

DUBLIN CONFERENCE TO ADOPT THE POLITICAL DECLARATION ON EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS IN POPULATED AREAS

STATEMENT BY THE UNITED KINGDOM

Madam Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen. The UK congratulates Ireland on the adoption of the Political Declaration on EWIPA. The breadth and scope of the attendees today is testament to the effectiveness of your approach. We commend the patience, perseverance and inclusive nature of Irish leadership.

Tragically the need for this declaration is more important than ever. There is no shortage of brutal violence against urban populations around the world. I highlight in particular Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and its ongoing and indiscriminate attacks against populated areas and civilian infrastructure. I thank all those involved here for reminding us of the breadth of civilian suffering in multiple conflicts around the world: the powerful Memorial to the Unknown Civilian we saw this morning; the installation at yesterday's civil society forum; Nujeen Mustafa's brave and moving testimony about Syria.

The UK is proud to be a signatory to the Declaration. We commend the emphasis placed on the full and proper adherence to International Humanitarian Law as the essential foundation for the protection of civilians during conflict.

Excellencies, the signing of the Political Declaration is a significant milestone, but it is just the beginning. Looking to the future, we need to ensure that the momentum built negotiating continues through to implementation. The UK, I believe, already has policy and procedures in place to support the Declaration. We will implement them, we will review them, and if necessary, improve them, and we will continue to work with and support our partners - civilian and military. We are also keen to cooperate in a formal process to promote the Political Declaration and deliver against its commitments.

Excellencies, let me conclude by expressing once again the UK's support and commitment for the implementation of the EWIPA Declaration; allow me to express our gratitude to the Irish Government for your excellent arrangements and warm welcome to Dublin; and our warmest congratulations on securing this historic milestone in the protection of civilians from the humanitarian consequences of armed conflict.

Thank you.