UNGA74 First Committee

Thematic Debate on Other Weapons of Mass Destruction

Statement by Ireland

23 October 2019
Ireland aligns itself with the Statement delivered by the European Union. I would like to add the following remarks in our national capacity.

Chair,

We share the view of many States here today that Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) have no place anywhere in our world. The presence of these weapons offers nothing to international peace and security and the risk that non-state actors acquire weapons of mass destruction adds a further dangerous dimension.

We regard the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the 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. We call on those remaining States who have not yet joined these international instruments to accede to them and complete their universalisation at the nearest opportunity.

Chair,

My delegation would like to voice our continued support for the work of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in its implementation 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. Ireland is of the firm belief that the widespread condemnation of those who breach their obligations under the CWC must be matched by action and we must safeguard against impunity. The failure to ensure effective accountability for the use of chemical weapons only serves to embolden those who dare to use them.

Ireland welcomes the recent establishment of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) and we commend the OPCW Technical Secretariat for the progress made to date. The OPCW
has the capacity and capability to conduct the technical task of attribution in an impartial and scientific manner. The publication of the IIT’s first report will be an important step towards identifying those responsible for chemical weapons use in Syria and holding perpetrators to account.

Chair,

Ireland is also a member of the *International Partnership against the Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons* and we would like to commend the French for the continued leadership of this important initiative. We look forward to continuing our collective efforts to enforce the prohibition of chemical weapons use and hold accountable, those who are responsible for such abhorrent acts, including through the EU restrictive measures regime.

Chair,

Since 1972 the BTWC has established an unequivocal prohibition on a full category of WMD. It has also contributed to increasing our collective understanding and capacity to respond to the risks associated with the proliferation of biological weapons. However, we remain conscious that the BTWC exists in a scientific context which has altered considerably from the assumptions that underpinned the original text. The fast pace of scientific developments and the dual use nature of biological agents and toxins requires us to remain open to considering ways to strengthen the Convention.

Ireland welcomes the valuable ongoing intersessional process of the BTWC and we look forward to engaging with experts, civil society and scientists at the upcoming Meeting of States Parties. We are committed to working to ensure the widest possible representation at this meeting, in regard to both gender and geography. We call on all States to honour their financial obligations to this important Convention without delay.
Chair,

Strengthening the full range of non-proliferation and export control regimes remains a priority. As outgoing co-chair of the Missile Technology Control Regime, Ireland was pleased to pass this leadership role to New Zealand at a successful plenary meeting organised in Auckland earlier this month. Linked closely with the MTCR, we also support the Hague Code of Conduct.

Ireland also strongly supports other key non-proliferation regimes including the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Wassenaar Arrangement and the Australia Group.

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.

To enhance the capability to respond to possible WMD use, the Irish Defence Forces continues its successful partnership with the International Committee of the Red Cross to provide CBRN training to its humanitarian staff, equipping them with the practical skills they need to survive and deliver their vital services in situations of extreme challenge in the event of a CBRN attack.

Chair,

Ireland remains committed to 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 of the Region. We continue for the full implementation of the 1995 resolution and the 2010 agreement on the Zone. Progress on this key issue can bring vital momentum to our broader disarmament work.
Ireland is further concerned by the potentially destabilising effects of hypersonic missiles and supports the Secretary General’s call for a moratorium on testing and other measures to address the potentially destabilising effects of this new development.

Thank you.

_Check against delivery._