Ireland National Statement

Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

Meeting of High Contracting Parties

H.E. Mr. Michael Gaffey

Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Ireland
to the United Nations and Other International Organisations

Geneva, Switzerland

13 November 2019
Chair,

May I open by congratulating you on your appointment as President and assuring you Ireland’s full cooperation and support.

Ireland aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the European Union.

Chair,

We must not allow financial issues to dominate the short time we have available for this meeting. We thank you for your efforts to resolve these issues and on future arrangements for the ISU. The timely payment of annual assessed contributions in full by the High Contracting Parties is the only guarantee of the long-term sustainability of the CCW. We very much regret the impact of non-payment of assessed contributions by some HCPs, but we remain confident that there is sufficient political will to ensure a satisfactory outcome that will serve to strengthen implementation of the Convention.

Chair,

The interrelationship between disarmament, peace, security and sustainable development is clear, and direct. Ireland welcomes the elaboration of this interrelationship in the 2030 Agenda, and the Secretary-General’s focus on it in his Agenda for Disarmament. In order to build on these linkages, we need to universalise and strengthen the implementation of existing international humanitarian law and disarmament instruments, and ensure their continued relevance, taking into account emerging technologies.

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 to be excessively injurious or have indiscriminate effects, by prohibiting or restricting their use. It is a dynamic convention, capable of responding to the evolving means and methods of warfare used during armed conflicts.

The CCW is an important instrument for the protection of civilians, military and peacekeeping personnel during times of conflict. We strongly urge all non-States Parties to
adhere to the Convention without delay and also call for the full adherence to all five protocols. Greater diversity is key to improved decision making, and we need to consider how we can achieve more equal participation between men and women in this forum.

Chair,

We remain gravely concerned at the humanitarian harm being caused during active hostilities in populated areas and in particular by the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects. The use of these weapons within urban areas is having a devastating impact on civilians and civilian objects.

We welcome the priority that the UN Secretary General and President of the ICRC have attached publicly to the humanitarian impact of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. We also note the call by the UN Secretary General in his Agenda for Disarmament that States should support the development of measures designed to address the humanitarian impact of explosive weapons in populated areas.

Ireland, along with many others States, is committed to achieving a political declaration on explosive weapons in populated areas. We welcome the significant increase in support we received for the joint statement on EWIPA at First Committee last month, demonstrating the growing level of concern among States for action on this critical issue. Ireland will chair the first in a series of open consultations to initiate work towards a political declaration, in Geneva on 8 November. We believe a political declaration is one of a set of measures which can enhance compliance with IHL and better protect civilians during armed conflict.

Chair

We will deliver a more substantive intervention on the topic of LAWS, but for now, we would express our thanks to the outgoing chair of the GGE for his leadership and guidance. Ireland was encouraged by the progress made during the 2019 meetings of the Group of Government Experts most notably on the reaffirmation that any future weapons must remain under human control. We call on all States to heed the warning on the potential risks of LAWs outlined recently by the UN Secretary General. We must accelerate our efforts to
address these challenges effectively, and we support the proposal for 30 ays of GGE meetings across a two year period.

Chair,

We continue to be concerned at the humanitarian impact and developmental consequences arising from the use of Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines. MOTAPM is an important issue on the agenda of the CCW for many years. We continue to believe that expert discussions within the CCW will benefit all States.

Evidence of continuing harm is regularly highlighted by international organisations, mine clearance organisations and affected states. We are particularly welcome monitoring since 2014 of AVM incidents by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. This shows an 18% increase in Anti-Vehicle Mine incidents in 2018, with 569 reported casualties, 53% of them civilians, across 23 States.

Ireland was pleased to support the 2019 GICHD research launched this week on *The Socio-Economic Impact of Anti-Vehicle Mines in Angola*. This research will contribute to the evidence base and help to inform future international discussion and decisions on MOTAPM.

Chair,

Ireland remains concerned at the reports of use of incendiary weapons in armed conflict, and we reiterate the need for all parties to conflicts to comply strictly with CCW Protocol III. We believe the continued applicability and implementation of Protocol III merits further consideration among HCPs.

Let me conclude by expressing our gratitude for the valuable input of civil society, including academia. Ireland supports a broad and inclusive participation and partnership with civil society in our work.

Thank You