Ireland National Statement

Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

Meeting of High Contracting Parties

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21 November 2018
Chair,

1. Ireland aligns itself with the Statement delivered by the European Union. I add these remarks in our national capacity.

2. The intersection between Peace, Security and Development is irrefutable. Disarmament and non-proliferation instruments are critical tools in achieving concrete progress towards meeting the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Towards this aim, we need to universalise and strengthen the implementation of existing international humanitarian law and disarmament instruments, and ensure their continued relevance, taking into account new developments in conventional warfare. We call on non-State Parties to accede to the CCW Convention and each of its five Protocols.

3. Ireland would also like to note that greater diversity is key to improved decision making and to ask that CCW States Parties consider how we can best achieve a more equal participation between men and women in our deliberations.

Chair,

4. My Delegation would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your efforts over recent months to resolve the on-going CCW financial issues and future ISU arrangements. The timely payment of annual assessed contributions in full by the High Contracting Parties is the only guarantee of the sustainability of the CCW processes. We very much regret the situation which has arisen in respect of the ISU in
part due to non-payment of assessed contributions by some HCPs. However, we remain confident that there is sufficient political will to ensure a satisfactory outcome that will serve to strengthen implementation of the Convention.

Chair,

5. 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 in contemporary armed conflicts around the world. We must act to enhance compliance with international humanitarian law to ensure the protection of civilians during armed conflict which is an obligation shared by all parties to an armed conflict.

6. We welcome the priority attached to EWIPA by the Secretary General in the new Agenda for Disarmament and recognise the need to respond to his call to engage constructively in efforts to address the humanitarian impact of EWIPA, including through the development of a possible political declaration; common standards, practices and operational policies; the collection of data on collateral harm and through the sharing of policy and practice.

7. Ireland, along with other States, is committed to achieving a future political declaration on EWIPA. It is our view that a political declaration is one of a suite of measures required to enhance compliance with IHL and protect civilians and civilian objects during armed conflict. We welcome the range of initiatives by States to
address the humanitarian harm caused by EWIPA and are encouraged by the increased engagement on this issue in the CCW. Any initiative undertaken should enhance the protection of civilians and civilian objects in armed conflict in compliance with IHL and contribute to alleviating humanitarian harm resulting from the effects of explosive weapons in populated areas.

Chair,

8. 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 outgoing chair of the GGE, Ambassador Amandeep Singh Gill for his skillful leadership and guidance.

9. My Delegation was encouraged by the progress made during the 2018 meetings of the Group of Government Experts (GGE) on Lethal Autonomous Weapons (LAWs), most notably on the reaffirmation that international law applies to autonomous weapon systems and that any future weapons must remain under human control. It is incumbent upon all States to heed the warning of the potential risks of LAWs as outlined recently by the UN Secretary General and we must accelerate our efforts next year to effectively address these challenges.

Chair,

10. The issue of Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM) remains one of humanitarian urgency. We continue to be concerned at the humanitarian impact and the heavy consequences on social and economic development arising from the use of
Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM). We acknowledge that MOTAPM are legitimate weapons, provided they are used in a manner that ensures the protection of civilians in accordance with International Humanitarian Law.

11. MOTAPM is an important issue which has remained on the agenda of the CCW for many years and we continue to believe that expert discussions within the CCW on this issue would benefit all States. In particular, we believe that the issue of MOTAPM should remain on the agenda of the Meeting of High Contracting Parties both because of the importance of the issue itself to the purposes of the convention and in order to ensure that the CCW States Parties can continue to consider in a constructive and transparent manner conventional weapons of concern.

12. To advance understanding of the humanitarian and socio-economic impacts of anti-vehicle mines, my delegation is pleased to announce funding to GICHD for the forthcoming year. This new research will assist affected countries understand the broad impact of anti-vehicle mines and prioritise clearance. This research will also contribute to the evidence base and help to inform future international discussion and decisions on MOTAPM.

Chair

13. Ireland remains concerned at the reports of use of incendiary weapons in armed conflict, 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 appropriate for further consideration at the next Review Conference.
14. 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 State, UNIDIR and civil society to promote continued discussion of this topic.

Chair,

15. Let me conclude by expressing our gratitude for the valuable input of civil society, including 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.

Thank You