

First Session  
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**Discussion paper on the issue of restrictions on the use of anti-vehicle mines  
(Russian Federation)**

Russia shares the concerns of a number of delegations relating to the problem of the use of certain conventional weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects.

We express our appreciation to those countries which have come forward with initiatives on ways of improving the so-called “inhumane weapons” Convention and enhancing its vital role in protecting civilian populations.

In this connection, we believe that a particular danger is posed today by anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war which have fallen into the hands of terrorists. The incident in Kaspiisk, when 42 people, including 11 children, were killed in an explosion and more than 120 people were injured, convincingly supports this view. For this reason, Russia, like most other countries, is keen to see these problems resolved as swiftly as possible.

As for mines other than anti-personnel mines, the Russian Federation has repeatedly questioned whether or not there is any point in developing a new protocol to restrict such mines. Its doubts in this regard relate to the following:

- the existence of the Amended Protocol II - the “Landmine Protocol” - which restricts the use of all types of landmines, including anti-vehicle mines;
- the lack of convincing grounds for humanitarian concerns about anti-vehicle mines;
- the substantial costs involved in implementing the additional new requirements.

To date, we have not received sufficiently convincing arguments to persuade us to change our position on this matter.

The main argument adduced by certain countries in favour of the adoption of a protocol is the danger posed by anti-vehicle mines in the conduct of humanitarian operations.

As is generally known, anti-vehicle mines are designed primarily to attack armoured vehicles. In contrast to anti-personnel mines, they do not explode when stepped on. The data on detonations caused by people in areas where armed conflicts had taken place demonstrate that anti-vehicle mines are much less dangerous than conventional unexploded munitions. According to our statistics, the number of victims from anti-vehicle mines accounts for less than 3 per cent of the total number of civilian victims.

In our opinion, the mandatory requirement that the former parties to hostilities must produce maps of their minefields and ensure that their populations are properly informed about the hazards of such mines would be a much more effective measure for preventing the accidental detonation of anti-vehicle mines.

As an example, we might cite the case of Afghanistan, where humanitarian operations are successfully being conducted and humanitarian aid is being provided.

Raising the technical requirements for the detectability and safety devices for anti-vehicle mines by incorporating self-destruction (self-neutralization) and self-deactivation mechanisms in their design will inevitably entail the retrofitting of such munitions and raise the question of stockpiles. Not every State is in a position to spend considerable amounts of money on retrofitting and developing new mines, particularly in conditions where many of the States parties to the 1980 Convention are still faced with the problem of demining large areas removed from productive economic use because of great numbers of unexploded remnants of war.

In addition, it should be stressed that the task of retrofitting stockpiles of such munitions is further complicated by the associated security considerations.

Accordingly, adoption of the new protocol will effectively reduce the defensive capacity of States which have stockpiles of anti-vehicle mines and will deprive them of the ability to use this cheap and essentially defensive weapon.

In addition, it must be borne in mind that the sums involved in retrofitting, setting up production facilities, producing and accumulating the necessary stockpiles of munitions run into the tens and even hundreds of millions of dollars. It goes without saying that, in these circumstances, a State which, to protect its land borders, requires many thousands of such munitions and which is concerned about its own security, will face considerable financial outlays.

We support the observations repeatedly put forward by the Chinese delegation that the elaboration of this new instrument will cause confusion because of its legal overlapping with other, already adopted international instruments.

We look forward to hearing the opinion of other delegations on these issues during the present consultations.

Thank you for your attention.

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