

## **Emerging Issues (Agenda Item 10)**

**Thursday, 22 November 2018**

Chair,

1. We welcome the addition of the **Emerging Issues** item to the agenda of the MCHP and we particularly welcome the working paper submitted by India and Switzerland on the consideration of developments in Science and Technology within the CCW framework. The conclusions of this paper deserve serious consideration by HCPs.

Chair,

2. Ireland remains gravely concerned at the humanitarian harm being caused during active hostilities in populated areas and in particular by the use of explosive ordnance and other explosive weapons whose effects extend beyond the immediate area of a legitimate military objective located within or close to concentrations of civilians.
3. These weapons have a devastating impact on civilians and civilian objects. We must act to enhance compliance with international humanitarian law to ensure the protection of civilians during armed conflict. This is an obligation shared by all parties involved in armed conflict.
4. The use of explosive ordnance and other explosive weapons in populated areas causes long-term humanitarian harm which far outlasts the conflicts in which they are used.
5. In his latest report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict issued in May this year, the U.N. Secretary-General reported that “the state of protection of civilians is bleak, and the need for action to address it is urgent.” The SG’s report calls for efforts to enhance respect for IHL. It is clear that where we cannot prevent conflict, we must work to strengthen the protection of civilians and civilian objects from humanitarian harm.

6. We recognise the need for States to engage constructively in efforts to address the humanitarian impact of EWIPA, including through the development of a possible political declaration, common practices, standards and operational policies and through the sharing of policy and practice.
7. Ireland, like many other States, is committed to achieving a future political declaration on EWIPA. We welcome the widespread and cross-regional support received for a joint statement on EWIPA at First Committee last month, and we welcome continued widespread engagement on this issue.
8. Without prejudice to applicable international humanitarian law, or discussions on the substantive content of such a declaration, we believe any such political declaration should enhance the protection of civilians and civilian objects in armed conflict from the effects of explosive weapons in populated areas. The declaration would not ban the use of these weapons; however, through providing clarification and setting out a commitment to adopt and update, where relevant, national policies and practices on EWIPA, a political declaration would enhance compliance with IHL.

Chair,

9. The preamble of the CCW recalls the “general principle of the protection of the civilian population against the effects of hostilities.” Thus, there is merit in examining EWIPA more formally within the CCW framework. To this end, we welcome the working paper submitted by Germany, including the call to establish an open-ended working group. Ireland also supports the recommendation that EWIPA should appear as a separate item on the agenda of next year’s MHCP.
10. Ireland continues to support efforts towards a future political declaration outside the CCW framework; however, we view the achievement of a political declaration as complementary and mutually reinforcing to any agreed future programme of work on EWIPA in the CCW framework.

11. Finally, chair, as part of my delegations broader efforts on EWIPA, we will continue to support Civil Society that has worked to effectively over the last several years to bring this issue to the top of the political agenda.

Thank You