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Statement by

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Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain
Conventional Weapons (CCW)

General Exchange of Views

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Mr. President,

At the outset, please allow me to congratulate you, Ambassador Aryasinha, upon the assumption of the Presidency of the Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW, and assure you of our delegation's full cooperation and support in the fulfillment of your duties. We are confident that the CCW and its members will benefit from your vast experience.

Mr. President,

Israel highly values the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its significant achievements. Israel recognizes the CCW's uniqueness as the only forum which includes all the relevant actors – including producers and users of conventional weapons – and consequently as having the greatest potential to make a real difference on the ground. The CCW's strength and relevance lie in its ability to strike the necessary balance between military and security necessities and humanitarian concerns. Israel highly appreciates the professional and non-political nature of CCW's work and will continue to participate actively and constructively in this forum.

Mr. President,

Israel attaches great importance to the universalization of the CCW and welcomes the states that have recently joined it, namely Algeria and Grenada. Thus far, 121 states have taken upon themselves to be bound by the treaty. We encourage others to join the treaty, especially when it comes to regions which are currently under-represented, such as our own, the Middle East.

Mr. President,

Israel regrets that the long and intensive efforts undertaken during the negotiations for a sixth Protocol on Cluster Munitions did not bear fruit. Israel believes that the important work undertaken by the CCW in that context could have yielded significant humanitarian benefits and that the CCW should remain open to the possibility of returning to this important issue in an opportune time in the future.

Mr. President,

Looking forward, we are confident that the Fifth Review Conference of the CCW, to be held next year, will prove to be an excellent opportunity to take stock of the Treaty's evolution, achievements and implementation, to evaluate ongoing processes, and to have more thorough deliberations on various issues, including the way forward – all while maintaining the necessary balance between military necessities and humanitarian concerns. This principle should guide us in our efforts to advance the important issues of MANPADS, MOTAPM, IEDs and LAWS.

Mr. President,

Israel welcomes the work undertaken in relation to future Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) over the last couple of years in the CCW, and participated actively in the expert meetings that took place in May 2014 and April 2015. Israel is in the view that this topic should be further discussed in an informal setting under the framework of the CCW. We will elaborate on this issue in the designated section later today.

MANPADS, MOTAPM and IEDs are long standing issues of concern in international fora, including the CCW. While these weapons may be used as legitimate means of warfare, they continue to pose a threat to humanitarian interests when used illicitly and irresponsibly. The growing instability in the world at large, and in our region – the Middle East – in particular, the wide proliferation of these weapons, and the widespread phenomenon of terrorist activities against civilians and civilian objects, necessitates addressing measures to limit the threats posed by these weapons. In view of the potential wide adverse effects of the illicit use of such weapons, our efforts should begin at curbing and preventing their proliferation.

More specifically, the issue of MOTAPM has been one of the most prominent endeavors of the CCW in recent years which did not come to fruition. Israel participated actively in the negotiations on this issue, which took place between 2002 and 2006. By joining the declaration, made on behalf of 25 states at the end of the Third Review conference in

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2006, Israel committed to take upon itself certain practices limiting the use and transfer of MOTAPM, as a matter of national policy. In light of the increasing turbulence in the Middle East, the commitment that Israel and other States undertook in the context of transferring MOTAPM to terrorist organizations and terror sponsoring States, seem pertinent today more than ever. Israel supports taking the issue of MOTAPM forward once again under the CCW's auspices. We would elaborate further on this issue in the designated section tomorrow.

As for IEDs – Israel welcomes the ongoing work on this issue, and believes that advancing it further could be another important achievement of the CCW. The use of IEDs is a phenomenon plaguing many regions of the world, as IEDs are the weapon of choice by many terrorist organizations. My delegation trusts that ongoing work on this issue has the potential to mitigate unauthorized transfers, production and use of IEDs. Israel welcomes the recent resolution in the First Committee on IEDs. We are confident that given the necessary political impetus, the adverse negative effects of the use of IEDs could be mitigated.

The growing threat posed by MANPADS, as well as by short range rockets and surface-to-air missiles, has been clearly demonstrated in recent years, in numerous occasions in the Middle East as well as in other parts of the world. These instances are unnecessary reminders as to why these weapons should not reach the hands of terrorist groups, but should be kept in the hands of responsible sovereign states under appropriate stockpile management arrangements. Thousands of MANPADS, which in the past few years have fallen in the hands of terrorist groups, pose a serious threat, *inter alia*, to the lives of civilians, and the safety of aerial transportation routes and carriers. The transfer and illicit trafficking of such weapons to non-state actors by terror sponsoring States as well as through diversion, smuggling and loss of control over stockpiles and territories, has the potential to cause significant humanitarian suffering, and in some cases even to wide-scale tragedies. Israel remains committed to strengthen domestic and international attempts to address this threat, including through the use of new technologies and promoting better coordination among states, including voluntary intelligence sharing where appropriate. We hope all

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CCW member states will support further attempts to address the growing threat of MANPADS, short-range rockets and surface-to-air missiles and their use by terrorist groups, before more tragedies occur.

Thank you, Mr. President.