CCW Meeting of Experts on Mines other than anti-personnel mines (MOTAPM)

02-04 April 2012

Statement – Delegation of Ireland

General Exchange of Views

Mr. Friend of the Chair, as this is the first time that my delegation takes the floor in this meeting, I would like to congratulate you on your selection and assure you and the Chair of our support and cooperation.

My delegation has consistently emphasised the humanitarian damage to human life and to social and economic activities caused by mines other than anti personnel mines. Therefore, my delegation is pleased that last year’s CCW Review Conference decided to convene this meeting of experts to discuss the implementation of international humanitarian law to mines other than anti-personnel mines.

Following the 2001 Review Conference the CCW States Parties mandated successive groups of governmental experts to examine problems arising from the use of mines other than anti-personnel mines and to make recommendations that would minimise the humanitarian damage arising from such use. From 2002 to 2006, a considerable body of excellent work was accomplished on MOTAPM under the direction of various coordinators, including Ambassador Paranhos of Brazil, Mr Peter Kolarov and Ambassador Reimma of Finland.

In the course of meetings during that period, States Parties heard overwhelming evidence of the humanitarian damage caused by mines other than anti-personnel mines and a large majority of States Parties expressed the view that MOTAPM are not adequately dealt with under Amended Protocol II. It is a matter of profound regret for my delegation, that despite the overwhelming evidence of humanitarian harm, it was not possible to agree a mandate to negotiate a new instrument.

The vast majority of MOTAPM casualties are due to mines laid outside perimeter marked areas. My delegation presented a proposal in November 2002, updated in June 2004, proposing that the use of persistent mines should be restricted to perimeter marked areas, and that, regardless of method of delivery, only mines whose active life is limited could be laid outside perimeter-marked areas. This proposal, like the US-Danish proposal on detectability, and on the active life of remotely delivered mines, attracted wide support among States Parties. The Irish proposal concerns the use of mines during armed conflict and does not seek to impose numerical technical specifications that might create difficulties for less developed states. The proposal’s technical requirement is limited to requiring that all non-persistent mines, laid outside perimeter marked areas, be equipped with a self-deactivating feature, in addition to either a self-destruction or self-neutralisation mechanism.
These meetings provide an invaluable opportunity for States Parties to build on the work done in 2002 to 2006 and also to hear new information from those in the field about the humanitarian impact of MOTAPM and to exchange views on the implementation of IHL to MOTAPM. It is the hope of my delegation that the discussions that we will have over the coming days will demonstrate that the need to address MOTAPM is pressing and that we can continue these discussions in the coming years.

Thank you, Mr. Friend of the Chair.