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

**16th Meeting of States-Parties
Vienna, Austria**

Contribution to the General Debate

Ireland

Mr President,

Ireland would like to add some remarks in a national capacity to those delivered by the European Union.

As requested, I will read a short part of our national statement only and the full version will be made available online.

I would like to express my delegation's gratitude to you and to Austria for your Presidency of the Convention, and assure you once again of our full cooperation and support. Thanks also to the Implementation Support Unit for their great support to State's Parties during the year. I would also like to acknowledge the advocacy of Princess Astrid of Belgium and Prince Mired of Jordan and the important contribution they are making to our work.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Ottawa Convention. Ireland is proud to have played a leadership role in the negotiation of the Convention, and is immensely proud to have been the second country, after Canada, to sign and ratify

the Treaty on 3 December 1997. As of the end of 2017, 163 nations have signed on to the APLC and Ireland welcomes the recent decision by Sri Lanka to accede to the Convention.

Ireland continues to support the Ottawa Convention and remains one of the world's most committed and biggest donors to humanitarian mine action, providing €38 million between 2006 and 2016. We support and believe in the vision of a world free of landmines by 2025, and will continue our endeavours to reach this key objective for humanity.

In addition to our direct mine-action work, Ireland has been a consistent supporter of the ISU, contributing €25,000 to its support in 2017. We also are committed to the equal participation of men and women in the work of the Convention and to this end, we recently provided €5,000 to a Mine Action Canada project designed to support the participation of young women in the work of the Convention.

Ireland welcomes the progress made on all pillars of the Convention over the last 20 years. In that time, over 53 million mines have been destroyed, casualty rates have dropped sharply and previously unusable land has been returned to communities around the world.

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.

We note in particular the continued strengthening of the norm against the use of anti-personnel land mines by States, even among those States not yet parties to

the Convention. We also note that only very few countries now manufacture these inhumane and indiscriminate weapons and welcome this progress.

Of course challenges persist and the reversal of the downward trend in the number of global mine casualties for the second year in a row is particularly disappointing. However, we remain firm in our belief that the vision of a world free of anti-personnel landmines is possible, and within reach. Increased data collection is showing us however that this will only happen by redoubling our efforts, cooperation and commitment to our Convention.

Thank you Mr President.