

## **PAX intervention Preamble**

Thank you Chair,

PAX would like to thank Ireland for their leadership in this political process and commend Ireland for the draft text which, overall, has been improved over time. As INEW member we would like to refer to the INEW commentary to reflect our full suggestions to further improve the text.

We hereby would like to reflect on the issue of wide area effects. There is no reference at all to wide area effects in the declaration text, and whilst the previous version of the text had too many references to explosive weapons with wide area effects and as such narrowed the focus of the declaration too much, this central concept is now missing.

This, while the relationship between wide area effects and increased harms to civilians when used in populated areas is at the core of the civilian harm that this political declaration seeks to address.

We would therefore like to see the concept being described in the preamble, and secondly, reinserted in article 3.3.

Factors that cause wide area effects are a large blast or fragmentation radius, the use of multiple munitions, inaccuracy of delivery, or a combination of these factors. The impact on civilians and civilian objects of these wide area effects is well documented, by PAX and many others, in Ukraine and other places such as Yemen, Iraq and Syria to name a few. Over and over again, civilians are killed, wounded, psychologically impacted. Their homes, their schools, their hospitals destroyed. Their environment harmed. The reverberating effects of explosive weapons in populated areas are grave and resonate for an extended period of time.

The preambular paragraph should include a description that wide area effects present a direct and a heightened risk of civilian harm, alongside a description of the factors that produce these effects. Such a statement in the preambular section would serve the purpose of the political declaration as a whole. The reference to wide area effects can then be reinserted in 3.3, without the need for further explanation or qualifiers there.

The preamble should stipulate that these factors result in the significant likelihood that the effects of the weapon will extend beyond, or occur outside the specific military objective. In a populated area, that puts people and infrastructure in that wider area, at a significant risk of harm.

In conclusion: A strong commitment in 3.3. against the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas will be central to the declaration. Adding a description of factors that create wide area effects in section 1 of the preamble, as well as the link to increased harms these inflict to civilians when used in populated areas will promote understanding of what the commitment in 3.3 entails. This will also prevent the need for

qualifiers in 3.3 that risk blurring the meaning of the central commitment, and will facilitate understanding and implementation of this commitment.

Thank you Chair.