

Statement by India at the 24th Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II of the CCW, 15 November 2022, Geneva – delivered by Commodore Nitin Parvataneni, Director(Military Affairs), Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi

Mr. President, please accept the Indian delegation's congratulations on your important appointment and assurance of our support. India firmly supports the vision of a world free of the threat of landmines and believes 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. India firmly believes that the provisions of AP II strike a balance between humanitarian concerns on landmines and legitimate defence requirements, particularly of states with long and difficult borders.

Accordingly, we have fulfilled our obligations under the Protocol related to non-production of non-detectable anti-personnel mines as well as rendering all our existing anti-personnel mines detectable. Mines that have been employed for defensive military operations are laid within fenced perimeters and marked. Post operations, these mines are cleared by trained troops to render the area safe for civilians. In addition, the protocol provisions have been incorporated as part of relevant doctrines and standard operating procedures. Information on AP-II is regularly disseminated to our Armed Forces through courses of instruction and training manuals. These are highlighted in our regular National Annual Reports.

India supports AP-II serving as an appropriate framework for addressing the issue of (IEDs), which remain the weapons of choice for terrorists and non-state actors. The responsibility for enforcing the rule of law, including adherence to international laws lies with the legitimate government authority of that State.

India's Centre of Excellence on Counter-IED training has organised several training courses in which a number of service personnel from Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Vietnam among others have visited during the past several years.

An integral part of India's efforts to avoid civilian casualties due to mines is to enhance public awareness on landmines by carrying out education and risk mitigation in affected areas. Mine victims are assisted in rehabilitation with financial compensation, employment and health assistance. India's ratification of

the Convention of Rights of Persons with Disabilities underscores the importance we attach to victim assistance.

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 undertook mine clearance tasks in several countries including Cambodia, Laos, Angola, Benin and Afghanistan. India has also provided support for mine clearance tasks in Sri Lanka. In the last seven years, over 800 personnel from various countries such as from Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Vietnam 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.

India will continue to support the implementation of AP II at all levels and fully support the universalisation of AP-II.

The full version of our statement will be forwarded separately.

Thank you Mr. President.