

## **8th Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions**

### **Statement by Ireland**

#### **International Cooperation and Assistance**

Mr President,

As the outset, let me congratulate you on your election as the President of the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and wish you every success. I would also like to congratulate the work of the co-ordinators, Australia and Peru for their hard work on International Cooperation and Assistance.

I would like to align Ireland with the Statement delivered by the European Union, and add the following in our national capacity.

Ireland's cooperation and assistance programmes for humanitarian demining are directly linked to supporting Ireland's commitments under the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the APLC, as well as the CCW. We recognise the importance and benefit of identifying synergies in the implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and other humanitarian disarmament instruments. Promoting efforts that enhance better coordination on victim assistance and international cooperation with other disarmament conventions can contribute to the overall strengthening of these importance disarmament instruments. Ireland, as Co-Coordinator for Victim Assistance on the CCM Coordination Committee for the period 2018-2019, will continue to promote these synergies, where possible.

Mr President,

Ireland has maintained a long standing commitment of support to humanitarian mine action programmes, including weapons and ammunition disposal. Irish Aid's support to humanitarian mine action and in clearing contaminated land and roads contributes to the long-term economic development and helps to reduce risk to civilians from remnants of past conflicts.

Total Irish Aid expenditure for humanitarian demining in 2017 was €1.53 million and we have allocated to €2 million to date in 2018. Over the period 2006-2018 Ireland has contributed a total of €41.5 million to humanitarian demining programmes. This included funding for programmes of work in countries such as Afghanistan, Mozambique, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Colombia, South Sudan, Angola, Iraq, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam.

As well as clearance of contaminated ground, this funding is also being used for a substantial risk education programme within the affected communities. To this end, Ireland has been pleased to support Slovenia's International Trust Fund (ITF) in their capacity building work. In recent years, we have supported programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ukraine, and in Colombia. We welcome the technical support that ITF applies all around the globe, providing much needed relief in precarious situations, and we are supportive in particular of the capacity building aspects of ITF operations and its commitment to the promotion of gender equality across the organisation and programme work.

Mr President,

This year marks a significant milestone in the life of our Convention. It is now ten years since the international community met in Dublin to adopt the Convention on Cluster Munitions and Ireland is proud to have played a leadership role in the negotiation of this historic Convention.

At that time many voices raised doubts as to the efficacy of a ban treaty against such widely used weapons. Today we see the power of normative action and of stigmatising these weapons systems. There are now 104 States Parties to the Convention, with Sri Lanka and Namibia - the newest members – having joined the Convention in recent months. Through its continuing universalisation and a steadfast commitment by States Parties to the Convention's binding provisions, the CCM is going from strength to strength each year.

We were pleased to note the findings from the recently launched Cluster Munition Monitor 2018 which indicates that States Parties to the Convention have already destroyed 99% of their stockpiled cluster munitions, eliminating a collective total of more than 1.4 million cluster munitions and 177 million submunitions. By any measure this is an impressive record and one we can all be proud of. On top of this, we welcome the announcement by Croatia, Cuba, Slovenia and Spain, confirming the destruction of their stockpiles. This is another positive achievement that augers well for the future.

Though much progress has been made in the past decade we must remain active in our efforts to bring additional states within the Convention, and in particular those states either affected by cluster munitions or which retain them. Even as we gather here to this week to discuss the many achievements of our Convention, we must not forget that new areas are being contaminated and new victims are suffering from the use of these inaccurate, inhumane weapons in ongoing conflicts. We are deeply concerned about the reported continued use of cluster munitions against and affecting civilian populations in different parts of

the world. We again call on all concerned to cease using these indiscriminate weapons.

Mr President,

My delegation wishes to acknowledge the tireless work of civil society, who continue to work constructively with the international community to realise our united goal of a world free of these inhumane weapons. This work is vital to achieving this shared goal.

In conclusion, while we recognise the many challenges that remain to be addressed, Ireland is greatly encouraged by the progress of the Convention in its first 10 years. In looking to the future, we will remain steadfast in our efforts to promote the universalisation and the full implementation of the CCM and we look forward to continuing our work towards the total elimination of these weapons.

Thank You.