Statement by

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Check against delivery
Mr Chairman

Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. I would like to add these remarks in my national capacity.

Last month, the international community signed up to an ambitious and creative Sustainable Development Agenda. Among the targets set by our leaders was a significant reduction in death from violence and related deaths everywhere. Another relevant target for this Committee’s work was the aim to achieve a significant reduction in illicit arms flows by 2030. To achieve these aims, we must all work to strengthen and to make the existing conventional arms treaties and instruments universal. We must also focus on making them fit for purpose, as technology, weapons and warfare evolve in ways unimaginable to those who drafted those instruments originally.

The Arms Trade Treaty is ground-breaking in its recognition of the gendered impact of illicit arms proliferation. We must show leadership to also recognise women’s agency as a powerful force for change in disarmament.

Ireland has been a strong supporter of the Arms Trade Treaty and we warmly welcome its early entry into force and the firm footing on which it is now established. We ask all States to consider acceding to this new and innovative instrument for curbing illicit arms flows. Ireland regards transparency as an essential tool for the effective implementation of the Treaty and looks forward to the adoption of agreed, publicly available, reporting templates.

Most casualties from the use of conventional arms are caused by Small Arms and Light Weapons. Ireland is a strong supporter of UNSCR 2117 and the UN’s Programme of Action for Small Arms and Light Weapons. We support proposals which seek to integrate and address gaps in the control of these weapons flows, including through the development of international tracing procedures. We firmly believe that ammunition must also be included in control systems. The
Arms Trade Treaty, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Landmines Convention all represent what States and Civil Society, working together, can achieve in conventional arms control.

Ireland welcomes the new accessions to these humanitarian instruments, whose normative force continues to gain widespread acceptance. We welcome the Dubrovnik Declaration, the Maputo Action Plan and Mozambique’s recent declaration of mine free status.

Ireland has been a major contributor to Mine clearance in affected countries for many years. We are heartened to see tangible progress in reaching the goal of a world free of these inhumane and indiscriminate weapons and of other explosive remnants of war. However, much remains to be done, as discussions on IEDs this week have shown. Use of depleted uranium continues to deserve further research and we look forward to the informal MOTAPM meeting which will be held in Geneva on 5 November. We also urge all States to accede to the CCW’s Protocol V on explosive remnants of war. While welcoming undoubted progress on these issues, we have been appalled to hear well substantiated reports of recent use of cluster munitions in Libya, Syria, Ukraine, Yemen and South Sudan. We would ask that all parties to these conflicts cease using these weapons, which a growing number of States have now recognized are both inhumane and indiscriminate.

Mr Chairman

The mandate of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols is at the heart of our debate on how to control and regulate the use of conventional weapons. Again, we would urge all State’s to accede to the Convention and to its protocols. We are encouraged by the active consideration which has been given to the question of Lethal Autonomous Weapons systems at the CCW. We support a strengthened mandate for the CCW to explore this serious emerging challenge for conventional arms control, as recognised by the many side events and briefings on this issue convened during our session.
Ireland supports the establishment of an open ended working group on this issue which could prepare for the CCW Review Conference in 2016.

Ireland remains consistent also in our view that the use of ‘drones’ or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) must be in accordance with international law, including international human rights and humanitarian law. We welcome the continued discussion of this topic, including the relevant principles and norms of international law across both CCW and human rights spheres.

Ireland would like to acknowledge the work of UNIDIR, an essential support to the member States in providing us with quality research and analysis into these difficult issues.

The harm caused by the use of explosive weapons with a wide area impact in populated areas is another emerging challenge for the international community. Ireland is concerned at the escalating civilian casualty rates and damage to essential infrastructure from the use of these weapons in populated areas. Ireland was pleased to participate in the recent meeting in Vienna on this topic and we support calls for the urgent further consideration of all aspects of this question, including possible gendered impacts.

Mr Chairman,

In conclusion, I would like to pay tribute to the crucial role played by civil society. They have contributed so much in recent times, helping us progress on these old and new challenges in conventional arms which, in the words of those who drafted the CCW and its Protocols, continue to “trouble the conscience of humanity”.

Thank you.

ENDS