

Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction

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Contribution to the General Debate

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Ireland

Madam President

I would like to express my delegation's gratitude for your tireless efforts throughout the past year, and assure you once again of our full cooperation and support. I would like to express Ireland's appreciation to you Madam Chair personally and to the Government of Chile for the extraordinary supports and additional efforts which you made to enable us to meet this week in Santiago. Thanks also to the ISU for their great support to State's Parties during the year.

Ireland would like to add some remarks in a national capacity to those delivered earlier by the European Union.

Ireland welcomes the progress made on all pillars of the Convention since the Maputo Review Conference. We note in particular the continued strengthening of the norm against the use of anti-personnel land mines by States, even among those States not yet parties to the convention. We also note that only very few countries now manufacture these inhumane and indiscriminate weapons and welcome this progress. We welcome and congratulate Poland on the completion of their stockpile destruction and decision not to retain any even for training.

Of course challenges persist but we remain firm in our belief that the vision of a world free of anti-personnel landmines is possible, and within reach. Increased data collection is showing us however that this will only happen by redoubling our efforts, cooperation and commitment to our Convention.

Universalisation remains a significant challenge. Ireland urges non-States Parties to join the Convention, and to refrain, as a minimum, from the use and transfer of anti-personnel mines pending formal adherence. We welcome the commitments of non-State Parties in this regard. Ireland would like to welcome the statement made by Prince Mired of Jordan this morning, and in particular his remarks about the need for us all to use the opportunities afforded by High Level engagements to promote the Convention with non- State parties. Ireland takes a proactive approach to its commitments under the Convention in its contacts with non-States parties and are convinced that this is very useful in keeping the issue on the agenda for those countries who have not yet joined.

In our role as Chair of the Article 5 Committee, Ireland holds firm to the obligations of Article 5, and believes that they remain a central tenet for achieving our shared goal of a world free of anti-personnel landmines. Requests for extensions on Article 5 obligations are testimony to the continued challenges some States Parties face. The issue of new contamination is also of concern but the decision of the 12th MSP is clear on how this question should be dealt with. We are committed to continuing work in a cooperative way on this question so that all State's Parties can remain in compliance with the Convention.

We would also like to stress the importance of transparency and accuracy in communications and reporting, including under Article 7. Deadlines for reporting and mine clearance serve to strengthen the APLC and are key legal obligations under the Convention.

Mr President,

The presence of landmines, including anti-personnel mines, constitutes a threat to human security and a serious impediment to development and rehabilitation in post-conflict societies and to meeting the sustainable development goals. . Moreover, as increasingly witnessed by a variety of actors, landmines pose an often insurmountable obstacle to humanitarian operations, denying access to populations in need. Clearing landmines not only prevents further human casualties, but also frees entire communities from fear, thus paving the way for reconstruction, development, agricultural production, and business opportunities.

Ireland notes with concern the reports of a decade-high number of casualties from use of APLS including IEDS which function effectively as APLS, coinciding with a time when financial support is at its lowest level since 2005.

Recognising the importance of cooperation and assistance, Ireland continues to maintain a strong programme of mine action and related activities in our ongoing development partnerships and we will speak further on this issue at the relevant agenda item and circulate our information on the assistance we are providing,

A major achievement of this Convention remains its commitment to victims and survivors. Those affected by landmines include not only the direct victims, but also their families and communities, and all those who continue to live in fear of unexploded landmines. Efforts to provide victim assistance must consist of nationally led processes with the full and effective participation of landmine survivors and affected communities. Such efforts must take into account not only the gendered impact of the use of anti-personnel mines, but also women's agency, as a powerful force for change. Ireland welcomes and looks forward to the panel on Gender and Mine Action on Thursday. Gender and Disarmament is a major focus for Ireland's foreign policy and we very much welcome this initiative.

In conclusion, Madam President, Ireland wishes to acknowledge the extraordinary collaboration which exists between the Convention and the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, and other civil society organizations.

We are steadfast in our belief that there is a strong power to normative action, and we stand ready to continue our determined efforts with the Convention. Ireland are dedicated to sending a powerful global message against the use of these weapons, and to achieving a world free from anti-personnel landmines by 2025, in accordance with the renewed commitments undertaken by us all in the Maputo Plan of Action.

Thank you.