



**Preparatory Committee for the Sixth Review
Conference of the Convention on Certain
Conventional Weapons**

Statement on General Exchange of Views

**Delivered by Lucy Duncan
Disarmament Ambassador**

6 September 2021

Thank you President-designate, and congratulations on your confirmation this morning.

New Zealand would like to offer brief remarks on three areas: lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS), incendiary weapons, and Mines other than Anti-Personnel Mines.

On **LAWS**, the Review Conference presents a key moment for the international community. We have the opportunity to treat this issue with the urgency and seriousness it deserves. New Zealand's overriding focus continues to be agreeing an updated, forward-leaning mandate for the GGE to enable negotiations to begin on the limits and controls needed to effectively regulate autonomous weapons systems. We were pleased with the substantive discussions that occurred at the most recent GGE session, and are particularly grateful to the focus and drive of the Chair, Ambassador Pecsteen, in enabling those to occur. We must maintain this momentum in the GGE as we head into its final sessions, to demonstrate meaningful progress and to deliver on the mandate given to the GGE by the previous RevCon.

During this review period, New Zealand was pleased to be able to discuss **incendiary weapons** in 2017 and 2018 under a dedicated agenda item on Protocol III, which we continue to see as an important component of our Convention. We are, however, very disappointed that it has since been removed from the agenda when there is clearly work still to be done on the universalisation and full implementation of this Protocol. Our concerns continue to be reinforced by periodic reports of the ongoing use of incendiary weapons in various conflicts, with horrific consequences for civilians.

New Zealand is gravely concerned about these reports and continues to condemn any use of incendiary weapons against civilians or civilian objects, and any other uses incompatible with relevant rules of that international humanitarian law (IHL), including provisions of Protocol III. In addition to our expectation that this concern and condemnation will be reflected in the final document of the Review Conference, we are strongly of the view that Protocol III should be reinstated on our agenda. We should not miss this opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to Protocol III and strongly encourage its universalisation and full implementation.

Like many others, New Zealand also remains concerned at the ongoing humanitarian harm caused by **Mines other than Anti-Personnel Mines** (MOTAPM), including through the denial of humanitarian assistance. It is clear that IHL contains few rules specifically regulating these anti-vehicle mines. We understand that there are a range of views on the military utility of MOTAPM. Some emphasise their disadvantages, including that MOTAPM deny areas to friendly force movements, create a clearance burden at the end of active hostilities, and pose risks to both military and civilian activities in a post-conflict situation. Others, however, emphasise that they provide an effective means of achieving “obstacle effects” –

including to disrupt or block opposing forces. Our challenge is therefore to find a way to proceed with work on this issue within the bounds of our Convention – in a way that does not constrict the military utility of MOTAPM while also reducing the harm caused to civilians by their use.

We look forward to a fruitful Review Conference. Please count on New Zealand's constructive engagement, and our full support.

Merci beaucoup.