

Statement by Ambassador Anupam Ray at the meeting of Group of Experts to the Amended Protocol II, 20 July 2022, Geneva

Mr. President

India congratulates you and your delegation on the assumption of this important responsibility. We assure you of our full support and cooperation in carrying out our work. We also wish to express our appreciation to the Secretariat for the support provided throughout the year to the High Contracting Parties in the effective implementation of this important Convention. India looks forward to constructively participate and contribute to this important area of our work during this intersessional period.

Mr. President

2. India is fully committed to the CCW and is a signatory to all the five Protocols of the CCW including the Amended Protocol II. India attaches high importance to the full implementation of AP II and its universalization. We firmly believe that AP II strikes a balance between humanitarian concerns on landmines and legitimate defense requirements, particularly of states with long borders.

3. We have fulfilled our obligations under the AP-II related to non- production of non-detectable anti-personnel mines as well as rendering all our existing anti-personnel mines detectable. As per our obligations under the protocol, information on AP-II is being regularly disseminated to our Armed Forces. India submits its national annual reports in a timely manner.

4. Addressing the issues relating to civilian casualties is a priority for India. Enhancing public awareness on landmines, rehabilitation of mine victims, financial compensation, employment and health assistance are high priorities. India's ratification of the Convention of Rights of Persons with Disabilities underscores the importance we attach to victim assistance.

5. We support the vision of a world free of the threat of landmines and believe that the availability of militarily effective alternative technologies that can perform cost effectively, the defensive function of anti-personnel landmines, will facilitate the achievement of this goal. Since this is a meeting of experts, we would also like to stress the importance of development and sharing of technology to protect civilians against the indiscriminate use of mines as well as for mines clearance.

Mr. President

6. India is a leading contributor to UN peacekeeping operations and has

extended assistance to international demining and rehabilitation efforts. India has trained mine clearance teams which have undertaken mine clearance tasks in several countries including Cambodia, Lao PDR, Angola, Benin and Afghanistan. India has also provided support for mine clearance tasks in Sri Lanka. In the last decade, over 800 persons from various countries have undergone training in India in mine clearance and explosives disposal. We remain committed to providing capacity-building and assistance to countries upon their request.

7. AP-II also serves as an appropriate framework for addressing the issue of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) which is today deployed often by terrorists and illegal armed groups. India welcomes the adoption of the declaration on IEDs at the Sixth Review Conference. We support continuing the useful work on IEDs under the CCW framework with focus on addressing the threat of IEDs. We believe that while there is a scope for enhancing cooperation among States in exchange of expertise and information sharing on countermeasures, this should be done on a voluntary basis.

8. India's Centre of Excellence for training on IEDs has organized several training courses in which a number of service personnel from other countries have participated alongside Indian participants. Delegations from Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Vietnam have visited the Centre of Excellence during the past.

9. India will continue to support the full implementation of AP II and its universalization.
