

Thank you Chair

This has been another productive session of the OEWG and your comprehensive synthesis paper has served as a helpful focus for our continued deliberations. The contributions of the expert panellists have not just informed our discussions but have also stimulated our debate.

This morning, Dr Ira Helfand has painted a picture so stark and powerful, it must surely reinforce the efforts of every individual in this room to step up to our responsibilities and take forward the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.

Dr Helfand and Sara Sekkenes remind us again of the catastrophic impact of these weapons of mass destruction, and the threat they pose for all humanity and the very survival of the human race. Sara has also drawn attention to the near impossible challenge of any humanitarian response to a nuclear incident, recognising the immense pressures the whole humanitarian system is already struggling with.

We welcome also her references to the Chatham House consultation paper on the need for a joined-up approach to these interconnected issues, Ireland was pleased to commission this research and I will say a little more about this later.

I want to pay special tribute to the important voice of Setsuko Thurlow here today. Ireland welcomes her presence on the panel, as we were honoured to welcome her to Dublin two years ago. Her voice as witness and the weight of her moral authority cuts through all abstract debate to bring us a true understanding of the devastating reality of this terrible weapon.

It is important to keep this reality in mind as we take forward our deliberations. We must never forget that when we speak of security, we speak of the security of humanity, of the men, women and children living in the nations we represent.

Challenging work lies ahead of us all but we should take inspiration from Setsuko and the other survivors and channel our response to their powerful testimony into equally powerful action.

Motivation is a very important factor. We have been discussing here this morning how to raise awareness and turn knowledge into change. Survivor testimony and the other evidence of the grave humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons need to be brought to the attention of all policy makers. We need to shift the debate from the silo to the top table, from the abstract to the concrete.

The very idea of nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament can seem overwhelming until we consider that, to quote Kathleen Sullivan yesterday, nuclear weapons are in fact very personal because they threaten every thing and every person that we love.

In this regard, Ireland was pleased to introduce our working paper and the associated consultation paper from Chatham house on treating nuclear disarmament as a global

governance issue and this is something that we will continue to raise. We look forward to the side event being organised by Mexico on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons at the World Humanitarian Summit later this month. We see this as an important opportunity to bring this issue to a wider audience.

We welcome the progress that was made here this week in the very constructive discussions on risk and transparency and we look forward to strong recommendations on these aspects of nuclear weapons in the final report. I would like to mention in this regard our support for the CTBT and our strong desire that this important instrument can enter into force. We trust that our discussion this week can serve as an impetus for those States who still need to ratify the Treaty to do so and reinforce the global norm against nuclear testing. Next week in Dublin, the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies and the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the CTBTO will host a workshop for the CTBT National Data Centres and Ireland is pleased to support this useful and important initiative.

With regard to raising awareness and the vital question of disarmament education, Ireland has been particularly active with regard to the gendered impact of ionising radiation. Ireland believes it is crucial to continue raising awareness and contributing to knowledge around this hitherto little appreciated aspect of nuclear weapons use. A nuclear detonation of any size will impact hugely on all human beings exposed to its radiation, but more so on women than on men, and on girl children more than boy children. This gendered aspect of these weapons needs greater visibility and Ireland looks forward to seeing this vital issue for humanity reflected in the recommendations from this OEWG.

However, we want to reiterate that addressing these issues as a matter of urgency is no substitute for dealing with the root cause of the risk, that is the continued existence of and reliance on nuclear weapons. If I may quote our then Foreign Minister, Frank Aiken, addressing the United Nations in 1963 -," the non nuclear states can, I submit, do something more than watch and pray while the nuclear powers negotiate or fail to negotiate the agreements required to avert the dangers which threaten them and all of us."

Mr Chairman

This has been, yet again, a fruitful and useful discussion and we welcome the lively participation and active engagement by the States, Civil Society and Expert panellists who have contributed under your able Chairmanship. We look forward to next week's discussion and continue to hope that this active and inclusive process may also encourage those States who have, for now, chosen not to be here, to decide to join us and bring their perspective also to this critical discussion for our times and for all humanity. As DG Moeller said, at the moving ceremony of the presentation of the Hiroshima tree last Monday, at this juncture in our history it is time to demonstrate wisdom, statesmanship and common sense.

We look forward to further discussions next week.

Thank you