

Meeting of High Contracting Parties to CCW
Statement by Ireland on Mines other than Anti-Personnel Mines
(MOTAPM)
Friday, 13 November 2015

Mr President,

Following the 2nd CCW Review Conference in 2001 the States Parties mandated successive groups of governmental experts to examine problems arising from the use of mines other than anti-personnel mines and to make recommendations that would minimise the humanitarian damage arising from such use. At that time the States Parties heard overwhelming evidence of the humanitarian damage caused to human life and to social and economic activities by mines other than anti-personnel mines. A large majority of States Parties at that time expressed the view that MOTAPM are not adequately dealt with under Amended Protocol II and that there was a need for an additional protocol to regulate their use. Despite the failure to adopt a protocol up to 30 states at the 3rd CCW Review Conference joined political declarations where they undertook to implement policies on detectability active life and perimeter marked areas that were consistent with the provisions of the draft protocol. It would be very helpful to the present debate if these states were prepared to update the Conference on progress in implementation of these declarations.

In recent years the evidence of humanitarian harm arising from MOTAPM use has continued to increase. In the view of my delegation there is compelling evidence that MOTAPM present a substantial hazard to civilian populations, to humanitarian operations and to peacekeeping forces both during and after armed conflicts.

Mr President

Delegations will also recall that the 4th CCW Review Conference mandated a meeting of experts in 2012 to discuss further the implementation of international humanitarian law with regard to mines other than anti-personnel mines, and to submit a report to the 2012 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention. That meeting was busy and substantive and in the view of my delegation and many others demonstrated a clear need to continue these discussions.

Also in 2012 GICHD and SIPRI announced their intention to launch a joint project to undertake a global study of anti-vehicle mine use and the humanitarian impacts arising from such use. Ireland was pleased to part-fund that project and we believe that these findings will reinforce the

resolve of states parties to discuss further the impact of MOTAPM and to give serious consideration to addressing this issue in a meaningful way.

In a further demonstration of momentum in this area, Ireland was happy to participate in the one day meeting on MOTAPM organised by UNODA, UNMAS and the GICHD in Geneva last Friday. That meeting was very successful and informative with a variety of excellent presentations from experts in the legal military and humanitarian fields. The quality of both presentations and discussion was very valuable in clearly outlining the nature and scope of both the military utility and the humanitarian impact. That meeting also included a very useful discussion on possible approaches to address the humanitarian problem.

My delegation continues to support action to address the remaining gaps in IHL with respect to these weapons. We are particularly concerned at the impact of minimum metal MOTAPM on humanitarian clearance operations and at the hazards presented to civilians arising from the emplacement of persistent mines outside perimeter marked areas. Therefore we believe that the CCW should give serious consideration to addressing the key features of detectability and of the active life of MOTAPM especially of those laid outside perimeter marked areas.

Mr President,

We are very concerned at the humanitarian impact of MOTAPM laid during recent and present conflicts as has been demonstrated in many reports from the field. As States parties to the CCW we should also be concerned at the much greater potential harm that will be caused if present stockpiles were to be widely used in any future conflict between industrialised states. Therefore despite the difficulties we have a responsibility to engage on this issue and to examine what we can do in addition to full compliance with Amended Protocol II on this issue.

Mr President

In the past Ireland like many other States Parties favoured the adoption of a legally binding protocol on this issue. While this outcome remains our preference, we recognise that other approaches within this framework could also be useful and that any future work to address this gap should be undertaken without prejudice to the outcome. This is a major piece of unfinished business for the CCW Convention and it should be given serious consideration by States Parties in the coming year and in particular at next year's Review Conference.

Thank you, Mr President