IRELAND

Statement

by

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Thematic Discussion on Other Weapons of Mass Destruction

Chair,

1. Ireland aligns itself with the Statement delivered by the European Union. I would like to add the following remarks in our national capacity.

2. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery continues to be a growing threat to international peace and security. The alarming increase in the instances of WMD use in recent years reinforce the need for a resolute and global approach. The risk that non-state actors acquire weapons of mass destruction adds a further critical dimension. It is vitally important to enhance international cooperation, both in the framework of the United Nations and amongst all Member States, in order to address these challenges. My Delegation shares the view of many States here today that weapons of mass destruction have no place in our world. Their toxic presence lends nothing to already fragile, tense and complex regional relationships.

3. We regard the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and the newly adopted Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, as key instruments in the international community’s efforts to achieve a world free of all weapons of mass destruction.

Chair,

4. Ireland finds it deeply shocking that the international community is still confronted with the use of chemical weapons despite international law prohibiting them. The development and use of chemical weapons, long prohibited by international law, goes against the very purpose of peace that this United Nations was founded upon.

5. We would like to voice our continued support for the work of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in this, the 21st year since its establishment and the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The CWC is a key component of the non-proliferation and disarmament framework. Its integrity and strict application must be fully guaranteed.
6. Ireland has long supported and trusted the efforts and work of the OPCW, including the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism, the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) and the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT). We are dismayed that the JIM’s mandate has not been renewed by the UN Security Council. The repeated use of veto powers in the United Nations Security Council to prevent moves towards accountability for chemical weapons use in Syria is highly regrettable. We ask States to consider the negative impact that this decision has on our collective efforts to ensure accountability for violations of the Convention in Syria and elsewhere.

7. My Delegation is of the firm belief that the widespread condemnation of those who breach their obligations under the CWC must be matched by action, and that to safeguard against impunity those responsible for these abhorrent attacks against humanity must be held to account. The failure to ensure effective accountability only serves to embolden those who dare to use them.

8. Ireland welcomed the decision of the Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in June this year. We believe that the first step towards accountability is attribution. By enhancing the capacity and capabilities of the OPCW to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Syria and, by request, elsewhere, this decision will help to strengthen the implementation of CWC and help to end impunity for the use of these weapons.

9. Ireland also joined the International Partnership against the Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons earlier this year. The International Partnership - which is a French political initiative - commits participating countries to hold to account those responsible for the use of chemical weapons and calls on the international community as a whole to enforce the prohibition of chemical weapons use and to redouble our efforts to prevent, and hold accountable, those who are responsible for such abhorrent acts. We look forward to continuing the work of this important initiative.

Chair,

10. A further compelling reason for working to strengthen and reinforce our WMD Conventions are the well-substantiated reports that some non-state actors are seeking to acquire and use weapons of mass destruction. My Delegation continues to fully support the comprehensive
implementation UN Security Council Resolution 1540, which remains a central pillar of the international non-proliferation architecture, and key tool in the fight against non-states actors seeking to acquire and use WMD.

Chair,

11. Strengthening the non-proliferation regime is a high priority for Ireland and the role played by export control regimes is an essential part of ensuring the best possible standards are applied to sensitive technology transfer. The Missile Technology Control Regime constitutes a key instrument in this regard and is essential to international efforts to prevent missile proliferation. Throughout its 31 year history, through information sharing, export controls, awareness raising and international cooperation, the MTCR has significantly reduced the ability of proliferators to acquire the technology, information and means to develop WMD missile delivery systems.

12. Ireland, together with Iceland, was pleased to co-Chair the MTCR for a 12 month period in 2017-2018. A successful plenary was hosted in Dublin last October where partners conducted a thorough review and evaluation of the regime's activities over the previous year. Partners particularly focussed increased attention on Intangible Technology Transfer, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, Catch All Controls and Regional Proliferation issues. In the public statement following the Plenary, MTCR partners appealed to all states to support the non-proliferation aims of the Regime by observing its Guidelines and establishing appropriate national legislation and law enforcement mechanisms. Partners also emphasised that observance of the MTCR Guidelines by as many states as possible will contribute substantially to limiting the risks of proliferation of delivery systems for WMD and to fostering international security.

13. Throughout their tenure, the Co-Chairs were determined to conduct an ambitious and far reaching strategic outreach programme to non-MTCR countries to highlight the role played by the MTCR in the broader non-proliferation architecture. The outreach focussed on advancing the regime's profile and ensuring that as many states as possible adhere to what are the best practice guidelines for export controls of missile technology.

14. Ireland is also a strong supporter of the Hague Code of Conduct which has many complementarities with the MTCR. The HCoC has delivered concrete results as the only multilateral transparency and confidence-building instrument in this arena. We welcome
recent adherents to the Code and call on all non-subscribing states to adhere to it without further delay.

Chair

15. Ireland continues to support the important goal of achieving a Middle East Zone free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by States in the Region. We are keen for work on this issue to develop and grow, with the involvement of all stakeholders from the region.

16. In 2018, we were pleased to support a Civil Society event on the margins of the NPT PrepCom with BASIC and civil society actors from the region and we look forward to continuing our engagement. Progress on this issue is vital to a successful and productive outcome to the 2020 NPT Review Cycle. We believe renewed effort must be made by the Co-Convenors, in conjunction with the States of the region on concrete measures for regaining momentum on this essential aspect of the NPT.

17. A stalled process will lead to frustration, which will only serve to deepen divisions further. Progress on the commitments we have already made on important common goals, without additional conditionality, will contribute to peace and security for us today and for future generations. It will ensure they can live in a world free from the specter of Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Thank you.