



8 April 2022 Geneva Consultations INEW Daily Summary

Negotiations on the political declaration aimed at strengthening the protection of civilians arising from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas concluded on 8 April in Geneva.

Meetings ended with final comments from participants on the draft text, concluding remarks, a general sense of optimism after constructive exchanges of positions on elements on the text, and a shared commitment to a declaration that makes a meaningful contribution to the protection of civilians from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

Ireland held bilateral consultations with delegations in the morning rather than plenary discussions that concluded the previous day. During this time, Ireland sought to find better consensus on points of divergence in positions that emerged throughout the week.

Ireland began the afternoon session with a brief overview of the current state of work to be done on the draft declaration text to bring it near to a final version. Ireland made note of the substantive interventions that made clear the importance of framing the need for the declaration in the preamble, along with the need for a civilian-centered approach to its provisions and commitments, underscored by compliance with international humanitarian law. It noted that states were moving towards convergence on the text in both sections of the preamble.

In the operative sections of the draft text, there was less convergence but, nonetheless, useful and active discussions in the areas where positions among delegations differed. Ireland encouraged participants to continue discussion with each other, especially on key elements on these sections, while it also continues to review proposals for compromised language.

On these key provisions, civil society and some states made clear that, to fulfill its potential, the declaration must include commitments that aim to prevent and reduce harm from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, set out expectations for behaviour through policy change that can also be enacted in practice, and do more than simply reaffirm the need for states to abide by the law.

In its final remarks, the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW) laid out an appeal to Ireland as it works to finalize the declaration text over the next few weeks, to “be guided by developing a text that embodies actions that will have clear humanitarian benefit and effect. This declaration can be an instrument that saves lives.”

As next steps, Ireland will continue to reflect on proposed changes to the declaration text and further refine it ahead of a one-day, final consultation that will likely be held in early June. This consultation will serve to make small changes to a text that will be close to final. Delegates will likely receive an updated version of the text four weeks before the final consultation.

INEW is ready to play a key role as a central partner in this future process of work. It will be by building a community of practice, based on continued collaboration between states and international and civil society organisations, working together to promote progressive implementation of the declaration, that its eventual success will depend.