

Ecuador comments to the latest draft of the Political Declaration to address the humanitarian harm arising from the use of EWIPA,

Ecuador acknowledges and thanks Ireland for all the efforts undertaken to move this process forward, and for the distribution of latest version of the draft political declaration.

In general terms:

- Ecuador considers that the latest version contains important improvements in content and represents an excellent document to work on the final version.

-Ecuador welcomes the use of the term" explosive weapons in populated areas", without the generalized limitation related to wide area effects. Although such a limitation could be considered in very specific instances in the text, such as paragraph 3.3, a generalized use does not seem appropriate.

- Furthermore, Ecuador agrees with the consistent use in the new version of the language on the direct and indirect effects of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, as well as the clearer commitments with regards to data collection and victim assistance.

With regards to specific sections:

- Ecuador welcomes that the new draft has taken into account many of its comments made to previous drafts and considers that the title of the political declaration now adequately captures its objective.

- In section 1, paragraph 1.2, for better placement, Ecuador suggests the inclusion of the immediate and long-term psychological and psychosocial harm caused by these weapons, instead of its current inclusion in paragraph 1.3.

- As for the new paragraph 1.5, previously 1.6, Ecuador considers that the paragraph would fit better in section 4, where issues such as the exchange of good practices are dealt with. Moreover, its language could be substantially improved, given that one of the central objectives of the declaration is the expression of concern about the humanitarian consequences of the use of these weapons. In this regard, the paragraph should not only refer to the better and full implementation of international humanitarian law, but more generally to the need to improve the protection of civilians from the humanitarian consequences of the use of these weapons.

- In section 2, it would be appropriate to delete the particular reference to populated areas at the end of paragraph 2.2, given the objective of this paragraph is to reaffirm the obligations of international humanitarian law for the protection of civilians and civilian objects, which apply in all circumstances.

- With regards to section 3, the most crucial part of the political declaration, specifically paragraph 3.3, the word "restrict" should be deleted and only the word "avoid" should be used. In addition, given that this is in Ecuador's view the main commitment undertaken by signatories to the political declaration, it would seem necessary to add after the word "including", either the word "necessarily" or "always", in order to make it clear that it is not one of several possible alternatives.

- As for paragraph 3.4, the armed forces need to take a more active role in considering the effect of the use of EWIPA, so the word "take into account" should be replaced by "assess".

- Finally, on section 4, Ecuador suggest that the review proposed in paragraph 4.6, not only be done on the implementation of the declaration,

but on the progress generally made to the protection of civilians from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.