

**Eighteenth meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction**

**16-20 November 2020**

**General Statement by Ireland**

Ireland aligns itself with the statements made of behalf of the European Union; I will add the following remarks in our national capacity.

President,

At the outset, please allow me to thank the Presidency for facilitating this Meeting of State Parties in these most unusual of circumstances. As we are meeting in this virtual format, the world continues its efforts to tackle COVID-19. In this context I would like to extend our sincere thanks to you, to the Implementation Support Unit and Coordinating Committees for continuing their critical work during this pandemic. As we tackle new threats, the challenges posed by Anti-Personnel Mines persist and our work must continue.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Chile and the United Kingdom for completing their clearance obligations under Article 5 of the Treaty earlier this year. Successes such as these remind us of the tangible progress we are collectively making towards a mine-free world.

President,

We are now a year on from the adoption of the Oslo Action Plan. The integrated approach to demining efforts entailed in the Plan offer us a comprehensive agenda to drive our work in the years ahead. The mainstreaming of gender and diversity perspectives in all aspects of mine action programming and convention implementation is an important and welcome development which will greatly enhance our understanding of, and policy responses to, the key challenges facing the convention.

The commitments made in the Oslo Action Plan, including towards vital victim assistance and risk education are crucial elements which will benefit affected communities. Though some aspects of our work have been interrupted this past year, it is imperative that we maintain the ambition of the Oslo Review Conference.

President,

Ireland has consistently emphasised the clear links between humanitarian demining and sustainable development. In supporting demining efforts, we not only reduce the risks posed to civilians but open up access to land for economic development including agriculture, services, education and employment.

Ireland has a long, proud, history of supporting humanitarian mine action programmes. Since 2006 we have provided more than €46 million in funding for humanitarian de-mining and mine action, with a further 2 million to be dispersed by the end of 2020. We are currently in a 3 year mine-action programme worth €5.5million with our long standing partners in Halo Trust covering demining programmes in Afghanistan, Colombia, Somalia, South Sudan and Zimbabwe. Within these programmes, in addition to crucial land clearance, staff conduct mine risk education, engage with affected communities

and strive to ensure gender perspectives are mainstreamed at all stages of programming.

Additionally, through the Irish Aid Programme managed by our Embassy in Hanoi, we have been providing support to landmine and unexploded ordnance (UXO) clearance in South East Asia since 1998. These include ongoing programmes in Cambodia, Lao DPR, Viet Nam, and Myanmar.

Ireland is also proud to continue its support of the vital work of the Implementation Support Unit, contributing €40,000 to support its work over the last two years. We also are committed to the equal participation of women and men in the work of the Convention and, to this end, we have 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. Furthermore, we are pleased to have recently granted €80,000 to GICHD which will go toward a study analysing the humanitarian and socioeconomic impact of explosive ordnance.

President,

The most recent report from the Landmine Monitor continues to highlight the success of anti-personnel landmine stockpile destruction, with 55 million stockpiled mines destroyed since the adoption of the Convention. The norm against the use of anti-personnel mines by states is now well established in the international system. We are encouraged that very few States manufacture these inhumane and indiscriminate weapons. Nevertheless, outreach to these states and efforts towards the universalisation of the Convention must continue.

Ireland continues to remain gravely concerned at the high number of casualties caused by landmines, IEDs, explosive remnants of war and cluster munition remnants recorded in 2019 and reported in the 2020 Landmine Monitor. In the spirit of the Oslo Action Plan, we call on all states to contribute to vital demining programmes.

Although we are faced with these recent setbacks, we remain firm in our belief that the vision of a world free of anti-personnel landmines is possible, and within reach. To achieve our shared goal of a world free from anti-personnel landmines mines by 2025 we must redouble our efforts, cooperation and commitment to our Convention.

In conclusion, Ireland wishes to acknowledge the important work and productive collaboration which exists between the Convention and the International Committee of the Red Cross and civil society organizations, and in particular with those field experts who have continued their work even in the face of a global pandemic.

Despite our distance from each other, our experiences in navigating this crisis have underscored how it is more important ever that we, as states, work closer together to combat global challenges. 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.

Thank you.