



Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons
Review Conference
Geneva, 12 – 16 December 2016
General Statement by H.E. Ambassador Patricia O’Brien
Permanent Representative of Ireland

Madam President,

Let me start by congratulating you on your appointment as President of the Review Conference and by assuring you of my delegation’s full cooperation and support.

I wish to align Ireland with the statement to be delivered by the European Union and to add the following remarks in a national capacity.

Last year, by adopting the ambitious 2030 Development Agenda, states committed to significantly reduce all forms of violence and related deaths everywhere. 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 and its five Protocols.

I would like to reiterate Ireland's position in relation to LAWS, to be elaborated in more detail in the context of Main Committee II. We are of the view that all weapons should remain under effective human control. We welcome the Report and Recommendations of the Chairman of the informal meeting of experts, Ambassador Michael Biontino, whom I wish to thank for his tireless efforts in this respect. Ireland strongly supports the establishment of a group of governmental experts to meet in 2017 to discuss and explore options on taking the issue of LAWS forward in the context of the CCW. This support does not preclude the consideration of LAWS in the context of International Human Rights Law in other relevant fora.

Ireland views the question of Mines Other than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM) as one of continuing humanitarian urgency. We believe that the limited provisions on MOTAPM in Amended Protocol II have not proved

adequate to address the humanitarian harm arising from their use, in particular as regards key issues regarding detectability and active life of MOTAPM and the hazards presented by mines laid outside perimeter marked areas. We believe it is now time to continue the expert work carried out in 2012 and to this purpose we are submitting a proposal that the Review Conference should authorise a mandate for such a meeting, which will discuss how best to take this work forward in an inclusive and cooperative manner, without pre-judging the outcome in any way. This proposal will be presented in detail in the context of Main Committee I.

Madam President,

Improvised Explosive Devices and their proliferation represent a threat to our global efforts to promote and maintain international peace and security and to achieve sustainable development. We are deeply concerned by the humanitarian harm caused by the growing use of IEDs, whose indiscriminate effects take a particularly heavy toll on civilians. The responsibility for the harm arising from these effects should not be limited to any particular category of user. We welcome the Political Declaration on IEDs adopted by the Conference of High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II last August and we look forward to continuing our common efforts to address the issue of IEDs in a comprehensive and balanced manner, in full compliance with the principles of IHL.

The use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas is a growing challenge which the international community must take urgent steps to address. States should take measures to prevent or at least minimise the humanitarian harm caused by the use of these weapons, in particular by ensuring full compliance with their obligations under IHL. 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.

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 would welcome discussion on the applicability and relevance of this Protocol during the Review Conference.

I would also like to reiterate Ireland's consistent view that the use of armed "Drones" or unmanned aerial systems (UAS) must be in accordance with IHL and with International Human Rights Law where applicable. We welcome the Declaration on armed unmanned aerial systems launched by the US last October,

which Ireland was pleased to join, and we encourage discussion on this topic across relevant fora.

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 Review Conference which will set the ground stones for productive work during the next intersessional period, in order to further the object and purpose of the Convention.

I thank you, Madam President.