



IRELAND

Statement by

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and other international organisations in Geneva**

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Mr Chairman

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

Ireland regards all weapons of mass destruction - biological, chemical or nuclear - as an existential threat to global security and to humanity. Equally, we regard the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention as key instruments in the international community's efforts to achieve a world free of all weapons of mass destruction.

We call strongly on those remaining States who have not yet joined these international instruments to accede to them and to complete their universalisation. Over one hundred years from the first use of a weapon of mass destruction, it is beyond time for us to consign these weapons to history.

We need only look at the appalling situation in Syria to see the compelling arguments for action in this respect. The civilian population of Syria is not only suffering from devastating humanitarian harm through the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of conventional weapons, but it has also been the subject of chemical weapons attacks by both the Syrian Armed Forces and Da'esh, as identified in the Third Report of the Joint Investigative Mechanism.

Ireland welcomed Syria's accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention in 2013 and were pleased to support, in our national capacity, the international community's efforts to remove and destroy the Syrian Government's declared stockpiles of chemical weapons. However, we are greatly disturbed by the evidence of continued use of such weapons in the country. Ireland reiterates our call to refer possible war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated in Syria to the International Criminal Court. Those responsible for these crimes must be held accountable.

With respect to Biological Weapons, the upcoming Review Conference provides us with an invaluable opportunity to reaffirm and strengthen our commitment to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Developments since the last Review Conference, such as the outbreak of the Ebola Virus, have clearly shown us that biological threats do not discriminate amongst victims, nor do they respect borders. We must do all that we can, as global partners, to ensure effective disease monitoring, detection, control and prevention. A critical step in this regard is the full and effective implementation of the BTWC.

We look forward to engaging with experts, NGO's and scientists at the upcoming Review Conference, in line with established practice. We are also committed to ensuring the widest representation possible and have therefore provided sponsorship funding to enable the voices of as many State's Parties as possible to be heard and to contribute to the Review.

Ireland believes it is essential that the Review Conference makes real and sustained progress in relation to the inter-sessional process, reinforcement of the Implementation Support Unit and the science and technology review framework, as well as effective domestic implementation measures. We look forward to the outcome of the Review Conference and a strengthened, “fit for purpose”, Convention.

As part of our practical contribution to countering WMD, the Irish Defence Forces, in collaboration with the ICRC, has for the last two years delivered training for aid workers in surviving the effects of a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear attack. We hope to continue with the delivery of similar training courses in the future.

A further compelling reason for working to strengthen and reinforce our WMD Conventions are the well-substantiated reports that some Non-State Actor groups are seeking to acquire and use weapons of mass destruction. These developments should reinforce the resolve of the global community to adhere to UN Security Council Resolution 1540 and its strong obligations on all States to prevent Non-State Actors from acquiring or using weapons of mass destruction. Ireland fully supports the UNSCR 1540 comprehensive review and we favour a strong re-statement of the UN Security Council's support for Resolution 1540, including through a further Security Council Resolution.

Strengthening the non-proliferation regime with regard to Means of Delivery of Weapons of Mass Destruction is another key priority for Ireland. The proliferation of ballistic missiles is a continued threat to peace and security, a

threat that has been underscored by the recent tests carried out by North Korea. Ireland reiterates our condemnation of all such tests and the need to strengthen international efforts to prevent the proliferation of ballistic missiles.

Ireland is an active supporter of The Missile Technology Control Regime which, through effective export controls and sharing of information, contributes strongly to non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Ireland is committed to playing a positive role in the continuing work of the Regime and is looking forward to the outcome of the Busan Plenary this week in this respect. We welcome the fact that the MTCR has enlarged its membership this year and look forward to further strengthening the regime, including through enlargement to applicant members who meet its criteria. Ireland firmly believes that the membership of all EU States would greatly contribute to the further effectiveness of the regime.

Ireland is also a strong supporter of the Hague Code of Conduct, as the only multilateral transparency and confidence-building instrument in this arena. Ireland welcomes recent adherents to the Code and calls on all non-subscribing states to adhere to this code of conduct without further delay.

Ireland continues to support the important goal of achieving a Middle East Zone free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction. We deeply regret that the conference on the establishment of such a zone, free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, has not yet been convened. We recall the encouragement expressed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference for the

establishment of further nuclear-weapon-free zones, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned, which reaffirmed the expectation that this would be followed by concerted international efforts to create such zones in areas where they do not currently exist, especially in the Middle East. In this context, we note, with deep disappointment, the non-fulfilment of the agreement at the 2010 Review Conference on practical steps to fully implement the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, and we reiterate our disappointment that no agreement could be reached at the 2015 Review Conference on this issue.

We maintain the view that dialogue and building confidence among all stakeholders is the only sustainable way to agree arrangements for a meaningful conference, as decided by the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We deeply regret that progress on this crucial issue has stalled but we want to take this opportunity to call upon all parties to work together towards full implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East to achieve what is a common commitment and common goal, contributing to peace and stability for future generations.

Thank you

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