Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons
Preparatory Committee
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Contribution to the General Debate by
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Madame President

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your appointment as President of our meeting, and to assure you of our full cooperation and support.

Ireland aligns itself fully with the statement to be delivered by the European Union and would like to add the following remarks in a National capacity.

Madame President

Ireland is committed to the CCW and its Protocols. We welcome the current review process and the opportunity to consider the Convention and its protocol and study how we can, in these difficult and challenging times, reinforce its relevance and continue to strengthen its implementation.
The CCW is an important instrument of international humanitarian law. It aims to prevent or minimise the humanitarian harm caused by certain categories of weapons which are deemed as excessively injurious or have indiscriminate effects, by prohibiting or restricting their use. Further, the CCW, is a dynamic convention, capable of responding to the ever evolving means and methods of warfare used during armed conflicts. The CCW is an important tool to protect our citizens, military and peacekeeping personnel during times of conflict. We strongly urge all non-States Parties to adhere to the Convention without delay. We encourage full adherence, where appropriate, to all five protocols.

Ireland for its part continues to work towards the universalisation of the Convention, as we know many of our colleagues do too. We would suggest that November’s Review Conference underscores the importance of universalisation and sets out further measures which can help us achieve our goals in this regard.

Ireland, like all High Contracting Parties, welcomed the adoption last year by our Heads of State and Government of the Sustainable Development Goals. Among these goals was a commitment to the 2030 target of significantly reducing all forms of violence and related deaths everywhere. To achieve this aim, we must all work to universalize and strengthen
existing humanitarian instruments and treaties. The CCW is a vital part of our efforts in this regard.

I would like now to address some particular concerns which Ireland has in relation to current challenges in conventional weapons law. These relate to the matters falling within the mandate of the CCW, which we believe should be discussed both at this meeting, and, looking forward, to the Review Conference this November.

**Madame President**

Firstly I would like to begin by reiterating Ireland’s strong position in relation to LAWS. We are of the view that all weapons should remain under effective human control. In addition we also believe that the debate should continue to be centred on compliance with International Humanitarian Law and also with International Human Rights Law.

We intend to deliver a more substantive intervention on the topic of LAWS, but for now, Ireland would like to express its thanks to the group of experts chaired by Ambassador Biontino. We feel that the recommendations in the report issued by Chairman Biontino and his team provides an excellent basis upon which to take forward our work at the Review Conference.

The debates which took place in April, in addition to the work undertaken by civil society, have highlighted to us the myriad
of technical, legal, ethical and societal concerns which development of such weapons systems would present. The views expressed also underscored the urgency of this matter.

Ireland believes that real progress can be made through the establishment of a group of governmental experts to consider the issues further. Ireland strongly endorses this recommendation and hopes that the High Contracting Parties at the Review Conference will also support this proposal as put forward in the experts report.

**Madame President**

As we have previously set out, Ireland remains concerned at the recent reports of the use of incendiary weapons in armed conflict in particular the reported use of air-delivered incendiary weapons against targets located within concentrations of civilians and we would like to reiterate the need for all parties to conflicts to comply strictly with CCW Protocol III. The continued applicability and relevance of Protocol III is an issue which we feel should be considered further at this year’s Review Conference.

**Madame President**

Improvised Explosive Devices and their proliferation represent a threat to our global efforts to promote and maintain stability, security, sustainable development, human rights, and humanitarian operations. We will intervene later on during the debates to deliver a more substantive position on IEDs, however at this stage Ireland would like to put on
the record its concern with the proliferation in use of IEDs and in particular the humanitarian harm arising from their indiscriminate effects.

While the indiscriminate use and effects of IEDs has impacted all our societies, Ireland believes that its impact is most pronounced in fragile states. This presents a profound humanitarian challenge and we would ask all High Contracting Parties to consider taking collective, unified action in order to counteract this threat. In this regard we would be hopeful that a political declaration can be agreed and endorsed by the upcoming Review Conference.

**Madame President**

We would like to take this opportunity to once again reiterate our concern in relation to the use of Explosive Weapons with a Wide Area Impact in Populated areas, a question which we see as a growing challenge for international humanitarian law.

It is clear to us that the escalating civilian casualty rates arising from the use of Explosive Weapons with a wide area impact in populated areas presents a significant challenge, which the international community must address.

We strongly encourage maximum compliance with International Humanitarian Law, in particular the relevant provisions of Additional Protocol 1 of 1977 to the Geneva Conventions. In addition, Ireland believes that there would be value in the further exploration of how to minimize
civilian harm, in particular by addressing the secondary and tertiary effects of use of these weapons, and by clarifying our understanding of what constitutes protected civilian objects during an armed conflict. We believe that these weapons which have produced widely documented indiscriminate effects in recent and contemporary conflicts, could be examined within the CCW framework on a similar basis to that on which explosive remnants of war were examined after 2nd Review Conference. We would urge State Parties to consider this issue further and would welcome the opportunity to engage widely with interested parties on this issue.

Madame President
Ireland views the question of Mines Other than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM) as one of continuing humanitarian urgency. We were pleased to co-fund, with the United States, the GICHD–SIPRI study on the Humanitarian and Developmental Impact of Anti-Vehicle Mines which was published in 2014 and also welcome follow-up analysis on MOTAPM use in 2015 published earlier this year. We welcome the initiative of UN ODA, UNMAS and GICHD to organise an informal meeting on this issue last November, in which we were pleased to participate. During that meeting, we heard further testimony of the appalling casualties and economic harm which these weapons are causing on a daily
basis in countries like; Afghanistan, Cambodia, South Sudan and Libya.

The applicability and adequacy of International Humanitarian Law with respect to MOTAPM was also addressed at that meeting. While the use of MOTAPM is regulated by the general rules of International Humanitarian Law, amended Protocol II remains the only source of specific regulation on the use of MOTAPM. APII does not adequately address key issues regarding detectability and active life of MOTAPM and the hazards presented by mines laid outside perimeter marked areas. We are also mindful that a major future armed conflict between larger, more mechanised military powers could lead to far more widespread use of these weapons and far greater humanitarian damage than we are dealing with at present.

My delegation believes that the limited provisions on MOTAPM in Amended Protocol II have not proved adequate to address the humanitarian harm arising from their use. At the 4th Review Conference in 2011 Ireland was happy to co-sponsor a proposal to hold an expert meeting on MOTAPM in 2012. That meeting saw a high participation from states, international organisations and NGOs. We believe it is now time to continue this expert work and we are submitting a proposal that the Review Conference should authorise a mandate for such a meeting. States Parties should engage with this issue at expert level to determine how the CCW can best take this work forward in an inclusive and cooperative
manner, without pre-judging the outcome in any way, in order to address the humanitarian harm arising from MOTAPM use.

Madame President

Ireland would also like to reiterate our consistent view that the use of armed “Drones” or unmanned aerial systems (UAS) must be in accordance with international law, including international human rights and humanitarian law. We welcome discussion of this topic, including the relevant principles and norms of international law across both CCW and human rights spheres.

Finally Madame President, Ireland would like to express our gratitude for the valuable input of civil society and academia. Their contribution to informing and assisting delegations is irreplaceable. Ireland supports a broad and inclusive participation and partnership with civil society in our work.

I thank you Madame President

ENDS