The Meeting of Experts on Mines Other than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM)
U.S. Delegation Opening Statement
April 2, 2012

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The United States welcomes this opportunity to assess the current situation in regards to International Humanitarian Law and mines other than anti-personnel mines (MOTAPM). We fully recognize the humanitarian threat associated with the indiscriminate and irresponsible use of MOTAPM and believe that there is room for specific restrictions on the use of MOTAPM in addition to the relevant provisions of Amended Protocol II.

Like many other delegations here, the United States fully supported and worked hard to achieve an additional protocol to the CCW on MOTAPM before we suspended our work in 2006 and regrets that we were unable to achieve consensus. The United States as one of the original co-sponsors of a MOTAPM protocol stands ready, as we have since 2006, to restart the important work necessary to achieve agreement in the CCW on a new MOTAPM protocol, if consensus now appears possible.

Since 2006, the United States has continued to observe a humanitarian threat created by the presence of persistent and non-detectable anti-vehicle mines, in particular in Africa, where the use of MOTAPM has prevented access to land and infrastructure. Recognizing this problem, the United States continues to support clearance efforts for all mines including MOTAPM. In addition, the United States has taken steps at a national level to transition to all detectable, all self-destruct/self-deactivating landmines, which more than fulfills the steps that we committed to take in the 2006 declaration on anti-vehicle mines.

Mr. Chairman, the United States will provide more detail on the individual topics in our program of work at the appropriate time, but you have our assurance that we have come prepared to participate actively. We look forward to discussing this important issue over the next three days as we try to find a way to move forward in addressing the humanitarian problem caused by the indiscriminate and irresponsible use of MOTAPM.