Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, let me express our appreciation to the President-designate and to you for the thorough and comprehensive preparation of our meeting and assure you of our full support. We are confident that your vast experience in the topic at hand will be of great value to guide our work.

It won’t come as a surprise to participants that we very much welcome the opportunity to discuss further the implementation of international humanitarian law with regard to mines other than anti-personnel mines. After more than five years, it is high time to live up to our promise, made at the 3rd Review Conference back in 2006, “to discuss further feasible precautions that may be taken to protect civilians from the effects of MOTAPM/AVM”.

Mr. Chairman,

The humanitarian problems mines other than anti-personnel mines can cause are at the heart of our considerations. The German national position regarding those weapons remains clear: While we continue to acknowledge that MOTAPM can be legitimate weapons, we must identify efficient ways to effectively reduce and prevent the humanitarian impact of those weapons. Only some months ago, all High Contracting Parties to the CCW have acknowledged, in their Final Declaration of the 4th Review Conference, that there remain ongoing concerns at the humanitarian suffering caused by mines other than anti-personnel mines.

Recent studies have confirmed that MOTAPM persist as hazards to civilian populations in post-conflict environments and that post-conflict societies can suffer severe humanitarian problems and development constraints for prolonged periods due to contamination with MOTAPM.

It seems that the implementation of existing rules and regulations of IHL has not been sufficient so far to prevent humanitarian impacts of MOTAPM. In Germany’s national policy, the legitimacy of the use and transfer of MOTAPM has therefore for a long time been subject to restrictions, based on
the criteria of detectability and active life limitations. We will elaborate those criteria in more detail at a later stage.

Mr Chairman,

We look forward to a results-oriented and constructive discussion during the following three days. It is in our hands to enhance the credibility and the vitality of the CCW as a relevant multilateral mechanism which contributes to the protection of civilians during and after conflict.

I thank you.