

Statement by India**during the thematic debate on Conventional Weapons****of the First Committee of the UN General Assembly, New York, October 2021**

India is a party to all the five Protocols of the CCW and is committed to ensure the full implementation of its obligations under the Convention and the humanitarian principles that they exemplify. The CCW, being an important instrument of International Humanitarian law, while stipulating measures to mitigate humanitarian concerns arising from the use of specific weapons and weapon systems, also takes into account the military necessity of such weapons, thus striving to strike a balance between the two requirements. India supports efforts towards the universalization of this important Convention. India believes that it is important to maintain the financial sustainability of the Convention so as to ensure its full and effective implementation. India is concerned about the precarious financial situation of the CCW and calls upon all High Contracting parties to make their financial contributions to the Convention, in full and on time. India looks forward to productive outcomes at the Sixth Review Conference of the CCW later this year.

2. India attaches high priority to the full implementation of the Amended Protocol II of the Convention as well as its universalization. AP-II of the Convention strikes a fine balance between humanitarian concerns on landmines and legitimate defence requirements, particularly of States with long borders, such as India. India supports the goal of a world free of the threat of landmines. India observes a moratorium on the export and transfer of landmines. India has fulfilled all its obligations under the Amended Protocol II related, inter-alia, to the non-production of non-detectable mines as well as rendering all anti-personnel mines detectable. We have also been submitting our national annual reports in a timely manner.

3. India believes that AP-II serves as an appropriate mechanism for addressing the issue of IEDs under the CCW framework. Having faced the menace of the use of IEDs by non-state actors for the last three decades that have caused casualties of both our defence personnel and civilians, India is sensitive to the issue of IED threat mitigation and victim assistance. Our Centres of Excellence on Mines and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) remain well-informed about the latest developments with respect to IED design, development, proliferation and the global threat mitigation effort to minimize the IED contaminated areas.

4. Protocol V, which was negotiated during the Presidency of India in 2002-03, holds a special significance for India. India is deeply aware of the grave humanitarian concerns arising from the explosive remnants of war and thus attaches importance to cooperation and providing assistance, to various countries, in the implementation of Protocol V. India is willing to share its best practices with other High Contracting Parties and the United Nations. India's ratification of the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities underscores the importance we attach to victim assistance. India supports efforts towards victim assistance and technical cooperation both under the UN mandate as well as on a bilateral basis.

5. Our "India for Humanity" initiative launched in 2018 coinciding with Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary celebrations, has successfully conducted several artificial limb fitments camps in various countries with more than 6500 artificial limbs fitted across the world. The initiative has been extended till March 2023. India also extends assistance to international demining and rehabilitation efforts and has undertaken specialist training programmes on Counter IED, bomb disposal and demining with numerous partner countries. We stand ready to contribute towards capacity building, victim assistance and victim rehabilitation, upon request from friendly countries in future under the UN mandate.

6. India participates as an Observer in the meetings of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and looks forward to its participation in the 19th Meeting of States Parties this year.

7. India supports the continued deliberations on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) on the basis of an agreed mandate within the framework of the CCW. India also reaffirms its support to the eleven Guiding Principles adopted during the annual Meeting of High Contracting Parties in 2019. India has actively participated in the discussions of the Group of Governmental Experts on LAWS held this year. While the deliberations in the GGE have been useful to understand commonalities, they have also equally demonstrated the need for further work on a number of aspects concerning LAWS. India, therefore, supports continuation of the mandate of the GGE on LAWS, beyond the Sixth Review Conference this year, with participation of all relevant stakeholders, with a view to taking forward the fruitful deliberations during the current review cycle.

8. India, without prejudice to a negotiated outcome to be reached by consensus by the GGE, is not in a position to support any stance which prejudices the outcome of the ongoing deliberations including in the form of a prohibition

or moratorium on further development or use of LAWS. India stands ready to actively participate in the deliberations of the GGE and work with fellow High Contracting Parties to reach a common understanding based on consensus.

9. Weapons in the hands of terrorists are the most threatening form of illicit SALWs. Therefore, India values the full and effective implementation of the UN PoA as a means to combat terrorism and transnational crime. India attaches great priority to the UN Programme of Action as an important multilateral instrument. The Biennial Meeting of States -7 held earlier this year successfully adopted an outcome document after substantive discussions on the important issue of Small Arms and Light Weapons. We look forward to further consolidating the progress made so far, at the BMS-8 next year.

10. India supports the UN Register on Conventional Arms and the UN Report on Military Expenditures and has submitted its national reports regularly. India is a member of the Wassenaar Arrangement. India has enacted robust national export controls governing the transfer of conventional weapons in line with the international standards and remains committed to preventing illegal transfer of conventional weapons.

11. In line with the importance that India attaches to the CCW, our Annual Disarmament Fellowship programme for young foreign diplomats, includes modules on the CCW. We believe that awareness of the Convention and its principles and provisions would help in further strengthening and universalization of the Convention. India stands ready to work with all Member States in this important area of our work and with a view to promoting international peace and security.
