IRELAND

Cluster II
Statement by

Ms. Jenny Quinn
Disarmament and Non-Proliferation
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

At the
2018 Preparatory Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

Geneva, 27 April, 2018

*Check against Delivery*
Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

Ireland fully aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union and with the working paper submitted by the Vienna Group of Ten.

Mr Chairman,

Ireland welcomes the increased attention to the devastating humanitarian consequences that the use of nuclear weapons would bring. By raising awareness of this issue, we reinforce the global norm against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Indeed, our aim should be to remove any notion of prestige or pride associated with the acquisition of nuclear weapons. We can achieve this by taking the debate outside of traditional and narrow viewpoints, and by including the very real human, environmental and developmental costs that would accompany any nuclear explosion, whether by accident or design.

Mr. Chairman,

The non-proliferation pillar of the Treaty is essential, in and of itself, but also to facilitate the mutually reinforcing and mutually important pillars of disarmament and peaceful uses. Ireland is fully committed to advancing the non-proliferation aims of the Treaty.
Considerable work has been undertaken to develop the complex network of legal instruments, non-proliferation arrangements and initiatives around the NPT. This framework is effective, but it is imperative that we do not become complacent. Simple expressions of support are not enough to curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons technology, material and know-how. It is incumbent on us all to support the non-proliferation aspects of the treaty in a pragmatic way. The full and effective participation of women in these debates will also serve to enrich our discussions and ensure an inclusive and diverse range of inputs.

Mr Chairman,

As a tangible expression of Ireland’s commitment, this year, together with Iceland, we are co-Chairing the Missile Technology Control Regime. A successful plenary was hosted in Dublin last October where an extensive review and evaluation of the regime’s activities over the previous 12 months was conducted. Partners devoted increased attention to Intangible Technology Transfer, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, Catch All Controls and Regional Proliferation issues. The Co-Chairs have also embarked on an ambitious and strategic outreach programme to non-MTCR countries to further advance the regime’s profile and ensure that as many states as possible adhere to what are the best practice guidelines for export controls of missile technology.
Strong export controls provide an effective bulwark against the illicit spread of nuclear technology but they must do so in a way that facilitates the smooth transfer of technology and equipment for peaceful uses, in accordance with Articles I to IV of the Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

The NPT is, at its heart, a bargain where benefits and responsibilities are delicately balanced. In order for the NPT to function effectively, the international community must have concrete assurances that nuclear activities undertaken by states are exclusively for peaceful purposes. The IAEA's safeguards system is absolutely crucial in this regard. We urge those states that have not already done so to conclude and bring into force an Additional Protocol without delay, particularly those with significant nuclear activities. We must also ensure that the IAEA is given adequate resources to ensure that it can conduct its essential work independently and effectively.

Ireland believes the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) agreed by the E3+3 and Iran is a hugely significant non-proliferation agreement. It demonstrated what can be achieved through effective multilateral diplomacy and we call on all parties to implement all parts of the deal fully and effectively, for we all have a stake in supporting its success. In this regard we are pleased to announce that Ireland will contribute another €20,000 towards the IAEA's monitoring and verification activities in Iran.
Mr. Chairman,

The dangerous and provocative actions of the DPRK confirm the absolute necessity to further strengthen the NPT. The DPRK's repeated nuclear tests represent the only breach this century of the global norm against nuclear testing. We welcome today's inter-Korean summit and are encouraged by the prospect of direct talks between the DPRK and the US. However, these talks must be matched by action. We urgently call on the DPRK to fully address international concerns related to its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes and to sign and ratify the CTBT without delay. The denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula would represent a major gain for the disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Ireland also fully supports the role of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones across the globe. Such zones can play an important role in promoting regional and international peace and stability. They complement and reinforce the NPT itself, as do a number of other multilateral instruments. The range of coverage of nuclear weapon free zones is a powerful demonstration of the determination of the majority of states to eliminate nuclear weapons entirely.

I would like to reiterate Ireland's absolute support for the establishment of a WMD-free-zone in the Middle East in accordance with the 1995 resolution. Ireland, together with BASIC, will be host a side event on 1 May to explore the possibilities that exist to move this important issue forward.
To conclude, Mr. Chairman, Ireland believes that the only way to ultimately fulfil the non-proliferation goal of the NPT is through its universalisation. Ireland calls on all states that have not yet done so to join the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States and, pending accession, to fully adhere to its terms. Promoting adherence to the Treaty is a collective responsibility on all States Parties and we should collectively strive for its universalisation.

Thank you