Statement

by

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UNGA73 First Committee

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Check against delivery
Chair,

1. Ireland aligns itself with the Statement by the European Union. I will add the following in our national capacity.

Chair,

2. The interrelationship between disarmament, peace, security and sustainable development is irrefutable. This interrelationship is recognised in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and now forms a central thread of the U.N. Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament. Ireland supports the proposal of the Secretary-General to integrate disarmament more explicitly through the work of the United Nations and we are encouraged by the priority assigned to the focus on *disarmament that saves lives*.

3. Ireland remains gravely concerned at the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which not only exacerbate tensions and prolong conflicts but also fuel organised crime and overwhelmingly contribute to gender-based violence. The control of illicit flows of small arms and light weapons is a prerequisite for stability and conflict prevention, which is critical to achieve the mutually reinforcing goals of sustaining peace and sustainable development in line with the SDGs.

4. My Delegation strongly supports the **UN Programme of Action (PoA) on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)** and its International Tracing Instrument. We welcome the renewed international commitment to counter the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, as demonstrated by the successful outcome of the Third Review Conference of the UN PoA earlier this year.

5. The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) forms a cornerstone of the efforts to tackle illicit proliferation and provides states with the basis for an effective and responsible export control system. We look forward to welcoming more States Parties as efforts towards universalisation continue. We recall that the ATT was the first arms control instrument to include a provision that gender-based violence should be considered in risk assessments on arms exports. While the
inclusion of the GBV provisions in the ATT was ground-breaking, implementation is most important. This requires thoughtful approaches and the continuous examination of export control procedures. To support the implementation of these provisions, Ireland was pleased to be able to provide funding for Control Arms to produce a “Practical Guide to assess the risk of Gender-based Violence under the ATT”. This practical guide offers a step-by-step approach designed to support the development of more robust export control procedures and ensure GBV forms a key part of export risk assessments.

Chair,

6. We remain gravely concerned at the humanitarian harm being caused during active hostilities in populated areas and in particular by the use of explosive ordnance and other explosive weapons whose effects extend beyond the immediate area of a legitimate military objective located within or close to concentrations of civilians. These weapons have a devastating impact on civilians and civilian objects around the world. We must act to enhance compliance with international humanitarian law to ensure the protection of civilians during armed conflict. This is an obligation shared by all parties involved in armed conflict. We welcome the important work of Civil Society and the ICRC in continuing to raise awareness and address the challenges of EWIPA.

7. We must also be conscious of the potential risks posed by new weapon technologies, such as Lethal Autonomous Weapons (LAWS) which present a variety of challenges, from legal to security to ethical. We are encouraged by the progress made during the 2018 meetings of the Group of Government Experts (GGE) on LAWS, most notably on the agreed emerging guiding principles which reaffirm that international law applies to autonomous weapon systems and that any future weapons must remain under human control. It is our firm belief that such weapons must always remain under human control, and that only human accountability can ensure full compliance with International Humanitarian Law.

8. Much work remains to be done towards the fulfilment of our agreed GGE mandate. The inability to date to converge on an agreed working definition or characterisation of LAWS should not hamper our efforts to comprehensively address the challenges posed by LAWS. The fast-pace of current technological developments present a compelling incentive for us to accelerate our efforts next year.
Chair,

9. Ireland’s cooperation and assistance programmes for humanitarian demining are directly linked to supporting Ireland’s commitments under the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), the Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention (APLC), as well as Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). Ireland has maintained a long standing commitment of support to humanitarian mine action programmes designed to clear contaminated land and contribute towards long-term economic development. So far in 2018 we have allocated €2 million to these programmes.

10. It is now ten years since the international community met in Dublin to adopt the CCM and Ireland is proud to have played a leadership role in the negotiation of this historic Convention. While we welcome positive developments in the implementation of the Dubrovnik Action Plan as reported at the 8th Meeting of States Parties in Geneva this year, we remain deeply concerned about the reported continued use of cluster munitions in different parts of the world.

11. The issue of Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM) remains one of humanitarian urgency. We are greatly concerned about the humanitarian impact arising from the use of these weapons. We continue to believe the limited provisions in Amended Protocol II have not proved adequate to address the concern arising from their use and we continue to support efforts, in common with many other States, to continue consideration of this issue within the CCW framework and elsewhere.

12. Ireland remains consistent also in our view that the use of ‘armed drones’ or armed unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) must be in accordance with international law, including international human rights and humanitarian law. Ireland joined the 2016 U.S. initiative with regard to the adoption of a Joint Declaration on the Export and Subsequent Use of Armed UAVS and we welcome the on-going efforts by States, UNIDIR and civil society to promote continued discussion of this topic.

Thank You