Mr Chair,

IEDs and their proliferation represent a threat to our global efforts to promote and maintain stability, security, sustainable development, human rights, and humanitarian operations.

The use of IEDs and their devastating and indiscriminate effects is not new. IEDs have played a role in almost every violent conflict which has taken place on this planet. Indeed I myself come from a country which has witnessed at first-hand, for many decades, the harm that these devices can bring and I am sure that many others here today can attest to such experiences.

What has changed however is not so much the use of IEDs, but their proliferation. According to some commentators “IEDs are an emerging global epidemic” and figures released by the Action on Armed Violence Organisation which have shown that there was a 2% global increase in civilian deaths and injuries from explosive weapon use in 2015 from comparative 2014 data.

It is undoubtedly clear to us that the grave threats posed to our global peace, stability and security are rising in tandem with the proliferation of IEDs. In our increasingly connected and digital world, the ability to procure and create IEDs has never been easier and consequently IEDs have become the weapon of choice of armed non-state actors. The proliferation in use in attacks worldwide, not only cause death and destruction, but their use also have powerful destabilising effects as they undermine domestic security and weaken national cohesion.

The use and effects of IEDs on already fragile states and their civilian inhabitants is all the more pronounced however. Oft located in unstable
regions, the use of IEDs succeeds in creating and exacerbating regional tensions thus destabilising and often thwarting attempts at peace building and reconciliation. It is here too that we can see the full scale of the humanitarian impact.

The indirect effects of IED usage also disproportionately affect women, children and more vulnerable members of the societies. IEDs bring a legacy of physical, psychological and societal impacts which will reverberate for decades to come and indeed may impact on our collective ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals which we have all committed to.

Mr Chair

The 2015 statement of the UNSG on IEDs was reinforced by the passing of a resolution (sponsored by Afghanistan, Australia and France) at UNGA First Committee last year which set out a number of action items for states to consider in addressing the issue of IEDs. We feel that sufficient political will exists to tackle this issue and we look forward to engaging with colleagues at First Committee in the autumn, during which time we can seek to make further progress.

Mr Chair.

We feel that the declaration approved by the meeting of State Parties to AP II is a crucial first step in an attempt to develop and cement a coordinated position on IEDs. Ireland, along with other colleagues, were pleased to have assisted in the drafting of a political declaration on IEDs. We would sincerely like to thank all those who participated and feel that the text sets out a strong position on IEDs.

We feel that this declaration provides us with a strong basis with which to move aggressively forward with our efforts. Further, we feel that the declaration accurately points out that action is needed in a variety of fora and that such action should take into account humanitarian, political and socio-economic impacts of IEDs.

From an Irish perspective, we felt that it was vital to ensure that the humanitarian impacts of the use and indiscriminate effects of IED’s was underscored in the text and we will continue to shine a spotlight on this important aspect going forward.
Ireland aligns itself fully to the actions set out in the declaration and is committed to working with colleagues to achieve success in this regard. It is our sincere hope that this political declaration is adopted by the 5th Review Conference acceptable so that we can send a strong global message augmented by concrete actions.

I thank you Mr Chair.