

**Ireland National Statement**  
**Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons**  
**Meeting of High Contracting Parties**

**To be delivered by H.E. Mr. Michael Gaffey**  
**Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Ireland**  
**to the United Nations and Other International Organisations**

**GENEVA**

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Mr. President,

Ireland aligns itself with the Statement delivered by the European Union. I would like to add the following remarks in our national capacity.

Mr President,

The intersection between **Peace, Security** and **Development** is irrefutable. The 2030 Agenda and the **Sustainable Development Goals** provide us with a universal global framework for the future of humanity, addressing the inter-linked causes of poverty, inequality, injustice and damage to our planet, which are prerequisite for sustainable development.

Disarmament and non-proliferation instruments are critical tools in achieving concrete progress towards these commitments. To achieve this aim, we must all

work to universalise and strengthen the implementation of existing international humanitarian law and disarmament instruments, and to ensure their continued relevance, taking into account new developments in conventional warfare. We therefore call on non-State Parties to accede to the CCW Convention and to each of its five Protocols.

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.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the **CCW Implementation Support Unit**, whose tireless work since its establishment by States Parties in 2009 ensures the efficient administration of the CCW framework and the continued relevance of the Convention. We very much regret the situation which has arisen in respect of the CCW ISU as a result of non-payment by some High Contracting Parties of their assessed contributions. The loss to the Convention of institutional memory and dedicated staff resources would be incalculable.

As the CCW Implementation Support Unit was established by a decision of CCW States Parties, we believe that any proposed change in its structure, role or staffing should be discussed and approved by States Parties. We look forward to further consideration of this essential question at our meeting this week. We are confident that there is sufficient political will to ensure a satisfactory outcome that will serve to strengthen implementation of the Convention in line with the Decisions taken by the States Parties and look forward in this regard to the opportunity provided by the meeting to consider the Chair's proposals.

Ireland welcomes the first meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts on **Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems** last week. While we were pleased with the progress made, there can be no doubt that the multifaceted challenges raised by increasing autonomy in weapons systems is deserving of sustained and in depth consideration by CCW and that one week of meetings was inadequate to meet this need. We would like to thank our Chairman, Ambassador Amandeep Singh Gill for his impartial and reflective Chairmanship and welcome its recommendations to the MSP, notably the need for a clear characterisation of LAWs, for a particular focus on the human-machine interaction and the recognition that all weapons systems including LAWS can only be developed and used in full compliance with applicable international law including international humanitarian law.

Ireland has maintained a consistent position in relation to LAWS. It is our belief that all weapons should remain under effective and meaningful human control and that this principle is critical to the international community's consideration of the questions arising from the development of LAWs. Compliance with International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law as applicable must underpin any developments or decisions made in relation to this multifaceted and challenging area.

Ireland views the question of **Mines Other than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM)** as one of continuing humanitarian urgency. We believe that the limited and very general provisions on MOTAPM in Amended Protocol II have not proved adequate to address the humanitarian harm arising from their use, in particular as regards to key issues regarding detectability and active life of MOTAPM and the hazards presented by mines laid outside perimeter marked

areas. We welcome the informal meeting on MOTAPM held in Geneva in August 2017 where states, international organisations, NGOs and mine-clearance organisations discussed a range of issues including their military utility and the continuing humanitarian harm arising from their use. We believe that expert work on MOTAPM within the CCW framework, last carried out in 2012, should resume and we should explore how best to take this work forward in an inclusive and cooperative manner, without pre-judging the outcome in any way. At a minimum this issue needs to remain on the agenda of future Meetings of High Contracting Parties.

**Improvised Explosive Devices** and their widespread and increasing use represent a persistent threat to our global efforts to promote and maintain international peace and security and to achieve sustainable development. We remain deeply concerned by the growing humanitarian harm caused by the use of IEDs, whose indiscriminate effects take a particularly heavy toll on civilians and on civilian objects. The responsibility for the harm arising from these effects should not be limited to any particular category of user, just as their effects are not limited to particular targets. We remain steadfast in our support of the Political Declaration on IEDs adopted by the Conference of High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II in 2015.

We were pleased to welcome the adoption of Resolution 2370 (2017) by the Security Council in August, and of Resolution 72/15 at this year's First Committee and we look forward to continuing our common efforts to address the issue of IEDs including within this framework.

We regard the use of **Explosive Weapons with Wide Area Effects in Populated Areas** as one of the most serious challenges facing the international community today. Ireland is concerned at the escalating civilian causality rates and damage to infrastructure from the use of these weapons in urban areas, and the long term impacts they are having on recovery and development for these communities. Ireland continues to believe that development of a Political Declaration would be a useful step enabling States to meet the challenge of preventing civilian harm from the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas, in accordance with international humanitarian law.

Ireland would welcome further discussion, inter alia, on the secondary and tertiary effects of these weapons, on their potential gendered impact, and on an understanding of what constitutes protected civilian objects during an armed conflict, including in the context of the CCW. To this end, we welcome the working papers submitted by Germany and Austria on the use of EWIPA.

Ireland has engaged with Civil Society to better understand the impact of EWIPA on civilian populations. We have been pleased to partner with Handicap International on their research project on gendered impacts of EWIPA and the impact of widespread use of EWIPA on forced migration. We look forward to discussing these concerns during the meeting.

Ireland remains concerned at the recent reports of use of **incendiary weapons** in armed conflict, in particular the reported use of air-delivered incendiary weapons against targets located within concentrations of civilians. We call on all parties to conflicts to comply strictly with CCW Protocol III and we welcome discussion on the applicability and relevance of this Protocol during the course of this week.

Let me conclude by expressing 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.

We look forward to a fruitful Meeting of High Contracting Parties, building on the substantive work carried out by the expert group, which will set the ground stones for productive work during the next year, in order to further the object and purpose of the Convention.

I thank you, Mr. President.