

LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN STATES JOINT STATEMENT
1ST INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS
NOVEMBER 18TH 2019

Mr. Chair,

On behalf of Eight Latin American and Caribbean states (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay), I thank you for convening this transparent, open and inclusive informal consultation and the efforts undertaken by Ireland in the advancement of this issue. We would also like to thank Austria for successfully hosting the first Conference on the Protection of Civilians from Urban Warfare this past October.

Mr. Chair,

In December 2018, 23 representatives of Latin American and Caribbean states met in Santiago, Chile, to address the issue of the use of explosive weapons of wide area effects in populated areas. Our representatives expressed concern that explosive weapons used in populated areas cause deaths, injuries and traumas to civilians, damage and destroy essential infrastructure and critical services, drive involuntary displacement, and leave “explosive remnants of war” that pose a threat in the long term, disrupting social coexistence, economic activities, and potentially compromising security.

Moreover, in their exchanges representatives concluded that the involvement of Latin American and Caribbean states and civil society can play a pivotal role in enhancing the protection of civilians from the harm caused by explosive weapons in a time when armed conflicts are increasingly fought in [population centres/populated areas/urban areas].

The will to advance ongoing efforts in this regard was further demonstrated during the Vienna Conference held last October, where we reiterated the grave

humanitarian concerns of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and expressed our vocal support to negotiate a political declaration.

Today, we reaffirm the critical importance of our concerted action to achieve the shared goal of a political declaration in order to set a stronger international standard of behaviour, building a community of positive practice and avoidance of harm.

In this regard, as highlighted by the Vienna Conference, key elements of a political declaration should include:

- Acknowledgement that the use of explosive weapons of wide area effects in populated areas is likely to have significant humanitarian consequences, seriously compromising the protection of civilians.
- Commit states to avoid the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects and disproportionate impact on civilians in populated areas, and to develop operational policies and procedures in this regard.
- Promote greater compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law, in particular through full compliance with the principles of humanity, proportionality, distinction and precautions in attack;
- Commit states to enable humanitarian access that is secure and sustainable.
- Recognize the rights of victims and affected communities, providing them with adequate assistance.
- Identify, develop and exchange best practices in relation to weapon-target matching, targeting procedures, planning and training; including the difficulty in directing inaccurate weapons against specific objectives in populated areas and

take into account foreseeable indirect “reverberating” effects on essential urban services in the proportionality assessment.

- Encourage collection of disaggregated data (sex and age) and information to increase awareness and enhance knowledge about the impact of explosive weapons on civilians in populated areas, thus describing the different impacts on a factual-based approach.
- Promote bilateral and regional cooperation through sharing experiences, good practices and expertise on reducing the harm caused by explosive weapons to civilians, building a community of good practices.
- Strengthen cooperation and partnerships with international organizations and civil society organizations to draw upon their relevant expertise and support.

We thank you Chair.