NINETEENTH 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

(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)


Statement by Germany

Madam Chair,

Germany wishes to thank you for chairing the Nineteenth Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II and is looking forward to a fruitful exchange on how to strengthen the protocol.

Germany aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

This year we celebrate 20 years of the Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention which succeeded in establishing a complete ban of the use of APMs. In this respect Amended Protocol II has been overtaken by the stricter norms of this also called Ottawa-Convention however, Amended Protocol II remains crucial for its rules with regard to the use of all other types of landmines, booby-traps and other devices. The serious humanitarian problems caused by such weapons are undisputed and Germany supports the humanitarian objectives set out in this Protocol.
Consequently, universalization of Amended Protocol II remains a priority. We welcome Afghanistan and Lebanon as the newest High Contracting Parties.

Hence, Germany renews its invitation to all High Contracting Parties to the original Protocol II to adopt the Amended Protocol II. The higher standards of the Amended Protocol II will make a real difference and might create some dynamic towards universalisation.

The informal workshop organized by Ireland, UNMAS, ICRC and GICHD on Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM) in August has demonstrated that there is need and value in further deliberations by High Contracting parties. Germany encourages further discussions on MOTAPM. Two technical aspects could be considered: lifespan limitations and detectability. We encourage states to take all necessary steps to limit the operational life span of their MOTAPM and to ensure their detectability. The German Armed Forces already fulfil the suggested standards for 10 years. Measures in this direction would significantly reduce the risk for civilians.

Germany would also like to thank France and Colombia for their helpful workshop on IEDs this summer. Both the question on how the private sector can contribute to our fight against IEDs and the possible lessons learnt in Colombia were extremely useful.

The discussions on IEDs are also a good example for a mutually reinforcing work between Geneva and New York. The results of the workshop in Geneva directly fed into the update of the First Committee resolution “Countering the Threat Posed by Improvised Explosive Devices” tabled by Afghanistan.
Among other actions Germany participates in the fight against the use of IEDs by hosting the annual International Symposium for Post Blast Investigators and Bomb Technicians with Police and military experts from over 35 countries and international organizations. The conference aims at the reinforcement of the information exchange on explosives incidents, operational tactics and techniques with regard to defusing IEDs and incendiary devices and crime scene work carried out after explosives or arson offenses.

As part of its humanitarian assistance Germany provides substantial financial, technical and material assistance to international organisations and relevant non-governmental organisations for mine clearance programmes, for the build-up of national mine clearance capabilities, for capacity building, and for the development of modern, technologically adequate mine clearance processes. Thereby Germany also supports states to fulfil their obligations under Amended Protocol II. Knowledge and equipment to detect and to clear IEDs in post-conflict settings has become more and more important and has become a focus of Germany’s assistance in this field. In 2016 Germany spent more than 32 million EUR for humanitarian mine action and IED removal in a stabilisation context. Among the recipients of German funding was the Geneva Centre for Humanitarian Demining, GICHD, one of the major research centres in the field of new technologies in demining and explosive ordnance disposal.

Last year 14 countries and territories benefitted from Germany’s bilateral financial and technical assistance for clearance programmes that helped to eradicate the daily threat that all types of unexploded and abandoned ordnance pose to populations, to peacekeepers and to humanitarian aid workers. Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Colombia, Ukraine, Cambodia and Iraq – to name just a few – were among the main beneficiaries of Germany’s bilateral aid.
Thank you, Madam Chair. We look forward to productive discussions to advance the implementation of Amended Protocol II.