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**Fourth Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties
To the Convention on the Prohibition of Restriction on the Use of Certain Conventional
Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious of to Have Indiscriminate
Effects**

**Statement by H.E. Gerard Corr, Ambassador,
Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations, Geneva,
15th November 2011**

Mr President

As it is the first time that my delegation takes the floor during this Review Conference, allow me to congratulate you on your appointment and to express my thanks for the skill with which you are guiding our proceedings. You may continue to count on my delegation's full support for you and your team in this task.

The Implementation Support Unit has done excellent work in preparing in helping to prepare the Review Conference and I would like to express our appreciation to it. Ireland welcomes the proposed emphasis on the consolidation, implementation and universalisation of the CCW and its Protocols. We strongly encourage all States not yet party to ratify or accede to the CCW and its Protocols without delay. Adherence to the Convention in some regions must be improved and it would be useful for the Review Conference to look at how this might be achieved. It would also be useful to look at what might be done to improve the level and regularity of reporting by States Parties. The Convention and its Protocols remain an integral part of international humanitarian law and our final document should reflect our ongoing firm commitment to the principles and obligations contained therein.

Mr President

There is overwhelming evidence of the humanitarian damage caused to human life and to social and economic activities by mines other than anti-personnel mines. As noted by UNSG Ban Ki Moon in his message to this meeting, this is an area where further progress should be made. We believe that MOTAPM are not adequately dealt with under Amended Protocol II and that there is a need for an additional instrument to regulate their use. We urge States Parties to act without delay and to conclude this important work by negotiating and adopting a legally binding protocol that would reduce the humanitarian damage caused by mines other than anti-personnel mines.

We also look forward to discussion of the very useful non-paper prepared by Canada on the future working methods of the CCW and its Protocols.

Mr President

One of the most noteworthy and successful aspects of CCW work since the Third Review Conference has been the implementation of Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War. Protocol V entered into force during the Third Review Conference, and the five years since then have seen an impressive increase in adherence to the protocol and much useful work on its institutional set-up and implementation. This work has achieved important results, in the form *inter alia* of putting in place systems to minimise the risk of creation of explosive remnants of war and to ensure their rapid clearance, as well as assistance to victims. The development of a comprehensive system of national reporting has provided much useful information which is of assistance in understanding the extent of the problems caused by explosive remnants of war, and in facilitating activities in the area of cooperation and assistance. The adoption of a system of thematic coordinators has facilitated the engagement of a wide cross-section of States in the work and, with the holding of annual meetings of experts, has enabled focused attention to be given to the most important areas of activity.

Ireland has contributed to this work in a number of ways. We have provided one of the thematic coordinators during 2010 and 2011, on cooperation and assistance. We have also shared information on actions taken by the Irish Defence Forces to implement the protocol, notably on the recording, retaining and transmission of information on the use of explosive ordnance. We look forward to continued constructive cooperation among High Contracting Parties to promote adherence to this important instrument and to ensure its effective implementation.

Mr President

Much of our work in the coming two weeks will focus on the draft Sixth Protocol to the CCW on cluster munitions. We hope that it will be possible to reach agreement by the end of next week on a protocol which will extend further the protection of civilians from the unacceptable harm caused by cluster munitions and Ireland will continue to negotiate in good faith with a view to fulfilling the mandate to which we all agreed last November.

We believe that the Chair's text offers the best basis for carrying forward these negotiations. However, despite some progress, notably in the area of the endeavour clause and the provisions relating to clearance of cluster munition remnants, we continue to have reservations about a number of aspects of the text. While there will be ample opportunity to set out our concerns in the coming days, let me highlight a number of issues. We would wish the draft to contain much stronger prohibitions. We are concerned by the complete exclusion of some categories of munitions from the requirement to possess safeguarding mechanisms such as anti-ship, anti-runway and direct fire weapons and that a mechanical self destruction mechanism, which has been documented as causing humanitarian problems, will be acceptable as an adequate safe-guard. We are also unhappy with the inclusion of a lengthy deferral period on the use of prohibited munitions, and that the text would impose an absolute and immediate prohibition only on munitions produced before 1980.

We have welcomed the indications provided by a number of possessor states of the impact that this prohibition would have on their stocks and strongly encourage those states which have not done so to offer similar information. As we have indicated previously, it is the case that such munitions are likely to represent a considerable proportion of the existing global stocks. Immediate prohibition of these munitions, and the prohibition of other types after a transition period, assuming that the States possessing them consent to be bound by a new protocol, would represent an improvement on the current situation.

Mr President,

Ireland is proud that the Convention on Cluster Munitions was agreed in Dublin under Irish chairmanship in 2008. Following on from the very successful second meeting of States

Parties in Beirut there are now 66 States Parties to the Convention. Ireland is working and will continue to work actively on universalisation of the CCM and it goes without saying that any protocol agreed in the CCW context must be compatible with and complementary to the CCM. As we have consistently indicated since our adoption of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Ireland will only accede to a new instrument if it brings added value and makes a difference on the ground in terms of reducing civilian casualties in future armed conflicts.

Mr President

It is our firm view that negotiations on a possible protocol on cluster munitions should conclude at this Review Conference. Four years of negotiations should be enough.

Thank you