Ireland’s response to the United Nations Secretary-General’s request for views in relation to
Resolution 73/67 on countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices
29 May 2020

1. In accordance with operative paragraph 30 of Resolution 73/67 on countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices (IEDs), Ireland is pleased to submit to the United Nations Secretary-General an overview of national implementation actions related to the Resolution 73/67 and Ireland’s contributions to the broader implementation of the Resolution’s requirements around the world.

2. Ireland shares the concern expressed in Resolution 73/67 at IEDs and in particular the negative humanitarian and socioeconomic impacts that arise from IED attacks on civilian populations worldwide. As set out in the Resolution, Ireland is supportive of efforts to address the issue of IEDs, in order to achieve relevant goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular target 16.1 on significantly reducing all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere. Ireland considers that progress in this regard is mutually reinforcing with efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and also the goals of the United Nations Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament, the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and the Youth Peace and Security Agenda.

3. Ireland particularly welcomes that Resolution 73/67 considers gender perspectives, recognising the importance of full involvement and equal opportunities for the participation of both women and men in countering the threat posed by IEDs; underlining the importance of addressing the threat of IEDs and their differential impact on women, girls, boys and men; and urging all States to reduce the risks posed by IEDs in a manner which takes into consideration the different needs of women, girls boys and men. Ireland played a role alongside partners at the United Nations General Assembly First Committee for Disarmament and International Security to secure support for including gender perspectives in this Resolution, and we consider that the practical application of its provisions will contribute to sustainably and effectively countering the threat posed by IEDs.

4. Ireland, and in particular the Irish Defence Forces, has played an active role in countering the threat posed by IEDs, including in awareness and prevention strategies. The Irish Defence Forces has been developing Counter Improvised Explosive Device (C-IED) policies and practices since the early 1970s and has developed an international reputation for excellence in this field.

5. In line with Operative Paragraph (OP) 3, Ireland has developed a national approach to countering IEDs, implemented by the Irish Defence Forces. The response of the Defence Forces to IED threats occurs at various levels within the organisation. C-IED awareness from a personal safety perspective is taught to all ranks during induction training, and all career advancement courses include the planning of C-IED activities and the integration of C-IED considerations into the planning and execution of operations at home and overseas. The Defence Forces has a number of specialist units with capabilities to address IED threats. The Ordnance Corps maintains Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams with a capability for Conventional and Improvised Explosive Device Disposal and Weapons Intelligence, for exploitation as well as maintaining the national response capability for malign CBRN events (CBRNe). The Corps of Engineers maintains several Engineer Specialist Search and Clearance teams nationwide who operate a large suite of specialist equipment and procedures for the detection, isolation and clearance of IEDs, or the location of subversive arms, ammunition, equipment
and documentation. These EOD and ESSC teams work closely with the national police service, An Garda Síochána in defensive, offensive and incident response C-IED situations.

6. In line with OP13, Ireland responds to the needs of today’s peacekeepers to operate in new threat environments involving IEDs. On overseas operations, the Defence Forces include a C-IED capability within all units deploying overseas on Peace Support Operations, predominantly for the protection of our own troops, ranging from EOD and Specialist Search teams to All Arms Patrol Search teams at Infantry Company and Platoon level. Currently this capability is deployed in UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), where Ireland provides the Force Reserve Company and is on standby 24-7 to respond to IED or other incidents involving explosive hazards.

7. In line with OPs 12, 16 and 22, the Irish Defence Forces has actively supported C-IED capacity building both nationally and internationally for many years, conducting courses for international students on IED Disposal (IEDD), Military Search and Route Clearance. Over the last ten years, the Irish Defence Forces has deployed C-IED instructors as part of their contribution to the EU Training Mission in Somalia and currently the EU Training Mission in Mali. Between 2017 and 2019, the Defence Forces participated in a number of Mobile Training Teams to the Jordanian Armed Forces in order to improve their specialist search and IED Defeat capability in conjunction with the NATO C-IED Centre of Excellence in Madrid. Defence Forces Weapons Intelligence Team (WIT) Instructors and students have participated in international WIT courses in the NATO C-IED Centre of Excellence. In 2018, the Defence Forces, in partnership with UNMAS, deployed C-IED instructors as part of two Mobile Training Teams to Burkina Faso in support of the Vancouver Pledges to bridge capability gaps in UN missions and build partnerships among UN Member States and international organisations. In 2019, the Defence Forces signed up to a five-year Military Search Capability Building Project with the European Defence Agency (EDA) with the objective of enhancing this capability within contribution Member States and was participating in the first Mobile Training Team in Cyprus prior to the outbreak of coronavirus in Europe.

9. In line with OP27, Irish Defence Forces experts contributed to the writing of the UN Military Engineer Unit and CET Search and Detect Manual which was launched in 2020 and also a revision of the UN Peacekeeping Missions Military EOD Unit Manual.

10. In line with OP29 on the important contribution of civil society to addressing the issue of IEDs, the Irish Defence Forces also provide Mine Risk Education and C-IED Awareness training to courses run for aid agencies and other international organisations in preparation for their deployment to contexts in which there is higher risk of exposure to IEDs.

11. In conclusion, Ireland welcomes the decision taken through Resolution 73/67 to include in the provisional agenda of the seventy-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly, under the item entitled ‘General and complete disarmament’, the sub-item entitled ‘Countering the threat posed by IEDs’. Ireland stands ready to engage with Member States in a fruitful discussion on this issue.