

## **EWIPA POLITICAL DECLARATION PROCESS CONTRIBUTIONS FROM URUGUAY MAY 2020**

Our country, faithful to the respect for the maintenance and defence of international peace and security, is seriously involved in the protection of children, women and civilians in situations of armed conflict and actively participates in the Groups of Friends on the Protection of Civilians; Women, Peace and Security; and Group of Friends of Children and Armed Conflicts.

Likewise, Uruguay - as a contributor to peacekeeping - stands out for its commitment to assume responsibilities in the field of protection of civilians and in humanitarian assistance, for example that provided through its deployable contingents in Peacekeeping Operations.

During its last biennium in the Security Council, Uruguay made the protection of civilians one of the main axes of its participation, in the understanding that the international community cannot remain unmoved by the tragic situation experienced by civilians in conflict environments.

The importance assigned by Uruguay to the issue of the protection of civilians determined that our country led the open debates during the exercise of its two Presidencies of the Security Council on this topic.

In the first open debate the focus was on how peacekeeping operations can more effectively protect the civilian population, while during the second presidency the focus was on Security Council Resolution 2286 on the protection of hospitals and the health personnel in conflicts.

Taking into account the Communiqués of Maputo and Santiago on the use of EWIPAs, Uruguay reinforces the idea of signing a political declaration with a **humanitarian approach** that guarantees the maximum possible protection for the civilian population and focuses on the consequences of direct or indirect damage that the use of these weapons generates for human life and health.

In this sense, it understands that the humanitarian dimension of the issue must be addressed in the direct protection of human beings affected by armed conflict as well as in the detrimental effects that the use of these weapons produces on people and on the damage or loss of essential services in populated areas.

Regarding the Preamble of the draft Declaration, we would like to make the following considerations:

- i. Scope of reverberating effects.- The scope of this concept and its consequences are not clear. Instead, it would be suggested to be more specific on both.
- ii. Application of International Law. - Any attack that does not comply with the norms and principles of International Law, International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights is not legitimate. In this sense, attacks must strictly respect the principles of the Right of Distinction, proportionality and precaution.
- iii. "Avoidance" policy. Our country shares the principle of avoiding the use of EWIPA, coinciding with the position of the region, in line with the principle of the non-use of force.
- iv. Consequently, when there are no other means to achieve a given military objective, it will be required that mitigation measures are adopted to limit its effects on the chosen objective, seeking to safeguard human lives in populated areas.

v. To this end, States must also influence their partners and other parties to the conflict to which they provide support. Furthermore, it is imperative that the protection of civilians be a strategic priority in the planning and conduct of military operations.

10. With regard to the operational part - section four -, on assistance to victims, their families and affected communities, our country supports the imperative to provide assistance to them without discrimination and in an integrated manner, allowing unrestricted access to humanitarian aid when necessary.

11. Regarding the previous point, it is understood that a more specific paragraph could be added regarding the way in which humanitarian assistance in conflict and post-conflict situations is provided, among others: provide emergency medical care, physical and psychological rehabilitation, support measures to promote family reunification, protection of children, women, and minorities and vulnerable groups for their social reintegration.