

Statement by Ireland to the 6th Meeting of the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Intervention on International Cooperation and Assistance

Thank you Chairman

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

I would like to take this opportunity to provide our meeting with a short summary of Ireland's cooperation and assistance program for humanitarian demining, including for the clearing of cluster munition remnants.

Ireland's humanitarian mine action programmes are directly linked to supporting Ireland's commitments to support mine action activities, under the APLC, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and Protocol V of the CCW. Our new Humanitarian Assistance Policy, launched in 2015, also emphasises the links between humanitarian demining and development, including reconstruction and land clearance, which in turn contributes to longer term socio-economic development. We also regard humanitarian demining as an essential contribution to strengthening resilience in situations of fragility.

Total Irish Aid expenditure for humanitarian demining in 2015 was 3.27 million Euro. The focus of our program for 2016 in line with the priorities outline above, is the provision of support to Halo Trust for clearance in Somalia, Afghanistan and Zimbabwe. We expect that by the end of 2016, 31 hectares of highly contaminated ground will be cleared in Somalia, 111 hectares in Afghanistan and 62 hectares in Zimbabwe.

Additionally, we have major programmes in Cambodia, Lao and Vietnam.

As well as clearance of contaminated ground, Irish Aid funding is also being used for a substantial risk education programme within the affected communities.

Ireland has also been pleased to support the work of Slovenia's ITF, with a grant last year to support projects in the Western Balkans and this year for clearance operations assistance to Ukraine.

Mr Chairman

As we have not taken the floor previously I would like to thank you and your team for the great organisation of this meeting, as well as the flowers!

I would also like to make some general remarks regarding the challenges facing our convention. Even as we speak now of our cooperation in clearance and assistance to victims, the sad fact is that new contamination and new victims from use of these inhumane and inaccurate weapons is occurring in current conflicts.

Ireland would like to reiterate our condemnation of their use in Syria and Yemen as well as our concern at well-founded reports of use in Libya, Ukraine, and Sudan. We again call on all concerned to refrain from using these inhumane and indiscriminate weapons.

However, in terms of adherence to the Convention, there is also some very encouraging news to note and we warmly welcome the new members to our Convention, Cuba, Mauritius, Somalia and Palau and call upon those states that have not yet done so, to commence the process of adhering to the Convention. We welcome indications from others here present that they hope to join shortly. Ireland will continue our support and outreach on universalisation in our bilateral contacts with non-States Parties.

Mr Chairman

This Convention was adopted eight years ago in Dublin. 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. We welcome the recent announcement by a major arms manufacturer that it will discontinue production of these weapons; and we look forward to continuing our work towards the total elimination of these weapons.

Thank you.