

Statement by Deputy Permanent Representative of Ireland, Mr. Jim Kelly, at the UN Mine Action Team event on the Convention on Cluster Munitions, 18 March 2009

Thank you Chair

Our thanks to UNMAT and CMC for their excellent initiative in hosting this meeting. The support of the UN system was an important contribution to the achievement of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Nor would adoption of the CCM have been possible without the active and vigorous involvement at all stages of civil society, coordinated by the CMC. The event today marks a further stage in our endeavours, challenging us all to promote the signatures and ratifications needed to bring the Convention into effect, and to lay the groundwork for its full implementation. In this context, we welcome the positive information provided today by UN member states on progress being made towards signature and ratification: we especially congratulate Lao PDR and DR Congo for the important steps that they have taken here today.

Ireland has been closely involved in the Oslo Process from the beginning as a member of the Core Group, and had the privilege last May to host the diplomatic conference which led to the Convention's adoption in Dublin. We were pleased to be in a position to be in the first group to sign and ratify the Convention in Oslo last December

However, we fully realise that this is not the end of the work which needs to be done: rather the beginning. We were pleased to participate actively in the valuable advocacy and awareness raising work which took place at regional level in advance of the Oslo signing ceremony. The momentum which has been generated during this period and at Oslo must not be lost. We know that implementation of the Convention will require a sustained and cooperative effort by governmental and non-governmental actors in the period ahead. This is a priority for the Government of Ireland and we will seek to build on and further develop our partnerships to help provide the Convention with the support essential for its long term implementation and success. It is only when this task is fully and finally complete that we will have discharged our collective responsibility to those who have suffered the appalling humanitarian consequences of the use of cluster munitions.

Thank you.

Statement by Deputy Permanent Representative of Ireland, Mr. Jim Kelly, to the UNRWA Pledging Conference, 10 December 2008

Ireland strongly supports the work of UNRWA and I am pleased to reiterate that support today. I wish to pay tribute to the leadership of Commissioner-General AbuZayd and to thank her colleagues for their work, often under difficult conditions, in bringing much-needed assistance to the Palestinian people. I also wish to thank Mr Andrew Whitley and his colleagues for their liaison role here in New York.

UNRWA faces growing challenges, as shown by the thirty per cent increase in those registering and eligible for services compared to more than a decade ago. It faces perhaps its greatest challenge in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially in Gaza, on which Commissioner-General AbuZayd expressed alarm when she addressed the Fourth Committee in October. Since then, the situation in Gaza has deteriorated significantly and it is important that we give UNRWA our full support in its important work on behalf of the people of Gaza. In that regard, Ireland will continue its support for UNRWA's education programme in Gaza in 2009.

This year marks a new chapter in Ireland's role in UNRWA, with the decision of the General Assembly in its resolution on Assistance to Palestinian Refugees, to invite Ireland, along with Finland, to become members of UNRWA's Advisory Committee. We look forward to working with other members of the Advisory Committee in support of UNRWA's work.

We welcome the progress achieved thus far with UNRWA's Organisational Development Process and we will be actively following this important issue in the Advisory Committee.

In conclusion, I am pleased to announce that Ireland intends to maintain our core funding for UNRWA in 2009 at €3.8M, equivalent to more than \$4.9M at current exchange rates. As indicated at the Vienna Conference on Nahr el Bared last June, €1 million of Ireland's contribution to UNRWA for 2009 will be earmarked for Lebanon and €250,000 of this specifically for the reconstruction of the Nahr el Bared Camp.

In addition, Ireland will continue its support for UNRWA's education programme in Gaza, with a further grant of €500,000 in 2009.

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