Statement

by

H.E. Ambassador Michael Biontino
Permanent Representative of Germany to the Conference on Disarmament

in Main Committee I

FIFTH REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE CONVENTION ON PROHIBITIONS OR RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF CERTAIN CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS WHICH MAY BE DEEMED TO BE EXCESSIVELY INJURIOUS OR TO HAVE INiscrimininate EFFECTS

Geneva, 12-16 December 2016

Thank you Mr. Chair for giving me the floor.

With regard to present-day conflicts, we are gravely concerned about the continued disrespect for International Humanitarian Laws and the resultant humanitarian impact in particular of the use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas.

The existing rules under IHL already foresee stringent limitations on the use of those weapons in close proximity to concentrations of civilians and require that the employed weapon can differentiate between combatants and non-combatants.

As conflicts and, as a consequence, respective peace support and humanitarian operations are increasingly taking place in an urban setting, Germany strongly believes that there is great value in discussing how to strengthen IHL compliance in this context.
Such a discussion requires inclusive and transparent deliberations, we suggest mandating a group of experts within the CCW.

Taking into account the charged calendar for 2017 and in order to not overstretch the financial resources we could conceive of holding the meeting of such a group of experts back to back with another possible group of experts on Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM) or combine several subjects related to explosives.

On this last issue, Germany would like to add its voice to the many delegations here in this conference room which spoke on the issue of MOTAPM and supports the Irish initiative on this very important subject.

This Review Conference presents the opportunity to take stock of what we have achieved and where we want to steer our deliberations for the next five years.

Germany actively supported the negotiations of a separate protocol on MOTAPM in 2006 and still believes that there is a necessity for an in-depth discussion on the humanitarian consequences of MOTAPM and how we best address it within the CCW-framework.

On a national basis, Germany applies the following policy vis-à-vis MOTAPM:

1. MOTAPM used by the German Armed Forces are detectable.

2. MOTAPM used by the German Armed Forces are equipped with a mechanism ensuring a lifespan limitation

3. MOTAPM transferred to third states must meet these requirements

We encourage all states to take appropriate steps to limit the operational life span of their MOTAPM and to ensure their detectability. This would be a vital step forward towards ensuring civilian populations’ safety.

Thank you Mr. Chair.