

Thank you very much Madam,

Thank you for inviting me to speak on this important subject, in my capacity as coordinator of the expert group on improvised explosive devices within the CCW's Amended Protocol II, alongside Diana Castillo, but also because I am French. Because as you know, France is very concerned by the threat posed by IEDs.

As you know, my country is very much engaged today in operation. And French forces are increasingly confronted with IEDs, particularly in the Sahel, where French forces are fighting terrorism. But we all know that the situation is, or has been, much the same in most other theaters of operation.

And the threat posed by IEDs is growing and civilians remain the first victims of IEDs. AOAV (Action on Armed Violence) has produced some excellent reports on this subject recently, which I invite you to read.

This is why France is so involved in the fight against IEDs. Because we are facing a real and practical security problem that kills people every day. It is a real-life problem, not an abstract bureaucratic problem. And, at this stage, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the actors who, day after day, on the ground, fight against this threat. My job in Geneva seems very easy compared to the risks they take every day.

IED are thus a phenomenon that is both massive - when you look at its impact - and above all diverse when you look at the different approaches required to deal with it.

As coordinator of the IED Expert Group, with Diana Castillo, we have sought each year to raise awareness among the High Contracting Parties of the threat posed by IEDs but also of the means needed to address them.

Our work can be seen in the declaration on IEDs that was adopted by the High Contracting Parties of the amended protocol 2 last week. I will read only a few excerpts:

The High Contracting Parties intend to "work towards the development and consolidation of coherent and coordinated national, sub-regional and regional responses as appropriate, to counter the threat posed by IED"

"continue to exchange information on measures, best practices, recommendations and methods aimed at addressing the threat of IED as well as on IED attacks"

"continue to raise awareness and explore synergies"

And last but not least:

"encourage States, the United Nations and international, regional and other organizations with relevant expertise that are in a position to do so to render to interested States, upon their request, technical, financial and material assistance"

aimed at strengthening the capacity of such States to counter the threat of improvised explosive devices, at the national, regional and international level."

It should be noted that the reflections and dynamics within the group of experts on IED within the amended protocol 2 of the CCW have been also at the origin of very important and useful reflections. This is the case, for example, of the Counter-IED Capability Maturity Model and Self-Assessment Tool developed by UNIDIR.

This document is designed to assist States in the development of coherent national responses to the threat posed by IED.

But beyond the guidance found, there is a need for action on the ground.

At this stage, one point that I think is important to note is the central role for UNMAS:

- on the field of course; and I know that examples of these interventions of UNMAS on the field will be presented to you ;

- but also on a day-to-day basis to help States build a coordinated approach to the fight against IEDs.

UNMAS is the coordinator, the actor who ensures coherence and effective responses including on mitigation of the threat from IED for both the United Nations and the affected States. I will give just one example to illustrate the actions of UNMAS: the SMART IED THREAT MITIGATION TECHNOLOGY ROADMAP, designed to support the UN whole-of-system approach to information-sharing and identification of effective IED threat responses.

I will not repeat line by line the statement on IED, but it seems clear to me that if we, within the Expert Group on IEDs, are working on the dynamics to face IEDs, it is indeed UNMAS that is one of the central actors to transform this dynamic into concrete action.