Madam President,

Allow me to begin by congratulating you on your appointment as President of this Meeting. The delegation of Croatia wishes to assure you of our full cooperation and support in your work. Our thanks also goes to your entire team - the Secretariat and the ISU, for the preparation of this event. Lastly, we thank the Coordinators - Hungary and France - for their valuable contribution to our work.

Croatia aligns itself with the EU statement made earlier, and would like to add a couple of points from the national position.

Croatia values the CCW as an important cornerstone of the whole disarmament and International Humanitarian Law (IHL), as well as all protocols to the Convention. In that sense, we are confident that Amended Protocol II provides strong and concise regulatory framework in reducing the adverse effects of armed conflicts and has led to substantial improvements on the ground.

As a State Party to Amended Protocol II, Croatia has been implementing its provisions and engaging in international cooperation and assistance in various areas of mine action, all with a view to reduce humanitarian concerns caused by mines, booby-traps and other devices. Moreover, as a State Party to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC), and being a country that itself still struggles with the legacy of mine contamination, Croatia has repeatedly called upon non-states parties to join the Mine Ban Convention (MBC) in order to further strengthen the existing norm against anti-personnel landmines.

Madam President,

We are fully aware of the increasing threat posed by the use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), and the growing political and humanitarian impact caused by IED incidents which mainly affect civilian populations. As such, they constitute a real challenge to the wider disarmament community, which is why we need to continue substantive discussions on a number of IED-related issues.

Indeed, the IED threat is rightfully of a grave concern for all relevant stakeholders and as such is an impediment to full application of humanitarian assistance and provision of development aid. Thankfully, measures can be undertaken to tackle this challenge; whether it is data mapping of threats, victim assistance programs, IED awareness campaigns or monitoring and tracking of IED materials. For the successful
implementation of all these activities, it is implied of course, that States and relevant organizations work hand-in-hand to ensure the best results. Thus, we particularly appreciate the on-going work in updating the Compilation of existing guidelines, best practices and other recommendations aiming at addressing the diversion or illicit use of materials that can be used for IEDs.

In conclusion; given the significance of Amended Protocol II in a rapidly changing world, it is important to conduct efforts to ensure the implementation of Protocol’s obligations and promote its universalization. Croatia intends to do its part in strengthening Protocol’s role and promoting its universality.

Finally, Croatia considers participation of civil society and NGOs in the work of the CCW as a welcome supplement to the overall CCW framework. We acknowledge their important support role to High Contracting Parties in our joint effort to maintain the CCW as an effective arms control instrument.

Thank you Madam President.