



IRELAND

Statement by

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Permanent Representative to the
United Nations in Geneva

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Mr Chairman,

Ireland aligns itself with the Statement by the European Union. I will add the following in our national capacity.

Mr Chairman,

The intersection between **Peace, Security** and **Development** is irrefutable. The 2030 Agenda and the **Sustainable Development Goals** provide us with a universal, indivisible framework for the future of humanity and our planet.

Disarmament and non-proliferation instruments are critical tools for concrete progress towards these sustainable development commitments. However, the reality is that conventional weapons are responsible for the majority of deaths from armed violence today. The illicit trade, destabilising accumulation and misuse of **conventional arms and weapons** continue to fuel armed violence in conflict-affected and post-conflict settings around the world.

Ireland notes with concern the ever-increasing proliferation of **small arms and light weapons**. Illegal and irresponsible arms transfers to conflict regions must be stopped if we are to make progress in ending conflict and criminality – and tackling gender based violence. Ireland strongly supports the United Nations **Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons** and we call on countries which have not signed and ratified the **Arms Trade Treaty** to do so.

The **Arms Trade Treaty** was conceived to prevent illicit and irresponsible transfers of arms and their use, which threaten security, destabilise states, violate international humanitarian and human rights law, and exacerbate conflict. We welcomed the inclusion, for the first time in an arms control instrument, of a provision that gender based violence should be considered

during risk assessments when considering arms transfers. We hope that this can set a benchmark for new Treaties, and that GBV will become a core element of concern in the drafting process.

Mr Chairman,

As we meet, we recognise that the use of cluster munitions in conflicts continues. Ireland reiterates our condemnation of their use in Syria and Yemen, and our concern at reports of use elsewhere. We call on all concerned to refrain from using these indiscriminate weapons. We urge States to accede to the **Convention on Cluster Munitions**. We welcome progress made under the Dubrovnik Action Plan as outlined at the Meeting of States Parties. The power of normative action and of stigmatising these weapons is clear, and we welcome the news of States planning to join the Convention.

We regard the use of **Explosive weapons with Wide Area Effects in Populated Areas** as an increasingly serious challenge facing the international community. We share the deep concern at the escalating civilian casualty rates and the damage to critical infrastructure from the use of these weapons in urban areas. We also point to the long term impact on recovery and development, including gendered impacts. Ireland reiterates our support for a process which would lead to a Political Declaration confirming the need for compliance with international law in respect of the use of Explosive Weapons with Wide Area effects in Populated Areas.

Mr Chairman,

Humanitarian de-mining is an essential contribution to strengthening resilience in situations of fragility. Ireland's **humanitarian mine action programmes** are directly linked to supporting our commitments under the **Convention on Cluster**

Munitions, the APLC, and Protocol V of the Convention on Conventional Weapons. We emphasise the clear links between humanitarian de-mining and development, opening up access to land for economic development, to services, education and employment opportunities. We condemn the use of landmines on the Myanmar-Bangladesh border, and are horrified by the reported civilian casualties as a result of their use.

The issue of **Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines** remains one of humanitarian urgency. We are greatly concerned about the humanitarian impact of the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of these weapons. We believe that the limited provisions in Amended Protocol II have not proved adequate to address the arising from their use and we join in calls for a formal review of Protocol III and its amendments.

Ireland reiterates that the use of '**drones**' or **Unmanned Aerial Vehicles** must be in accordance with international law, including international human rights and humanitarian law. We welcome the continued discussion of this topic, including the relevant principles and norms of international law across both conventional weapons and human rights spheres. We are encouraged by the active consideration which has been given to the question of **Lethal Autonomous Weapons** systems at the CCW. We look forward to the meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts which should take as its starting point the recommendations of the 2016 Experts Group and the mandate of the Review Conference.

Mr Chairman,

Finally, we would underscore the important role Civil Society plays with regard to Conventional Weapons, by highlighting State compliance, tracking

implementation of disarmament commitments, bringing pressure to bear through lobbying and raising public awareness. This is in addition to providing crucial services, from victim assistance to capacity building. We reiterate our wish for a more open and inclusive approach to civil society in our meetings.

Thank You.