



Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and  
Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction

17<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States-Parties

Geneva, Switzerland

26 November 2018

General Statement by Ireland

Madam President,

Ireland aligns itself with the statements to be made on behalf of the European Union.

I would like to express my delegation's gratitude to the Presidency of the Convention, and assure you of our full cooperation and support. Our thanks is also due to the Implementation Support Unit for their support to States Parties during the year. We warmly acknowledge the advocacy of Princess Astrid of Belgium and Prince Mired of Jordan and the important contribution they are making to our work.

The Ottawa Convention is now more than 20 years old. Ireland remains proud of our leading role in the negotiation of the Convention; and even more so of the fact that there are now 164 States Parties. We are hopeful that the membership of the Convention will continue to grow and that, before long, we will have achieved a universal prohibition of anti-personnel mines.

Ireland continues to be a strong supporter of the Ottawa Convention. We have provided more than €39 million in funding for mine action between 2006 and 2017, with a further €2.5 million allocated in 2018. We support and believe in the vision of a world free of landmines by 2025, and will continue to dedicate ourselves to this much-needed goal.

In addition to our direct mine-action work, Ireland is a consistent supporter of the ISU, and we were pleased to be able to contribute funding to their activities again this year. We are strongly committed to the equal participation of women and men in the work of the Convention and we recently provided funding to Mines Action Canada's Mine Action Fellows program, which supports capacity building for young women interested in demining activities related to landmines, cluster munitions and other indiscriminate weapons, in conflict-affected and post-conflict countries.

Madam President,

Ireland welcomes the progress made on all pillars of the Convention over the last 20 years. States Parties have destroyed more than 54 million stockpiled antipersonnel mines. The norm against the use of anti-personnel mines by states has strengthened significantly and continues to do so. The majority of the 33 countries that remain outside of the treaty abide by its key provisions. We particularly note that very few countries now manufacture these inhumane and indiscriminate weapons.

Ireland remains gravely concerned at the high number of casualties caused by landmines, IEDs, explosive remnants of war and cluster munition remnants, as reported in the 2018 Landmine Monitor. While we welcome the year on year decrease in the casualty count between 2016 and 2017, the number of recorded casualties and deaths is still far too high.

Ireland has consistently emphasised the clear links between humanitarian demining 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.

Universalisation remains a significant challenge. Ireland continues to urge non-States Parties to adhere to the Convention, and refrain from the use and transfer of anti-personnel mines pending formal adherence. We welcome the commitments of non-State Parties in this regard. Ireland takes a proactive approach to its commitments under the Convention in its contacts with non-States parties and are convinced that we must keep this the issue on the agenda for those countries who have not yet joined.

Despite such setbacks, we remain firm in our belief that the vision of a world free of anti-personnel landmines is possible, and within reach, and that the way

forward is to redouble our efforts, cooperation and commitment to our Convention.

We take this opportunity to reaffirm the importance of the obligations stemming from Article 5 of the Convention. These are a central tenet for achieving our shared goal of a world free of anti-personnel landmines. Requests for extensions on Article 5 obligations are testimony to the continued challenges some States Parties face. The decision by Ukraine to submit a request for an extension of its obligation under Article 5 of the Convention this year is notable and welcome and reinforces the strong norm established by the Convention. The issue of new large-scale contamination in some countries is of concern; particularly worrying is the significant increase in the use of improvised anti-personnel mines especially in the context of urban warfare. Ireland remains committed to continuing work in a cooperative way on this question so that all States Parties can remain in compliance with the Convention.

Madam President,

The presence of landmines, including anti-personnel mines, constitutes a threat to human security and a serious impediment to development and rehabilitation in post-conflict societies and to meeting the sustainable development goals. Moreover, as increasingly witnessed by a variety of actors, landmines pose an often insurmountable obstacle to humanitarian operations, denying access to populations in need. Clearing landmines not only prevents further human casualties, but also frees entire communities from fear, thus paving the way for reconstruction, development, agricultural production, and business opportunities.

A major achievement of the Convention is its commitment to victims and survivors. Those affected by landmines include not only the direct victims, but also their families and communities, and all those who continue to live in fear of unexploded landmines. Efforts to provide victim assistance must involve

nationally led processes with the full and effective participation of landmine survivors and affected communities. They must take into account the gendered impacts of the use of anti-personnel mines. Men and boys are disproportionately affected by anti-personnel landmines, and women and girls are often indirect victims, assuming a caregiving role for survivors and providing financial support for families. Victim assistance efforts should also reflect women's agency as a powerful force for change, including in operational and management roles in mine action.

In conclusion, Ireland acknowledges the important work and productive collaboration between the Convention and the International Committee of the Red Cross and civil society organisations.

We are steadfast in our belief that there is a strong power to normative action, and we stand ready to continue our determined efforts to fulfil the aims of the Convention. Ireland is dedicated to sending a powerful global message against the use of these weapons, and to achieving a world free from anti-personnel landmines by 2025, in accordance with our renewed collective commitments under the Maputo Plan of Action.

Thank you.