

Ireland Intervention

Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

Meeting of High Contracting Parties

November 2017

Agenda Item 10 - Mines other than anti-personnel mines

Thank you Chair

And thank you to Afghanistan for your excellent presentation on the challenges your country is facing with respect to mines other than anti-personnel mines or anti-vehicle mines, and the special measures which are being adopted to clear the many remaining contaminated areas.

Chair

The issue of mines other than anti-personnel mines, has been on the CCW agenda continuously since the 2nd Review Conference in 2001. Ireland views the question of MOTAPM as one of continuing humanitarian urgency. We were pleased to co-fund the GICHD –SIPRI study on the Humanitarian and Developmental Impact of Anti-Vehicle Mines which was published in 2014 and also to participate in an informal meeting on MOTAPM held in Geneva in November 2015 which was co-hosted by UNODA, UNMAS and GICHD. That Meeting was attended by over 50 states and a broad spectrum of relevant international organisations and NGOs. The report on this meeting was submitted to the 2016 CCW Review Conference. In August 2017 a similar informal expert meeting on MOTAPM was held in Geneva. This meeting considered the humanitarian impact of MOTAPM use and also examined the military utility of the weapon. It noted the military value of MOTAPM used in minefields as an obstacle to canalise, divert or block enemy deployments rather than as an individual stand-alone weapon and emphasising its importance as a tactical and defensive weapon. The meeting also highlighted the challenges which remain in maintaining military utility while improving the protection of the civilian population from indiscriminate effects. It is clear from these initiatives and other reports from the field that there is a continuing record of humanitarian harm arising from MOTAPM use in many contemporary armed conflicts.

Mr Chair

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. At the 4th Review Conference in 2011 Ireland was happy to co-sponsor a proposal to hold an expert meeting on MOTAPM in 2012. That meeting saw a high participation from states, international organisations and NGOs. At the 5th Review Conference in 2016 over thirty states parties supported a proposal to establish a Group of Governmental Experts on the issue. We believe, in the light of the continuing evidence of humanitarian harm and of continuing civilian fatalities arising from use of this weapon, that it is now time to resume expert work.

Mr Chairman

We have listened to a number of divergent views on MOTAPM much of them referring back to the previous CCW process on MOTAPM which concluded in 2006. While not attempting to minimise our differences my delegation believes that many things have changed since 2006 in terms of weapons development, military doctrine, and the nature of modern armed conflict. The fact that we disagree on some issues should not prevent us discussing an important weapon system which, unlike others we discuss, is already explicitly included within the scope of the convention.

Accordingly my delegation has circulated for the consideration of States Parties a draft proposal to hold an informal meeting of experts for up to two days in 2018 under the auspices of the Chair of the 2018 Meeting of High Contracting Parties to consider further the implementation of International Humanitarian Law with regard to the use of mines other than anti-personnel mines and to report to the 2018 Meeting of High Contracting Parties.

My delegation welcomes consultation with other states parties on the proposal and we are open to suggestions for adjustments or amendments to the text.

Thank you Mr Chairman