Mr. chairman,

As it has been already pointed out, Mozambique hosted a regional conference on EWIPA, in November last year.

It was, indeed, a great honour for us to host the Regional Meeting on the Protection of Civilians from the use of EWIPA, in our capacity of members of Geneva Core Group on the issue.

Co-organised with Handicap International and INEW, the Meeting offered a unique platform for the representatives of 20 African countries, some civil society organizations and UN agencies to share their views, experiences and perspectives on the matter.

Participants strengthened their engagement on this pressing humanitarian subject and political process.

We hold the view that the matter should be of particular concern, for according to available studies, in the long run, the impact of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas may tend to worsen.

We would like to remind delegates that according to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Revision of the World Urbanization Prospects, 54% of the world’s population lives in urban settings.

The revision indicates that Africa, alongside Asia, is urbanizing faster than other regions and that it is projected to become 56% urban, by 2050.
This trend, coupled with the urbanization of conflict concept, reminds us of the impact of EWIPA, including cities and towns, may have in a scenario of huge population concentration.

Mozambique has embraced the explosive weapons in populated areas’ initiative, right from its inception in Geneva, in the belief that protecting populations from the use of explosive weapons is a noble, if not a just and legitimate cause.

It is against this backdrop that Mozambique is strongly interested in seeing the issue of explosive weapons in populated areas further known and disseminated worldwide.

The detailed outcomes of the Maputo Conference are contained in both, report and communique.

Meanwhile, it is worth highlighting that the meeting managed to build a committed group of African states, working to develop influential policy and analysis to deliver an effective response that will mitigate harm from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

The meeting also addressed the issue of obsolete explosive weapons in populated areas, stored below international standards, which has been a matter of concern on the Continent, against the background that such weapons, often than not, accidentally explode causing serious human and material damages, on account of poor management and storage.

It is our understanding that more than an awareness raising meeting, the outcomes may contribute a great deal for the strengthening of the draft elements of the Political Declaration on explosive weapons in populated areas, to be submitted to the UN General Assembly, as provided for in the UN Secretary-General’s report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict.

We believe the engagement in Maputo conference has realized the aim of strengthening and broadening the political support among states and multilateral regional institutions, such as the African
Union, towards an international political declaration on explosive weapons, including user and affected states.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, we wish to express our support to the proposal by Germany on the setting up of a working group on the matter.

We thank you!