The Permanent Representatives of the
High Contracting Parties to the CCW
Amended Protocol II on Prohibitions or
Restrictions on the Use of Mines,
Booby-Traps and Other Devices
Geneva

2 March 2016

Excellency,

We are writing to you in our roles as Coordinator and Co-Coordinator on Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) of the informal Group of Experts under Amended Protocol II (APII) to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), which will take place in Geneva on 7 and 8 April 2016.

We expect that this year the experts will complement the Group’s work on IEDs building on the discussions of the Group of Experts in 2015. In view of your own preparations, we are pleased to update you on our plans for the upcoming session in accordance with the decision of High Contracting Parties at the 17th Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to APII (annex 1).

General exchange of views

The Group of Experts will continue to explore the impact of the IED threat and its humanitarian impact. We encourage delegations to express their general views on the IED threat and to provide national updates on the issue.

Compilation of existing guidelines

The Group of Experts will be further reminded of 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. We encourage delegations to provide further relevant information which may be added to the compilation.

Information exchange on national measures and best practices

The Group of Experts will continue, consistent with the decision taken by the Conference of the High Contracting Parties, to exchange information on national measures and best practices on the remaining topics as follows:

- Support measures to prevent the diversion of explosives for use in IEDs;
- Enhance information sharing on detection and counter measures techniques,

We encourage High Contracting Parties and their experts to contribute actively in the two topics listed above in order to advance the Group’s work on IEDs. If your delegation intends to deliver a presentation on one of those topics, we invite you to let us know in advance.

Possibility of a database, portal or platform

The Group of Experts will further explore the possibility of an information exchange database, portal or platform as a tool for improving information-sharing and reducing the threat of IEDs. The presentations made during the previous meetings of the Group will serve to guide us on whether the High Contracting Parties wish to pursue this issue further.
Questionnaire

You will recall that the one-time questionnaire on national counter-IED frameworks to enhance international cooperation and assistance and strengthen national capacities of High Contracting Parties has been circulated. The Coordinators and the CCW Implementation Support Unit (ISU) continue to gather the answers received. A first assessment of the responses received so far will be presented to the Group of Experts.

We strongly encourage all High Contracting Parties which have not yet done so to respond to the questionnaire. We have sent individual letters to the High Contracting Parties on 5 February 2016 reminding them to submit responses to the ISU by 31 March 2016. We hope to receive more responses before the Group of Experts meets in April.

Preparation for the CCW Fifth Review Conference

Finally, delegations are expected to collectively reflect on the way ahead regarding the issue of IEDs in the framework of the CCW or in a broader context, looking forward to the CCW Fifth Review Conference. In particular, we would be pleased to hear from delegations on options of possible outcomes or follow-up work that could be envisaged in this area.

A preliminary Programme of Work is attached as annex 2.

Should you require further information on the preparation for this meeting, please do not hesitate to contact either ourselves or the CCW Implementation Support Unit at any time.

We very much look forward to having a fruitful discussion during the Group of Experts meeting in April.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact either ourselves or the ISU at any time.

Yours sincerely,

Col. Nicolas Coussièrè
Coordinator on IEDs
CCW APII Group of Experts

Igor Moldovan
Co-Coordinator on IEDs
CCW APII Group of Experts
Excerpt from CCW/AP.II/CONF.17/6

C. Improvised Explosive Devices (IED)

28. The Conference took note of the report by Mr. Erwan Roche, Navy Captain, of France, as Coordinator on Improvised Explosive Devices, and Mr. Igor Moldovan of the Republic of Moldova, as Co-Coordinator, as contained in CCW/AP.II/CONF.17/2.

29. The Conference decided that:

(a) The High Contracting Parties request the Implementation Support Unit, in consultation with the Coordinators and the High Contracting Parties, to maintain, update and keep available on the CCW website 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 improvised explosive devices, on an ongoing basis as new relevant information is published;

(b) Following the work done during the 2015 meeting of experts, the Group of Experts shall continue to narrow and sharpen voluntary information exchange on national measures and best practices on, inter alia, the following remaining topics:

• support measures to prevent the diversion of explosives for use in improvised explosive devices,

• enhance information sharing on detection and counter measures techniques,

in light of the significance of the CCW framework, its norms and implementation with respect to the IED threat, and bearing in mind commercial confidentiality, national security requirements, the legitimate interests in trade of such materials; and taking into account existing and related work of international and regional organizations.

(c) As regards to the possibility of an information exchange database, portal or platform as a voluntary tool to improve information sharing on the diversion and illicit use of improvised explosive devices and materials that can be used for improvised explosive devices, as well as on other means of reducing the threat of improvised explosive devices, the Group of Experts shall continue, consistent with the scope of Amended Protocol II, to keep informed, inter alia, on the development of the AXON database project, as well as any new initiative in this field;

(d) With respect to the questionnaire agreed by consensus by the Group of Experts during its 2015 meeting with a view to enhancing international cooperation and assistance and strengthening national capacities of High Contracting Parties, including through the establishment of a network of national points of contact, circulated on 10 July under the reference CCW/AP.II/CONF.17/WP.1, the High Contracting Parties request the Implementation Support Unit, in consultation with the Coordinators and the High Contracting Parties, to:

• Continue to gather answers received and make them available to High Contracting Parties and relevant agreed international organizations through the specific and protected file available on the CCW website;

• Continue to compile the contact details of the national authorities designated by each High Contracting Party for Counter-IED cooperation, and make this list available on the CCW website; and

• Prepare a summary and analysis of the answers received for the next meeting of the Group of Experts, as a first assessment of the exercise.

(e) With regards to the forthcoming 2016 Review Conference of the CCW, the High Contracting Parties request the President-designate under Amended Protocol II, together with the Coordinators of the Group of Experts and the Implementation Support Unit, to work together and start consultations on possible options for future decisions to be made during the Review Conference, with a view to discuss concrete options during the next meeting of the Group of Experts.
PROGRAMME OF WORK

CCW Amended Protocol II Group of Experts
Improvised Explosive Devices (IED)
Geneva, 7 – 8 April 2016

Thursday, 7 April
15.00 – 18.00
• Opening of the meeting
• Universalization
• Operation and status of the Protocol
• Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs):
  o Introduction
  o General exchange of views
  o Compilation of existing guidelines and best practices aiming at addressing the diversion of illicit use of materials that can be used for IEDs
  o Information exchange on national measures and best practices on:
    ▪ Supporting measures to prevent the diversion of explosives for use in IED
    ▪ Enhancing information sharing on detection and counter measures techniques

Friday, 8 April
10.00 – 13.00
• IEDs (cont’d):
  o Discussion on the possibility of a database, portal or platform to improve information sharing on the diversion or illicit use of materials that can be used for IED
  o Consideration of the Questionnaire on national counter-IED frameworks and a first assessment of the responses received

15.00 – 18.00
• IEDs (cont’d):
  o Discussion on the way ahead on the question of IEDs in the framework of the CCW and beyond, and in preparation for the CCW Fifth Review Conference
  o Conclusions
• Wrap-up by the President-designate
• Closing of the meeting