



IRELAND

Statement by

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Mr Chairman

Thank you for giving me the floor.

I wish to align myself with the Statement made by the European Union and to add these remarks in our national capacity. In the interests of time I will read an edited version of this Statement and the full one will be available online.

As we, and several other Member States have mentioned in our National Statements, we strongly believe that our work on Disarmament and Non-proliferation is crucial to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. We also believe that nothing can make a difference so much as attention to the solid, everyday implementation of our international commitments with regard to transparency, confidence building and control of arms and weapons flows so as to prevent destabilising accumulations of arms and further fuelling of conflict situations.

Ireland welcomes the many positive achievements of the international community with regard to Conventional Arms matters this year. We would like to congratulate Ambassador Courtney Rattrey of Jamaica

on the outcome of the 6th BMS of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Ambassador Paul Beijer of Sweden for his leadership of the UNROCA Group of Governmental experts. We are supportive of the outcomes in relation to these important UN instruments and look forward to their full implementation.

Ireland continues to support proposals which seek to integrate and address gaps in the control of these weapons flows, including through the development of international tracing procedures. We also firmly believe that ammunition must be included in the control systems of these most deadly, and personal, weapons. When we look at the deadly tolls from arms and weapons everywhere, it is these weapons which, in the end, are responsible for by far the most deaths and harm. They have truly been called “the real weapons of mass destruction”.

Ireland was pleased to join France and a group of 55 States in the Declaration issued yesterday on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We particularly welcome the recognition in both the outcome document of BMS6 and the Declaration that the promotion of meaningful participation and representation of women in policy making, planning and implementation processes is crucial to overcoming obstacles and achieving success in the challenges that face us. We also welcome the draft resolution which our colleagues

from Trinidad and Tobago are bringing forward which we have co-sponsored.

Current challenges with regard to the use of conventional weapons are however many and are increasing. As we debate in this room, terrible loss of life, humanitarian harm to civilians, and destruction of civilian infrastructure is happening from the use of conventional weapons in current conflicts. This is true in particular of Syria where we are witnessing disproportionate and indiscriminate attacks with correspondingly high civilian casualties, including through the use of barrel bombs, cluster bombs and shocking evidence of incendiary weapons use in areas where there are concentrations of civilians. Well founded reports of indiscriminate explosive weapons use from Yemen and Ukraine, in particular with regard to cluster munitions use, are also deeply concerning.

Ireland regards this use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas as one of the most serious challenges facing us with regard to conventional weapons questions at this time. Our Minister Charles Flanagan raised this issue in his recent speech to the United Nations and we also acknowledge and welcome the attention being given to this question by the UNSG Ban Ki Moon, the ICRC, UNOCHOA as well as the Civil Society grouping INEW.

It is now a matter of urgency to explore how we can raise consciousness and strengthen the application of International Humanitarian Law in relation to Preventing Civilian Harm from the use of EWIPA. Ireland would also welcome consideration of this question during the upcoming Review Conference of the Convention on Conventional Weapons.

The Review Conference offers an important opportunity to renew and invigorate this crucial instrument of international humanitarian law. Again, we would urge all States to accede to the Convention and to its protocols.

We are encouraged by the active consideration which has been given to the question of Lethal Autonomous Weapons systems at the CCW and welcome the consensus recommendations which were adopted at the meeting of experts last April. Ireland believes it would now be timely for the Review Conference to establish a group of Governmental experts to take this important work forward.

As we heard expressed so clearly by the eminent Expert panel at the side event organized on this question earlier this week, the technology

to enable LAWS already exists. We must engage urgently with the challenges and disruptive possibilities which that presents us with. The drafters of the Convention recognized that as warfare and technologies evolve, so too must the Convention. We must use the opportunity of the review conference to move forward with our work on this issue.

Ireland also views the question of Mines Other than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM) as one of continuing humanitarian urgency. 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. We believe therefore that 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.

The Ottawa Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions continue to provide strong evidence of the power of normative action. We welcome the Declaration adopted at the recent meeting of States Parties of the CCM and we look forward to the APLC meeting in Santiago. We would like to thank Chile for hosting the meeting which

we hope will mark another important step on the way to meeting the ambitious aim of the Maputo Declaration of reaching a mine free world by 2025.

With regard to the Arms Trade Treaty, with its aim to regulate illicit and irresponsible arms transfers, we are satisfied with the outcome of the Second Conference of State's Parties and continue to encourage those countries who have not yet acceded to the Treaty to do so. We are particularly pleased with the adoption of a common reporting template which we see, along with public reporting, as crucial to the successful implementation of the Treaty. We look forward to less procedural and more substantive discussion next year.

Ireland remains consistent also in our view that the use of 'drones' or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) must be in accordance with international law, including international human rights and humanitarian law. We would wish to see continued discussion of this topic, including the relevant principles and norms of international law across both CCW and human rights spheres.

We welcome the recent U.S. initiative with regard to the adoption of a Joint Declaration on the Export and Subsequent Use of Armed UAVS.

Ireland has joined this declaration and we look forward to participating in follow up discussions regarding its implementation.

Ireland has been a major contributor to Mine clearance in affected countries for many years now. We are heartened to see tangible progress in reaching the goal of a world free of these inhumane and indiscriminate weapons and other explosive remnants of war. We also urge all State's to accede to the CCW's Protocol V on explosive remnants of war.

Another issue of concern relates to remnants of depleted uranium. As with all post-conflict situations, attention must be given to the need for identification, management and clearance of contaminated sites where contamination has occurred.

Mr Chairman

Last year, the international community signed up to an ambitious and creative sustainable development agenda. Among the targets set by our leaders included a significant reduction in death from violence and related deaths everywhere. Another relevant target for our Committee's work was the aim to achieve a significant reduction in illicit arms flows by 2030.

To achieve these aims, we must all work to strengthen and make universal existing conventional arms treaties and instruments so that they are genuinely and fully fit for purpose.

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