



IRELAND

Statement by

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Thank you Mr Chairman,

I wish to align myself with the Statement made by Egypt on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition and also with that made by the European Union. In the interests of brevity, I will read an edited text. Allow me, firstly, to add my congratulations on your Chairmanship and to assure you of my Delegation's support to you and to the members of your Bureau. You can be assured of our best wishes for your stewardship of our committee at this significant moment in the history of disarmament. Let me also thank you, Mr Chairman, for your opening address which, together with the words of UN High Representative Mr Kim Won Soo, have provided a strong impetus to our work.

Truly, it is time for change. It is now forty six years since the nuclear non-proliferation treaty entered into force and twenty one since its indefinite extension. It is twenty years since we welcomed the adoption of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which has still not entered into force, and also twenty years since the Conference on Disarmament was able to adopt a programme of work. It has also not increased its membership since 1999.

Multiple challenges abound in our work, whether it is on issues relating to weapons of mass destruction or conventional weapons. In turn, these challenges impact and make more acute the many threats to the peace and stability of our States and societies and undermine our collective desire to make our world a more secure, more peaceful and more prosperous place for our citizens. Just over one year ago, our Heads of State and Government, in this building, adopted an agenda for Sustainable Development which was nothing less than a promise for humanity. The work of this Committee is not just relevant but crucial for the achievement of those goals. We must, for the sake of

humanity, and the sake of the planet, ensure that our work here supports and does not thwart the achievement of our other global goals.

It is also, Mr Chairman, twenty one years since the United Nations met at Beijing to adopt a far reaching and ambitious Platform of Action for Women, Peace and Development. It is sixteen years since the UN Security Council adopted its ground breaking Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, with its strong commitment to the inclusion and empowerment of women. Ireland believes that women's engagement and empowerment in disarmament negotiations is crucial to achieving success in the challenges that face us. We look forward to working this year to see how we can also make progress on this question and we commend the draft resolution which our colleagues from Trinidad and Tobago are bringing forward.

Ireland would also like to acknowledge the deep commitment and invaluable contribution of our civil society partners. It had been our hope that, as proposed by us last year, their work could be even more integrated into our deliberations, as works so successfully in other fora. We look forward to the session with civil society on 12 October and trust that this question can be revisited then.

Mr Chairman,

It is Ireland's view that disarmament, but most particularly nuclear disarmament, is now more urgent than ever. Any nuclear detonation, whether accidental or on purpose, would have a significant impact on all our high level goals, including development, gender equality, health, protection of cultural heritage and the environment. A more wide-scale event, such as a so-called limited nuclear exchange, would wreak devastation for generations. The humanitarian consequences initiative and the Open Ended Working Group which concluded its work in Geneva in August, has brought these issues once

more to the attention of the international community and has shown us clearly and scientifically that both the risks and the consequences of a nuclear detonation are higher and greater than we have believed.

For this reason, Ireland is one of the 127 countries who have now joined the Humanitarian Pledge. As part of this commitment we were lead sponsors and are again this year, together with Austria, Mexico and South Africa, of the humanitarian consequences pledge resolutions as well as the Resolution on Ethical Imperatives for a Nuclear Free World. We are proud that these resolutions passed with large majorities along with the resolution which we also sponsored together with Austria, Mexico and South Africa, to convene an Open Ended Working Group on taking forward negotiations on multilateral nuclear disarmament. Together with our NAC partners, Ireland has been working for many years to elaborate effective measures. There had been a very productive OEWG in 2013 which added greatly to the sum of knowledge on all of the issues. We hoped that the (second) OEWG would lead to further progress and that it could) provide the opportunity for the type of open, inclusive, interactive discussions which are so necessary to the nuclear disarmament debate.

Regrettably, not all States participated in this UN mandated process. But over 100 States did engage, constructively and in good faith, along with our civil society partners and a wide range of experts. A great deal of important work was done in Geneva this year, including over 70 substantive Working Papers, which my delegation hopes can be collected in book form as a valuable resource. My delegation and many others made our best endeavours to reach general agreement on the Final Report and Recommendations. A consensus adoption would have sent a powerful message about our ability to work together towards our common nuclear disarmament objective – a world free from nuclear

weapons. Nevertheless, the Final Report and Recommendations, adopted by the majority, represents a strong basis for future progress and a clear path forward. We commend the Chair of the OEWG and look forward to the presentation of the Final Report and Recommendations. This year Ireland is a lead sponsor of the Draft Resolution, together with Austria, Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria and South Africa, which will give effect to those recommendations.

Ireland is pleased to recall that the OEWG Final Report and Recommendations are firmly and expressly framed and situated in the context of the objective of strengthening and complementing the NPT. This has always been and continues to be our starting point and the force behind our actions. Ireland's historic commitment to the NPT is unchanged and we are consistent, across all platforms, in that commitment. Our objective is to see the NPT implemented and the disarmament machinery functioning, in a credible and inclusive manner.

Inclusivity and diversity is important, in this arena as it is in all others. One of the most significant features of the OEWG sessions in Geneva was the range of powerful new voices which we heard on this issue, including those from less developed or smaller states and also the notable gender balance of speakers. All of this served to reinvigorate the debate, to remind us of the breadth of impact of this issue, of our common humanity and of the need for a human and humanitarian response to what, for far too long, has been a silo-ed issue. Ireland firmly believes that nuclear disarmament is a global governance issue, connected to other key international commitments, including the SDGs and Climate Change. We submitted a working paper to this effect to the OEWG and look forward to re-launching a revised version during this First Committee on 12 October. We will also, with UNIDIR, present new findings on the gendered

impact of nuclear weapons and the need for gender balanced engagement in the nuclear debate, at a side event on 19 October.

We look forward to working with others here at First Committee, at the NPT Prep Com in May and beyond, to ensure the necessary progress on nuclear disarmament commitments, which is made all the more urgent by the current global security situation. In this regard, Ireland believes that the convening of a conference to negotiate a new legally binding instrument for the prohibition of nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination, is an important first step in ensuring the full implementation of Article VI of the NPT, to which all States Parties are committed.

Mr Chairman,

Nuclear Weapons represent the greatest threat to humanity and to the future of our planet, and it is fitting that this Committee should pay particular attention to Nuclear Disarmament and Non-proliferation. Sadly, other weapons of mass destruction also continue to pose challenges. We are deeply disturbed by the findings contained in the third report of the Joint Investigative Mechanism which confirmed the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The use of such weapons is completely contrary to International law and we strongly condemn such actions. Those responsible for such atrocities must be held accountable. Ireland reiterates the need to fully support and implement the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention and we welcome efforts undertaken by the OPCW to further this aim. Further we call on all non-states parties to ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention without delay.

Ireland regards the BTWC as a critical instrument in the global community's efforts to achieve a world free from all weapons of mass destruction - chemical, biological and nuclear. Now more than ever, in the face of threats posed by

disease outbreaks and non-state actors, we need to redouble our efforts and work together to ensure the effective implementation of the BTW Convention. The Review Conference provides us with an invaluable opportunity to do just that and Ireland looks forward to working with colleagues so that real sustainable progress towards a world free from the threat of biological weapons can be achieved. We welcome the accession to the Convention of Côte d'Ivoire and Angola and strongly urge those few States who have not yet acceded to do so as soon as possible. Universalisation of this Convention would represent an important milestone in multilateralism and in the International community's long held goal of achieving a world where all Weapons of Mass Destruction have been relegated to history.

Mr Chairman,

As we meet here in First Committee, we are witnessing terrible loss of life, humanitarian harm to civilians, and destruction of civilian infrastructure from the use of conventional weapons in current conflicts. This is true in particular of Syria, where we are witnessing disproportionate and indiscriminate attacks with correspondingly high civilian casualties with terrible regularity. Reports from Yemen and Ukraine, in particular with regard to cluster munitions use, are also deeply concerning. Ireland regards the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas as one of the most serious challenges facing us with regard to conventional weapons questions at this time. Our Minister Charles Flanagan raised this issue in his recent speech to the United Nations and we also acknowledge and welcome the attention being given to this question by the Secretary General, the ICRC, OCHA as well as the Civil Society group INEW. Ireland believes that it is now a matter of urgency to explore how we can raise consciousness and strengthen the application of International Humanitarian

Law in relation to Preventing Civilian Harm from the use of EWIPA. We welcome the Side Events which are being hosted during First Committee on this question as an opportunity to consider how we can urgently make progress and build support for action on this question. Ireland would also welcome consideration of this question during the upcoming Review Conference of the Convention on Conventional Weapons.

With regard to developments in Conventional Arms there have been some welcome successes in recent years. We see the Ottawa Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions continue to gain adherents and acceptance of the norm banning these weapons. We support and are hopeful that the APLC will meet the ambitious aim of the Maputo Declaration of reaching a mine free world by 2025. While we are greatly concerned and condemn the use of cluster munitions in Syria and Yemen and are also disturbed at well-founded reports of use in Libya, Ukraine, and Sudan, we nevertheless welcome the growing strength of the norm against use of these inhumane and indiscriminate weapons.

We also welcome The Arms Trade Treaty, with its aim to regulate illicit and irresponsible arms transfers, and which still represents a rare success for the international community in recent times. We are satisfied with the outcome of the Second Conference of State's Parties and continue to encourage those countries who have not yet acceded to the Treaty to do so. We are particularly pleased with the adoption of a common reporting template which we see, along with public reporting, as crucial to the successful implementation of the Treaty. We look forward to less procedural and more substantive discussion next year.

Ireland is also a strong supporter of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. We welcome the outcome of the 6th Biennial meeting of

States Parties, and we were particularly pleased with the inclusion of language relating to gender and the Sustainable Development Goals in the final report. Ireland continues to support proposals which seek to integrate and address gaps in the control of these weapons flows, including through the development of international tracing procedures. We also firmly believe that ammunition must be included in the control systems of these most deadly, and personal, weapons. When we look at the deadly tolls from arms and weapons everywhere, it is these weapons which, in the end, are responsible for by far the most deaths and harm. They have truly been called “the real weapons of mass destruction”.

Mr Chairman,

The mandate of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols is at the heart of our debate on how to control and regulate the use of conventional weapons. Ireland looks forward to the upcoming Review Conference as an important opportunity to renew and invigorate this crucial instrument of international humanitarian law. Again, we would urge all State’s to accede to the Convention and to its protocols.

In particular, we are encouraged by the active consideration which has been given to the question of Lethal Autonomous Weapons systems at the CCW and welcome the consensus recommendations which were adopted at the meeting of experts last April. Ireland believes it would now be timely for the Review Conference to establish a group of Governmental experts to take this important work forward.

Ireland also views the question of Mines Other than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM) as one of continuing humanitarian urgency. 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. We believe

therefore that States Parties should engage with this issue at expert level to determine how the CCW can best take this work forward in an inclusive and cooperative manner, without pre-judging the outcome in any way, in order to address the humanitarian harm arising from MOTAPM use.

Mr Chairman,

We began our work this week with an exhortation from the High Representative for Disarmament, that there could be “no more business as usual” and that “succeeding in our ambitions requires the jettisoning of old mind-sets”. In that vein, I hope you might allow me to finish with a very old quotation indeed from 307BC - “a talent for following the ways of yesterday is not sufficient to improve the world of today”. In the spirit of Frank Aiken, Ireland’s then Foreign Minister and the driving force behind the First General Assembly Resolution concerning “the Elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons” 70 years ago, we look forward to working together in this Committee to achieve our global aims for a nuclear free world.

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