

Statement by India at the 15th Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

Madam President,

The Indian delegation is pleased to see you chair the 15th Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention. India is participating in this meeting as an Observer country.

Madam President,

India supports the vision of a world free of the threat of landmines with mine survivors fully integrated into their society and with individuals and communities free to pursue development in a safe and secure environment. The humanitarian ideals espoused by the APLC regarding anti-personnel landmines have universal appeal. Our presence as Observer in this and previous meetings of States Parties, and at the 3rd Review Conference in Maputo in 2014, is an expression of our support for these objectives. We believe that the availability of militarily effective alternative technologies

that can perform cost effectively the defensive function of anti-personnel landmines is important especially for countries with long land borders.

As a High Contracting Party to the Amended Protocol II of Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, India has fulfilled its obligations related inter alia to non-production of non-detectable mines as well as rendering all our anti-personnel mines detectable. India is observing a moratorium on the export and transfer of landmines. Information regarding our obligations under Amended Protocol II is regularly disseminated to the armed forces. We would also like to stress the importance of development and sharing of technology to protect civilians against the indiscriminate use of mines as well as for mine clearance.

India's armed forces have not used mines for maintenance of law and order or in internal security situations or even for counter-insurgency or counter terrorism operations even though our security forces and civilians have been the target of indiscriminate use of improvised explosive devices. Mines laid by our armed forces as part of defensive military operations are within fenced perimeters and marked, in accordance with the requirements specified in Amended

Protocol II. India is also contributing effectively to the discussions on IEDs, the weapon of choice for terrorists and non-State Actors, under Amended Protocol II.

Increasing public awareness is an integral part of our efforts to avoid civilian casualties. India's ratification of the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities underscores the importance we attach to victim assistance. The prosthetic called "Jaipur foot" is symbolic of India's contribution to victim assistance.

India has extended assistance to international demining and rehabilitation efforts including as part of UN peacekeeping operations to which India is a leading contributor. Indian mine clearance professionals have contributed to both clearance training globally, including in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Angola, Benin and Afghanistan. We have also provided support for mine clearance in the erstwhile conflict affected areas in Sri Lanka. In the last five years, over 500 personnel from various countries have undergone training in India in mine clearance and explosives disposal. Continuing with our commitment towards the international demining efforts, in March 2016, India conducted the Latest Multi-National Exercise on

Humanitarian Mine Action. The exercise included 125 Participants and 108 Observers from 18 countries-namely; Australia, Brunei, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russia, Singapore, Thailand, USA and Vietnam.

Madam President,

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate India's commitment to the vision of a world free of landmines.

Thank you.