Statement by

Frank Groome
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at the

Meeting of Experts of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V to the
Convention on Conventional Weapons

Geneva, 23 August 2019
President,

Ireland aligns itself with the Statement delivered by the European Union. I add these remarks in our national capacity.

At the outset, I would like thank you for your leadership as President-designate of the Thirteenth Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V. You can be assured of my delegations support in your efforts. I would also like to thank you for convening the informal preparatory meeting ahead of this Meeting of Experts. This served a useful function and added value to our discussions.

We welcome this year’s focus on the clearance of ERW in urban contexts and we are happy to provide a moderator for the panel discussion later this morning. The problems ERW cause are both widespread and long-term and against the backdrop of the increasing urbanisation of conflict, examining this issue is all the more pressing. It is another aspect of the harm arising from the increasing use of explosive weapons in urban areas.

Protocol V calls for “all feasible precautions” to be taken to protect civilians from the risks and effects of ERW and we strongly support efforts to strengthen this important instrument of International Humanitarian Law and enhance its implementation in order to reduce the humanitarian harm and minimise the risks and effects of ERWs.
President,

Ireland attaches great importance to Protocol V and its full implementation. We are committed to universalising Protocol V; increasing the rate and quality of national reporting and promoting the work of Protocol V on victim assistance and in particular the implementation of the 2008 Plan of Action on Victim Assistance. We also believe a renewed focus on the implementation Technical Annex, which is the primary means to achieving the overall aims of Protocol V, could help strengthen the work of this Protocol.

Protocol V, if widely adhered to and fully implemented, has the potential to significantly reduce the civilian casualties that regularly occur after the end of hostilities and to minimize the long-term socio-economic consequences that explosive remnants of war inflict on war-affected countries. We support the outreach activities you have conducted to promote universal adherence to Protocol V.

President,

Ireland attaches great importance to national reporting, which contributes to transparency and building confidence on national implementation. National reporting also facilitates international cooperation and assistance, as it increases our understanding of the progress made and the challenges faced in implementing Protocol V.

Timely and accurate information sharing regarding the use of explosive ordnance during armed conflict can facilitate more targeted and precise clearance operations. This will result in a more efficient use of scarce clearance resources and a reduction in the impact of ERW on civilian populations. Ireland was pleased to contribute to the
Protocol V Informal Meeting of Experts last year in which we briefed on some possible approaches to recording the use of explosive weapons under Article 4.

At this workshop the Irish Delegation conducted a practical exercise, with the active participation of delegations, illustrating how the use of explosive ordnance during a short period of hostilities could be effectively recorded. At the same session, Sweden also briefed the meeting on the practical application of Article 4 at the tactical level within the Swedish Armed Forces.

We acknowledge that there continues to be practical difficulties in the full implementation of Article 4 at various levels of national responsibility and Ireland is willing to work together with other High Contracting Parties in order to develop more effective approaches to recording under Article 4. The value of sharing knowledge and experience among HCP to enhance implementation efforts should not be underestimated.

President,

Additional efforts to further strengthen the work of the Protocol could include a focus on victim assistance and in particular on the implementation of the Plan of Action on Victim Assistance. In this regard, it is important to recognise that Protocol V is complemented by a range of treaties and conventions and does not work in a vacuum. The APMBC, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and Protocol V each calls upon its parties to provide technical, material and financial support for victim assistance. When viewed and implemented as a suite of complementary instruments, we can ensure lasting tangible results on the ground. As Co-Chair of the Victim Assistance committee of the CCM (alongside Spain), we remain open to considering efforts to coordinate as appropriate.
We look forward to working together with all High Contracting Parties to further advance the effective implementation of all provisions of Protocol V.

Thank You.

ENDS.