Vice-Presidents. These officers shall be elected so as to ensure the representative character of the General Committee provided for in Rule 7.” She also recalled that future presidents and vice-presidents should be appointed at the end of each annual conference to ensure continuity of preparatory work. At the Seventeenth Annual Conference, held in 2015, it had been decided to nominate a representative of the Eastern European Group as President-designate of the Eighteenth Annual Conference (see CCW/AP.II/CONF.17/6, para. 33). She therefore suggested that the Conference should confirm the nomination of Mr. Janis Kārkliņš, Ambassador of Latvia, as President.

3. *It was so decided.*

4. *Mr. Kārkliņš (Latvia) took the Chair.*

5. **The President**, referring to the decision taken at the Seventeenth Annual Conference, said that the representatives of China, France and the Non-Aligned Movement had been nominated as Vice-Presidents of the Eighteenth Conference. He took it that the Conference wished to confirm the nomination of Mr. Fu Cong, the Ambassador of China, Ms. Alice Guitton, the Ambassador of France, and Ms. Beatriz Londoño Soto, the Ambassador of Colombia.

6. *It was so decided.*

Adoption of the agenda

7. **The President** said that he took it that the Committee wished to adopt the provisional agenda contained in document CCW/AP.II/CONF.18/1.

8. *It was so decided.*

Confirmation of the rules of procedure

9. **The President** recalled that the rules of procedure for annual conferences of the High Contracting Parties to amended Protocol II had been adopted by the First Annual Conference in 1999, subsequently amended by the Fourth Conference in 2002, and further amended in 2014. The current rules of procedure were contained in document CCW/AP.II/CONF.15.7 and its corrigendum. He also recalled that pursuant to paragraph 24 of the final document of the Fifteenth Annual Conference, the Conference had decided that at future conferences rule 2 of the rules of procedure requiring the submission of formal credentials would be suspended, except for when an amendment to amended Protocol II or the adoption of a new instrument were being proposed. Rule 2 would therefore be suspended for the Eighteenth Conference. He took it that the Conference wished to confirm the rules of procedure as contained in document CCW/AP.II/CONF.15/7 and its corrigendum.

10. *It was so decided.*

Appointment of the Secretary-General of the Conference

11. **The President** informed delegations that, in accordance with rule 10 of the rules of procedure, Ms. Mary Soliman, Acting Director of the Geneva Branch of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, had been nominated as Secretary-General of the Conference by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. He took it that the Conference wished to confirm that appointment.

12. *It was so decided.*

Organization of work including that of any subsidiary bodies of the Conference

13. **The President** said that, in view of the brevity of the Conference, he was not proposing the establishment of any subsidiary bodies at the current stage. He suggested that the Conference should begin by discussing the question of universalization, followed by an exchange of views under agenda item 7, in which delegations would be able to address all relevant substantive issues on the agenda. The Coordinators would then present their respective reports on the meeting of the Group of Experts, which had taken place on 7 and 8 April 2016, together with their recommendations. Delegations would be invited to discuss the substantive work of the Group of Experts and the proposed recommendations. At the end of each thematic discussion, Conference participants would be asked to approve the recommendations put forward. Informal consultations could be held, if necessary, should amendments be proposed, and the Coordinator in question would then submit the approved amendments to the Conference. All recommendations would be included in the Conference's final document and would also serve as the focus of work for the implementation of amended Protocol II in 2017. The first thematic discussion would review the operation and status of the Protocol and would be led by Mr. David Pusztai (Hungary). The second discussion would be on improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and would be led by Colonel Nicolas Coussière (France) and Mr. Igor Moldovan (Republic of Moldova).

14. He then described the actions he had taken to promote universalization of amended Protocol II. With assistance from the Implementation Support Unit, he had continued to engage with the 11 High Contracting Parties to the original Protocol II that had not yet joined amended Protocol II. Since assuming the Presidency as the representative of Latvia in 2015, he had organized consultations with two of those Parties. Thus far there had been no clear commitment on their part, but the discussions with their representatives continued. One of the six High Contracting Parties to the Convention that had not joined amended Protocol II had been available for bilateral consultations. He had also met with representatives of the United Republic of Tanzania and Lebanon, two States that were not yet parties to the Convention. The representative of the United Republic of Tanzania had undertaken to keep him informed of any developments concerning his country's accession to the Convention, while the representative of Lebanon had stated his country's firm intention to become a party to the Convention once it had completed its domestic procedures. He had also held talks with the Ambassadors of Armenia and Azerbaijan regarding the accession of those countries to the Convention and to amended Protocol II; they had committed to report back to him after consulting their respective capitals. He had held regular meetings with the Implementation Support Unit to identify countries with which a dialogue should be established as a matter of priority, and he would continue to hold such meetings until the Fifth Review Conference. Lastly, he noted that the number of High Contracting Parties to amended Protocol II continued to stand at 102.

General exchange of views

15. **Ms. Londoño Soto** (Colombia) said that it was with great emotion that she announced that a definitive ceasefire agreement between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) had been concluded on 29 August 2016. The agreement, which put an end to 52 years of conflict, would allow the State to go further in implementing amended Protocol II. She recalled the adoption in March 2015 of the Agreement on Land Clean-up and Decontamination from the Presence of Anti-Personnel Mines, Improvised Explosive Devices, Unexploded Ordnance and Explosive Remnants of War in General, which had been an important milestone in the peace process. The country had since undertaken decontamination efforts with the goal of restoring the

rights and the lands of affected communities and enabling them to carry out projects of benefit to them. Decontamination of the rural areas of Orejón and Santa Helena had been under way for several months and good progress had been made. Contaminated areas had been mapped with greater precision, which had made it possible to identify 199 highly contaminated municipalities, 201 moderately contaminated municipalities and 183 slightly contaminated municipalities. Once the ceasefire agreement had been implemented, comprehensive mine-clearance work could begin. Humanitarian demining operations were planned in 52 highly contaminated municipalities. Demining was carried out by the national authorities with the support of clean-up and decontamination specialists. The mayors of affected municipalities had also taken part in those efforts and had participated in workshops to identify their needs. The Government of Colombia attached great importance to the assistance it received from civil society organizations working in the sphere of humanitarian demining, and was currently collaborating with four such organizations, one of which was Colombian. The country had also decided to draw on the experience of its military forces in the area of mine detection and deactivation and to that end had established a national task force on humanitarian demining. A 2,500-man humanitarian demining brigade had been set up, and it was hoped that it would double in size by the end of 2016.

16. **Ms. Kemppainen** (Observer for the European Union), speaking on behalf of the European Union, urged States that were not yet parties to amended Protocol II to accede to it and encouraged the High Contracting Parties to endorse the appeal on achieving the widest possible adherence to the Protocol. The European Union was deeply concerned over the increasing global impact of IED attacks worldwide, in particular in the perpetration of terrorist acts, and welcomed the work carried out under the Convention in increasing the awareness of, and countering, the impact of such devices; it encouraged the High Contracting Parties to continue to contribute to those efforts. It also welcomed the idea of a political declaration on IEDs and hoped that it could be agreed by the High Contracting Parties with a view to its final endorsement at the Fifth Review Conference. The adoption of the first-ever resolution on countering the threat posed by IEDs, by the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, was an important result of the work of the Conference in recent years, and the European Union looked forward to seeing an updated version later in 2016. The European Union had adopted and applied a number of measures to reduce the possibility of misuse of explosives in improvised explosive devices. It had also adopted harmonized rules concerning the marketing and use of explosive precursors. The restriction of explosive precursors was addressed under the European Union Action Plan on Enhancing the Security of Explosives. Furthermore, European Union legislation on explosives for civil use ensured the harmonization of laws adopted by European Union member States and set up a system for the identification and traceability of such explosives, information exchange networks and harmonization of safety requirements. The Action Plan against Illicit Trafficking In and Use of Firearms and Explosives committed the European Union and its member States to strengthening the implementation of existing measures with regard to the securing of explosives. It would also speed up the revision of the Regulation on Explosive Precursors in order to increase its effectiveness.

17. **Mr. Schmid-Drechsler** (Germany) said that Germany aligned itself with the statement by the European Union and underscored the importance of working towards the universalization of amended Protocol II. His delegation would welcome further discussions on mines other than anti-personnel mines, and encouraged States to take all necessary steps to limit the operational life span and to ensure the detectability of such mines in order to reduce the risk for civilians. The German Armed Forces already complied with the suggested 10-year standard. Germany also participated in the fight against IEDs by hosting an annual international symposium for post-blast investigators and bomb technicians, which was attended by police and military experts from over 35 countries and international organizations. Germany also provided substantial financial, technical and material assistance to States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations with a view to supporting their mine-clearance efforts. Fourteen countries had benefited from that assistance in 2015, including Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Iraq and Ukraine. Also in 2015, Germany had spent more than 13 million euros on improving

knowledge and developing equipment to detect and clear IEDs. The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining had been one of the recipients.

18. **Ms. Seo Eunji** (Republic of Korea) said that her country attached great importance to the international community's efforts to put an end to the use of anti-personnel mines, but that the legitimate security concerns of individual States should not be ignored. Although prolonged security threats on the Korean Peninsula had hindered the accession of the Republic of Korea to the Ottawa Convention on Landmines, the country had been enforcing the moratorium on exports of anti-personnel mines since 1997, and in 2014 had promulgated the Special Act on Mine Victim Assistance. It had also regularly submitted its national reports since its accession to amended Protocol II.

19. Deeply concerned by the indiscriminate use of IEDs against civilians and humanitarian workers by non-State actors, including terrorist groups, the Republic of Korea welcomed General Assembly resolution 70/46, entitled "Countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices", and supported the proposal to establish a database for information-sharing on a voluntary basis and the draft joint declaration on IEDs that was due to be submitted to the Fifth Review Conference.

20. **Ms. Robles** (France) said that the Government of France regarded the universal ratification of amended Protocol II as a crucial objective and encouraged all States that were not parties to accede. The instrument was more closely aligned with current international humanitarian law and would enable States parties to better cope with various threats related to mines, booby-traps and other devices, including IEDs. The mobilization of the international community against the global problem posed by IEDs had been given fresh impetus by the First Committee's adoption without a vote of the first resolution on the issue of IEDs, which France had sponsored. The Government of France supported the adoption of the draft political declaration on IEDs, which was the outcome of extensive consultations, and its submission to the Fifth Review Conference in December 2016.

21. **Mr. Mercado** (Argentina) called attention to the particular situation of his country, which did not have access to the landmines present on the Argentine territory of the Malvinas Islands, owing to their illegal occupation by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Argentina had nevertheless placed relevant records at the disposal of the British authorities for the purpose of demining operations on those islands. Moreover, in the framework of its request for an extension submitted in October 2009 in accordance with article 5 of the Ottawa Convention, Argentina had submitted a schematic plan for the application of that article in the affected areas during the 10-year extension period.

22. The Government of Argentina shared the concerns expressed about the reduction in the number of States parties submitting their annual reports and had taken note of the relevant recommendations contained in the report on the operation and status of the Protocol and of the work carried out on IEDs and on controlling the use of fertilizers and precursors. Argentina had adopted Decree No. 603/92, which provided for the establishment of a system for the control of sensitive exports and military materiel and an interministerial monitoring commission formed of representatives of the ministries of defence, foreign affairs and production, along with officials from the relevant national institutions, including the Institute of Scientific and Technical Research for Defence. Argentina thus had the technical and scientific capacity to monitor the use of hazardous substances and to prevent their diversion for illegal purposes.

23. **Mr. Malov** (Russian Federation) said that Russian military engineers had carried out demining operations in Palmyra, Syria. Russian Armed Forces continued to comply with technical requirements concerning landmines, including anti-personnel mines, and were developing new methods for mine detection and clearance. The landmines that had been delivered to the Ministry of Defence complied with the requirements of amended Protocol II and its technical annex. The Russian Federation had also developed and adopted new systems for marking and fencing minefields.

24. The Russian Government fully supported the continuation of work on IEDs, which were a source of serious concern. In 2015, it had replied to the voluntary questionnaire on the subject, and was studying the possibility of establishing a national IED focal point. Given that the main objective of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons was the

fight against terrorism, any work subsequently undertaken with respect to IEDs should be in keeping with that objective. The Convention should not be used to address the problems posed by IEDs.

25. The Government of the Russian Federation did not object to discussions on the creation of a database to facilitate information-sharing on IEDs, but wished to express doubts over whether it was advisable to continue the work undertaken to that end, given that the key issue of how to protect the extremely sensitive information that would be contained in the database from the risk of cyberattacks by terrorist groups had not yet been resolved.

26. **Ms. D'Ambrosio** (Italy) said that Italy aligned itself with the statement given by the representative of the European Union and that it shared the international community's concern at the growing use of IEDs. Italy supported the continuation of discussions on a possible database to facilitate information-sharing on IEDs and endorsed the proposed draft declaration on IEDs.

27. **Mr. Liang** Guotao (China) said that the Government of China had always faithfully fulfilled its obligations under amended Protocol II, and in recent years had devoted considerable human and material resources to its implementation. The Government was currently conducting its third demining operation, due to be finished in 2017, and had made positive progress. The Chinese military continued to destroy anti-personnel mines and other explosive devices that did not meet the requirements of the Protocol and carried out training and awareness campaigns. In the area of international cooperation and assistance, China would host 10 demining assistance programmes in the following five years. Since 1998 it had provided demining assistance to more than 40 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America and had trained more than 500 demining operators. In September 2016, China would host training courses for personnel from Egypt and Cambodia, and would provide financial assistance and demining equipment to Egypt and the Lao People's Democratic Republic in the course of 2016.

28. The Government of China shared the concerns raised about the use of IEDs by non-State actors. In accordance with national laws and regulations, the Government exercised strict control over the production, sale, import, export and storage of explosive devices. The public security authorities had developed a number of technical specifications on IED safety management, established an information management system for the civilian use of explosives and conducted special operations to confiscate firearms, which had reduced the number of incidents and casualties. At the same time, China had made progress in its research into IED emergency disposal technology.

29. The Government of China considered that the creation of a database to facilitate information-sharing on IEDs was a positive step, but that participation should take place on a voluntary basis. Conference participants should have a full discussion on the content and purposes of the database and on the protection of the confidential information to be stored therein, with particular regard to the prevention of hacking by extremist and criminal groups.

30. **Ms. Arredondo Pico** (Observer for Cuba) said that Cuba strictly complied with its obligations under the original Protocol II and that it applied a strict policy ensuring that anti-personnel mines were used exclusively for defence and national security purposes. With regard to IEDs, the Government of Cuba considered that, in keeping with the right to self-defence enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, the use of such devices by States to safeguard their national sovereignty and territorial integrity was not an unlawful act. However, Cuba condemned the use of such weapons by non-State actors, including armed terrorist groups. Her delegation wished to recall that the country had been the victim of terrorist acts in which IEDs had been used by mercenaries in the service of foreign governments. Given the importance of the issue, Cuba was willing to contribute to the identification of best practices and the exchange of information on the prevention and elimination of IED use by non-State actors, in particular illegal armed groups.

31. Thanks to measures adopted at the national level, IEDs did not represent a threat to Cuba. The Government maintained strict control over authorized holders of weapons, ammunition, chemical precursors and other substances liable to be used in the manufacture

of IEDs. The possession and use of such weapons and substances on board ships and aircraft were restricted and security measures were applied in the transport and storage of ammunition and explosives.

32. The Government of Cuba fully respected the decision of States that had chosen to become parties to amended Protocol II. However, those States were not entitled to decide to terminate the original Protocol II. Articles 54 and 55 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties provided that the termination of a treaty could take place by consent of all the parties and that a multilateral treaty did not terminate by reason only of the fact that the number of parties had fallen below the number necessary for its entry into force. Those provisions were confirmed by article 9 of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Accordingly, the original Protocol II remained in force and its termination would be a serious error, as it would also terminate existing legal commitments.

33. **Mr. Anikonov** (Ukraine) said that, since April 2014, a counter-terrorism operation had been under way in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in order to restore public order and stability and enable the continued functioning of local government bodies. In that context, various types of mines were being used, with due respect for the provisions of amended Protocol II, which Ukraine had ratified in 2014. Modifications had been made to Ukrainian legislation and regulations, including the guidelines on the use of mines and munitions, and to programmes for the training of demining specialists. The Ukrainian Armed Forces adhered strictly to the provisions of the technical annex of the Protocol, including on recording of the location of mines and on marking and fencing of minefields. Furthermore, international standards prohibiting mines had recently been incorporated into domestic law in the form of regulatory provisions that would enter into force on 1 September 2016.

34. The army, the police, the emergency services and international and non-governmental organizations were raising awareness among the populations of liberated areas of the risks posed by mines and explosive devices. The media and local authorities were kept informed of demining operations.

35. Since the beginning of the counter-terrorism operation, mercenaries and terrorist groups had been found to be using explosive devices in blatant violation of Protocol II, including anti-personnel mines fitted with anti-handling devices, which were placed in civilian areas without any signs. The Ukrainian military had also discovered Russian-manufactured PMN2 and PMN4 mines, whose use was prohibited. Ukraine had destroyed all such mines in 2013. Hence, the Russian Federation was failing to live up to its obligations as a Contracting Party to Protocol II. Laboratories used for the production of IEDs had also been discovered in liberated areas.

36. The Government of Ukraine supported the adoption of amendments to Protocol II so that IEDs would be taken into account. The country fully complied with the provisions of article 2 of that instrument and actively cooperated with the States parties to the Convention.

37. **Mr. Shindo** (Japan), stressing the importance of submitting annual national reports, said that such reports were essential for confidence-building and transparency and for monitoring and measuring progress in the implementation of a State's obligations under Protocol II. The universalization of amended Protocol II remained a priority objective for the Government of Japan, which supported the Plan of Action to Promote Universality of the Convention and its Protocols and believed that the universalization and effective implementation of the Convention should be a high priority for all States parties.

38. Japan continued to implement its obligations under amended Protocol II and the Ottawa Convention. It had allocated nearly \$670 million to mine action efforts in 51 countries and regions and would continue to provide support, with an emphasis on the clearance of landmines, cluster munitions and unexploded ordnance, risk reduction education and victim assistance in affected countries, and it encouraged other States to do likewise. The Government of Japan welcomed the exchanges of views on IEDs during the meetings of the High Contracting Parties in 2015 and during the meeting of the Group of Experts in April 2016.

39. He wished to thank the Coordinators for their report and recommendations, particularly regarding the continuing information exchange on national measures and best practices. His delegation was in favour of adopting the political declaration on IEDs, which would take stock of the efforts by the Group of Experts since 2009, draw attention to the humanitarian consequences of IEDs and recall the applicable rules of international humanitarian law. The Government of Japan supported the mandate on IEDs for 2017 and the continued participation of civil society in the Conference in accordance with its rules of procedure.

40. **Ms. Ayling** (United Kingdom) said that the United Kingdom aligned itself with the statement of the European Union. Her Government regarded amended Protocol II as a complement to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, and supported all efforts to protect civilians from the effects of such mines and from the indiscriminate use of mines other than anti-personnel mines. It was grateful for the work of the Coordinators and supported the declaration they had drafted. The Government of the United Kingdom remained committed to developing practical approaches that would reduce the availability and indiscriminate use of IEDs and was convinced that combating networks dealing in the illicit trade in components and the illegal manufacture of IEDs, as well as the groups that used them indiscriminately, required an effective, informed network. The United Kingdom would therefore continue to work with partners on data-sharing. It had also completed the questionnaire on IEDs and looked forward to discussion on that subject.

41. **Mr. Visek** (United States of America) said that, since 1993, the United States had provided more than \$2.6 billion in aid for conventional weapons destruction programmes in more than 90 countries. It also provided a wide range of assistance to combat the trafficking of such weapons. The United States remained the world's largest contributor to humanitarian demining activities, which included rehabilitation and vocational training for those injured by landmines and explosive remnants of war. The efforts undertaken by the United States in concert with its international partners had helped 16 countries to become free of mines. He wished to express his Government's appreciation for the work of the Coordinators, including in relation to the declaration on IEDs and the mandate for future work. Care should be taken, however, not to pursue actions that exceeded the mandate of the Convention.

42. **Mr. Paiva Benevides** (Brazil) said that the eventual termination of the original Protocol II could only be decided by all High Contracting Parties. Brazil did not undertake mine-clearance programmes, since there were no mined areas within its territory. However, a module on the country's amended Protocol II obligations had been included in the training of Brazilian military personnel. Brazil had not produced or exported anti-personnel mines since its ratification of the Ottawa Convention in 1997 and had enacted legislation, including Decree No. 3,665 of November 2000, which established norms for the manufacture, use, import, export, customs clearance, transport and trade of specific controlled materials with the aim of preventing their diversion. His delegation considered that any commitment on IEDs should be voluntary and should focus on enhancing existing cooperation and assistance among States parties.

43. **Ms. Yaron** (Israel) said that her Government viewed mines, including anti-personnel mines, as an essential defensive tool. The monitoring, marking and recording of mines and fencing of minefields were carried out in strict compliance with the provisions of amended Protocol II in order to strike the necessary balance between military and humanitarian considerations. In recent years, Israel had undertaken measures aimed at reducing the adverse consequences associated with the use of anti-personnel mines. Since 1994 it had imposed a unilateral moratorium on the export, sale or transfer of any type of anti-personnel mine. That moratorium would remain in force until July 2017, after which it might be extended for an additional three years. The Israeli National Mine Action Authority, established in 2011, was responsible for clearing minefields not essential to the national security of Israel, taking into consideration the International Mine Action Standards. In five years, more than 5.5 million square metres of minefields had been cleared, in cooperation with international partners. Israel had also participated in the post-conflict effort to clear Colombia of mines.

44. The Government of Israel considered that cooperation and information-sharing between domestic agencies, as well as on the bilateral and multilateral levels, were vital for countering the threat of IEDs. The adoption of a joint declaration at the upcoming Review Conference could pave the way to greater cooperation and coordination in that regard. Israel welcomed the adoption of the resolution entitled “Countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices” by the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly.

45. Israel had unfailingly submitted its annual report on the implementation of the Protocol and attached great importance to that tool. Her delegation was of the view that the Review Conference should dedicate special attention to that issue, including the possibility of providing assistance to those States that required it in order to submit their reports.

46. Israel joined other States parties in calling for the universalization of the Convention and its Protocol and welcomed the declaration on universality to be adopted at the Fifth Review Conference.

47. **Mr. Dhaene** (Belgium) said that his country endorsed the statement by the European Union. The Government of Belgium, which attached great importance to cooperation and information-sharing, had responded to the questionnaire on counter-IED measures and urged other Parties to do likewise in order to continue the collection of data on the topic. The European Union had taken concrete steps to reduce the potential for the misuse of explosives, including the European Union Action Plan on Enhancing the Security of Explosives and the Action Plan against Illicit Trafficking In and Use of Firearms and Explosives of December 2015. A bill on the marketing and use of explosives precursors had been introduced in the wake of the terrorist attacks in Belgium. His delegation was in favour of adopting a declaration on IEDs and supported the text proposed by the Coordinators. It called on the High Contracting Parties to amended Protocol II that had not already done so to accede to the Ottawa Convention.

48. **Mr. Datla Bala** (India) said that his country had fulfilled its obligations under the Protocol by taking steps to render all its mines detectable. India was observing a moratorium on the export and transfer of landmines, and information regarding its obligations under amended Protocol II was regularly disseminated to its Armed Forces. Mines used for defensive military operations were laid within fenced and marked perimeters and were cleared after operations. Mine victims received financial compensation and were assisted in rehabilitation. The ratification by India of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities underscored the importance that the Government attached to victim assistance.

49. As a leading contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations, India had extended assistance to international demining and rehabilitation efforts. Indian mine-clearance professionals had contributed to both clearance and clearance training in several countries, including Afghanistan, Angola, Benin, Cambodia and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic. In the past five years, more than 500 personnel from various countries had undergone training in India in mine clearance and explosives disposal.

50. The Government of India considered that amended Protocol II served as an adequate framework for addressing the issue of IEDs and welcomed the adoption of a resolution on the matter by the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly at its seventieth session, as well as the drafting of the declaration on IEDs and the mandate for future work within the framework of the Annual Conference. It also believed that there was scope for enhancing cooperation among States through the voluntary exchange of expertise and information on countermeasures, keeping in mind the need to ensure the confidentiality of sensitive information. In that regard, India had a centre of excellence for training on IEDs, which had organized several training courses attended by service personnel from a number of countries.

51. **Ms. Giles** (Australia) said that Australia supported efforts by States parties to pursue work on stockpile management and encouraged cooperation in capacity-building and establishing best practice. Since the last meeting of the High Contracting Parties in November 2015, Australia had contributed 5.5 million Australian dollars to the United Nations Mine Action Service to support mine and IED clearance in Iraq. With Pakistan, it

was coordinating a working group on the development and production of an IED threat mitigation handbook for the Office of Military Affairs in New York. The handbook, which was due for publication in December 2016, was intended to assist the United Nations in the planning and deployment of missions in IED-affected areas.

52. She wished to congratulate the Coordinators on their work. Australia had participated in that work and approved of the two documents submitted by the Coordinators. She encouraged all States parties to support the development of a database, portal or platform for information-sharing on the diversion and illicit use of explosives and materials necessary for their production.

53. **Mr. Saheb** (Iraq) said that booby-traps, mines and other explosives could be found scattered over a vast expanse of Iraqi territory and that such devices had caused the displacement of thousands of people.

54. According to national statistics for the first half of 2016, booby-traps had been deactivated in 182 houses, booby-traps had exploded in 1,240 houses, 97 car bombs had been recorded and 974 explosive devices had been deactivated.

55. A demining unit had launched an IED project and was working with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining to bring it to a successful conclusion. Iraq was willing to share all required data on IEDs at the international level in order to establish international parameters for use by all States suffering from the scourge of IEDs.

56. **Mr. Aviles** (Ecuador) stressed the need to step up efforts to promote, in all appropriate forums, the universalization of the humanitarian standards set out in the Convention and encouraged observer countries to accede to the Convention and its Protocols as soon as possible.

57. The Government of Ecuador scrupulously abided by its obligations ensuing from the implementation of amended Protocol II, including the submission of annual reports, which attested to the national commitment of the High Contracting Parties and helped to enhance transparency, trust and cooperation among them. The national report of Ecuador for 2015 had been submitted to the Implementation Support Unit in March 2016, within the established time frame.

58. The Government of Ecuador shared the grave concerns of the international community about the serious humanitarian impact of the use of IEDs, in particular on civilian populations. It had enacted appropriate legislation that allowed it to sanction the use of IEDs, and it stood ready to participate in any cooperation initiatives to combat the scourge of such devices.

59. Ecuador endorsed the draft political declaration on IEDs and supported the proposed mandate on IEDs for the next review cycle. His delegation considered that the text on the review of the implementation of amended Protocol II fully and accurately reflected the progress, commitments and aspirations of High Contracting Parties for the new review cycle.

60. **Mr. Garcia Castillo** (Peru) said that Peru respected its obligations under the instruments to which it was a party in the areas of disarmament and international humanitarian law, including those arising from amended Protocol II. It submitted its national report annually with a view to enhancing trust and transparency.

61. It was vital for the international community as a whole and affected populations in particular to play an active role in maintaining international peace and security. For its part, Peru was undertaking public information and awareness-raising activities regarding the risks associated with anti-personnel mines. In addition, training and capacity-building was being provided to specialized personnel in its Armed Forces and national police. A manual on humanitarian demining procedures had been developed, and a similar manual had been drawn up for joint demining work by Ecuador and Peru. Both manuals were aligned with the International Mine Action Standards. Ecuador and Peru had also established a coordination mechanism for the purposes of humanitarian demining, facilitating the fluid and continuous exchange of information and mutual assistance.

62. **Mr. Güneş** (Turkey) said that his delegation was convinced that the Eighteenth Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II was the appropriate forum to address the challenges posed by IEDs and that it supported the idea of a declaration on such devices within the framework of the Review Conference.

63. As recorded in its response to the IED questionnaire, Turkey had laws and regulations in place to control explosives and materials that could be used in the preparation of IEDs. Its security forces and intelligence services engaged in counter-IED measures, drawing on a database and various ad hoc resources.

64. The Government of Turkey believed that a worldwide or regional network for rapid information exchange could strengthen work to counter the threat of IEDs. It appreciated the efforts undertaken to compile existing guidelines, best practices and recommendations to combat the diversion or illicit use of materials for IED production.

65. The Turkish Government recognized the value of annual national reports as a tool for trust-building, transparency, cooperation and assistance.

66. **Ms. Janjua** (Pakistan) said that her country had been committed to the full implementation and universalization of amended Protocol II since its accession to that instrument in 1999. Universalization should remain one of the top priorities of the High Contracting Parties, and the balance between humanitarian concerns and the legitimate security needs of States, which was the Protocol's strength, should be preserved and strengthened.

67. Pakistan was fully compliant with the provisions of the Protocol, and its Armed Forces had incorporated, at all levels, the requirements set forth in the technical annex. The country had regularly submitted its national reports, including that of 2015.

68. Pakistan had successfully undertaken demining operations in various parts of the world, including Angola, Cambodia, Kuwait, Liberia and the Sudan, and was ready to provide further assistance to advance global humanitarian demining efforts.

69. Through concerted actions, Pakistan had made progress in combating the use of IEDs by terrorists on its soil. It had also successfully implemented stringent measures to control precursors and to tighten border controls, and its law enforcement agencies had significantly improved their capacity to detect and neutralize IEDs. A counter-IED strategy had been drawn up, an organization responsible for counter-IED efforts established and an institute founded to provide training on dealing with explosives and munitions. Training opportunities had also been made available to international partners.

70. The Government of Pakistan considered that further work on IEDs should be undertaken within the framework of the Convention and amended Protocol II, as the expertise and technical focus needed to address the matter in the most effective manner existed within that framework.

71. **Mr. Masmejean** (Switzerland) said that efforts to increase the number of High Contracting Parties to the Protocol should continue through the implementation of the Accelerated Plan of Action on Universalization of the Convention and its Protocols.

72. His delegation found it regrettable that many High Contracting Parties did not regularly submit their annual national reports and that some of them had never submitted a report. It wished to propose that the High Contracting Parties examine the possibility of developing an assistance mechanism for the drafting of national reports, modelled on the mechanism proposed in the context of Protocol V.

73. In respect of IEDs, the Swiss Government believed that amended Protocol II provided the appropriate review framework, since it was the only multilateral instrument that formally covered such devices, although its content and scope limited the impact of work carried out. Amended Protocol II was not a counter-terrorism instrument, however, and it was essential that its character did not change, so as to prevent ambiguities.

74. **Mr. Malov** (Russian Federation), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the Russian Federation was not a party to the conflict in south-eastern Ukraine and that the allegation that his country was using prohibited weapons in that region was baseless. Such

statements were intended to divert attention from the inability or unwillingness of the Ukrainian authorities to implement the Minsk agreements, particularly the political component thereof, as well as to distract attention from their own violations of amended Protocol II and the Ottawa Convention, which had been clearly documented by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in its mission to Donbass. His delegation deeply regretted that the Government of Ukraine was dehumanizing the people living in its south-eastern region by labelling them as terrorists.

75. **Ms. Ayling** (United Kingdom), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the Government of the United Kingdom had no doubt about the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands and the principle and the right of self-determination of the people living there. The future of the islands should be determined by their people, in accordance with the obligations of the United Kingdom under the Charter of the United Nations.

76. **Mr. Klymenko** (Ukraine), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that there was abundant evidence of the Russian military presence in south-eastern Ukraine. That evidence came not only from Ukraine, but from other highly reliable sources. Russian weapons, ammunition, mines and mercenaries continued to flow into the region, despite the steps taken to implement the Minsk agreements, and had been documented in various mission reports, including those of reputable international organizations such as OSCE. Ukraine kept international organizations informed of the Soviet and Russian mines that it identified in the south-eastern part of its territory.

77. The Government of Ukraine called upon the Russian Federation to put an immediate end to its aggression, to withdraw its troops from sovereign Ukrainian territory, to cease the supply of weapons and ammunition, including mines, to illegal armed groups in the south-east of the country and to discontinue the mine training of those groups. It also urged the Russian Federation to consider acceding to the Ottawa Convention.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.