

Mr. President,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your election and to offer you the full support of my delegation as you complete your important work this week. Likewise, I wish to congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Kongstad, for his activities as President over the past year.

Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier today on behalf of the EU.

In recent years, Mr. President, we have seen increasing emphasis on the humanitarian dimension of arms control and disarmament and this has allowed us to develop a new understanding of the long-term impact of weapons use on civilian populations and has embedded a renewed sense of responsibility in our approach to considering disarmament issues.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions must certainly be ranked as a successful example of disarmament on this new model. As the Lusaka Progress Report notes, we now have eighty three States Parties, and 112 signatories.

Nonetheless, the view which we as States Parties share on the need to remove cluster munitions from our arsenals is not shared universally. And while Ireland wishes to welcome the significant advances made towards universalisation of the Convention – and in particular to welcome those states participating in this Meeting as States Parties for the first time – 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.

In this context, Ireland welcomes the Zambian concept paper on universalisation.

Also in this context, Mr. President, I must again express Ireland's condemnation of the ongoing use of cluster munitions in Syria and call on all states and non-state actors to refrain from using these weapons.

Mr. President, together with our colleagues and co-coordinators from Lao, we have circulated a paper on clearance to States Parties for their consideration under the number CCM/MSP/2013/5. We will address this further at our session on clearance this week, but here I would say that we have offered this paper as a practical support to those states which continue to face challenges in clearing their territory of cluster munition remnants. We hope it will be taken and welcomed in this spirit.

Two years ago, Mr. President, we collectively decided to establish an Implementation Support Unit to further the work of the Convention. We regret that we have not to date been able to agree a model on how to pay for this; although the interim ISU has certainly done excellent work, uncertainty is not helpful. Ireland remains committed to working with all States Parties to find an appropriate solution at the earliest possible opportunity. I note and welcome the comments of the Swiss delegation in this respect and look forward to exploring their ideas this week, but my initial reaction is that they represent a way for us to take an important step forward.

Ireland looks forward to making additional contributions to our discussions over the next four days, Mr. President, and I will conclude by once again offering you our congratulations and the assurance of our commitment to working with you to bring this Meeting to a successful conclusion.

Thank you.