

***UN Disarmament Commission***

**General Debate - 7 April**

**Ireland**

Thank you very much, Mr Chair,

We're very grateful to you, and to the chairs of the working groups, for your commitment to advancing our work. You can be assured of my delegation's constant support.

Ireland aligns with the statement delivered by the European Union. In my remarks in a national capacity, I will focus on how we need to approach the next three weeks if we wish to make progress.

Firstly, Chair, we should all agree that we **need** an outcome from this body, particularly in Working Group 1.

An outcome is necessary not just for the credibility of the Disarmament Commission, but to demonstrate that multilateral disarmament can deliver results.

In their remarks today, delegations will speak about the importance of the disarmament machinery - how we need to strengthen it and how there is an urgent need to reverse the disturbing trend of its erosion. Ireland fully agrees.

The UNDC is an integral part of that machinery, so now is the moment to strengthen it - now is the time to show that this part of the machinery works - and to prove that it serves a purpose.

We need to put words into action.

Chair,

For us to be successful, we must consider the Disarmament Commission's unique role as **the** deliberative body within the disarmament machinery, and, how to use it most effectively.

In the past, we have taken approaches in Working Group 1 that address nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation across the entirety of its complex span.

Doing this again will not bring us success.

When Working Group 1 last succeeded in delivering recommendations in 1999, it applied a more specific lens tailored to the UNDC's strengths, yielding the definition of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones used today.

In proposing recommendations in this cycle, Ireland believes that states should now reflect on three things:

- what is most urgent;
- what is most relevant to our contemporary nuclear threat environment;
- and - appropriate to the universal nature of this body - what is most representative of commonly shared concerns.

For Ireland, Mr Chair, we have identified the unacceptable return of explicit nuclear threats as a foremost concern that fulfils these conditions.

In ongoing conflicts, we have witnessed nuclear-armed states, or officials representing those states, explicitly threaten non-nuclear weapon states with nuclear force.

This has included the Russian Federation, a permanent member of the Security Council, whose reckless nuclear threats and illegal aggression against Ukraine represent an abuse of its special responsibility for upholding international peace and security.

Such nuclear sabre-rattling from any nuclear-armed state disregards the nuclear taboo and deepens the risk of proliferation.

Ireland believes it is in all of our interests, nuclear-armed states and non-nuclear-armed states alike, to reinvigorate the nuclear taboo and to seek greater accountability for any instance of explicit nuclear threat-making.

Be that in Europe, the Middle East, or anywhere.

The Security Council veto initiative in the General Assembly has shown how such accountability mechanisms can be developed.

We believe that any state making an explicit nuclear threat should similarly have to explain itself and could do so through an appropriately designed trigger mechanism.

This is one idea for developing an outcome-focused topic in Working Group 1. Ireland is very willing to engage on other specific ideas that can yield results and my delegation is very encouraged that other states have suggested other promising options today.

Chair,

Regarding the mandate of Working Group 2, we must carefully reflect on its considerable breadth - recommendations may need to be sufficiently general to apply across different technologies.

Nonetheless, we believe there is merit in examining more closely some of the newer and less well-known technologies that are having an impact on the international security environment, in particular quantum computing and armed UAVs.

We should also remain open to considering more specific recommendations in this working group if agreeable by all states.

Fundamental for Ireland in any approach is that certain principles be considered for all technologies:

namely that maintaining meaningful human control in a way that upholds the principles of International Humanitarian Law is essential.

And that technology, which cannot be used in compliance with international law, should not be developed.

Mr Chair,

In closing, I urge my distinguished colleagues to engage earnestly and constructively in a common effort to make progress this year.

We cannot begin under a cloud of pessimism with a defeatist logic, nor can we excuse lacklustre effort due to a challenging security environment.

Though we have one year to go, by the end of this session we **should** aim to have a credible path to final recommendations such that we can devote our time in the final year to finessing concrete ideas.

The Pact for the Future demonstrated that we can still deliver universal agreement on fundamental disarmament priorities.

I call on all of us to make a pragmatic and determined effort to do so again at the UNDC this year.

Thank you