Statement by Ms. Tamar Rahamimoff-Honig
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to the Conference of Disarmament

2 April 2012, Meeting of Experts on MOTAPM

Mr. Friend of the Chair,

At the outset I'd like to welcome the Chair and yourself once again to the post. We are glad to be in your able and professional hands and as always pledge our cooperation and support in the fulfillment of your duties. We are confident that the discussions will be professional and significant.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel has participated actively in the previous rounds of negotiations on the issue of MOTAPM, with the aim of reducing the humanitarian suffering which may be caused by irresponsible and indiscriminate use of these weapons, while recognizing the continuing legitimacy of the use of mines including MOTAPMs. We have done so with the hope that the 5 year long discussions in the CCW will yield an understanding and agreement regarding the regulation of the use of MOTAPMs.

In this context, Israel associated itself with the declaration made on behalf of a group of states by Denmark (CCW/CONF.III/WP.16), at the end of the Third Review Conference of the CCW in 2006, regretting the
CCW's inability to adopt by consensus a new Protocol on mines other than anti-personnel mines. The declaration announced Israel's and other states' intent to adopt- as a matter of national policy- certain practices with regard to MOTAPM;

- First, not to use AVMs outside the perimeter-marked area unless the mine has certain physical characteristics that enable its detectability, and can be detected by commonly-available technical mine detection equipment.

- Second, not to use any AVMs outside a perimeter marked area unless it incorporates a reliable self-destruct or a self-neutralization mechanism, and a back-up feature.

- Third, to undertake steps to prevent transfers of AVMs: to those who are not a State or State agency authorized to receive it; if it does not meet the detectability and active-life standards set out in the declaration; if the intended recipient has not indicated consent to apply the same policy; or without an end-user certificate.

In addition to the statement made on behalf of the group, Israel has also made a separate declaration on this issue whereby it emphasized, inter alia, its understanding that the group declaration includes the necessary distinction between those military practices which prevail during a time of conflict and those practices which apply in other situations. This reflects the understanding prevailing in the room throughout the negotiation process that in times of conflict, a State party may be limited
in its ability to take certain protective measures regarding AVMs in particular, marking and fencing.

In particular Israel welcomed those provisions in the said declaration which prohibited the transfers of MOTAPMs to non-state actors. Terror organizations make use of MOTAPMs to attack military and civilian targets alike as well as utilize it as a source of explosives for IEDs. This is a prevailing phenomenon in our region but is not limited to our part of the world.

Mr. Friend of the Chair,

At this point, we would like to reserve the right to elaborate further Israel's policy in following sessions. We would just like to remind the room of Israel's moratorium on the sale and transfer of any AP mines which is renewed every four years. It is currently in force until July 2014. We will add that Israel's position supports the inclusion in a future protocol on MOTAPM a legally binding prohibition on the sale and transfer of those MOTAPMs which would be prohibited for use, such as undetectable mines.

We would also like to remind colleagues that last week marked the one year anniversary of the entry into force of the Israeli Law on the establishment of a national authority for the purpose of clearance of mines which are not necessary for national security (INMAA). This
Authority has been already established and has adopted regulations on the standards which will be applied in Israel for the clearance of mines. These are based on the IMAS standards but are even more robust in some aspects. It has also issued relevant tenders and accredited several companies for the purposes of mine clearance and quality assurance and control. A pilot project is expected to be underway in a few weeks' time. We have enjoyed collaboration and support of some national and international bodies and would like to take this opportunity to thank the Croatian Mine Action Authority (CROMAC) and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) for sharing with us their experience and expertise.

Thank you, Mr. Friend of the Chair.