

HI Official Statement for the Dublin Conference – 2022/11/18

By Manuel Patrouillard, Global Managing Director



Dear Minister, your Excellency, distinguished Delegates and representatives from civil-society,

In the name of Humanity & Inclusion, also known as Handicap International (HI), I would like to express what an immense pride in participating in this event today.

It is an impressive and inspiring outcome to a process marked by a series of milestones, some of which I would like to mention here because we have been significantly engaged in them for the last 8 years. They include:

- The Maputo and Santiago conferences were 42 States in total officially and boldly expressed their commitment to engage towards a new international text on this issue;
- The mobilization of members of parliaments across many countries, entailing collective calls endorsed by several hundreds of those parliamentarians, resolutions, hearings, questions asked to the governments, participation to events and stunts...

Since HI was founded 40 years ago at the border between Thailand and Cambodia, our organisation has constantly advocated for greater protection of civilians affected by conflicts.

We have long fought against unjust and indiscriminate weapons, such as landmines and cluster munitions. As we celebrate this new text on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, it is striking and very fitting that we do so on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Ottawa treaty.

In all these campaigns, we have striven tirelessly to promote the fact that the primary concern of all should be the children, men and women affected by conflicts.

On the path towards a political declaration on EWIPA, in every session in Vienna, Geneva or online, we have tried to highlight the fate of survivors, families, communities, and the

absolute need to take them into account and to address the humanitarian consequences of the harm done to them.

We have heard the invitation from Norway to meet again in 2024 OR We hope that this conference will not end before the time and place for the next meeting is set, to assess the progress towards the implementation of the political declaration.

We will be there and we are determined to contribute our part in bringing the declaration to life, in particular on the humanitarian and victim assistance commitments.

Putting these commitments into practice will entail specific challenges and it calls for more detailed guidance. We will be happy to work on this in partnership with the actors represented here today.

I am calling on all the signatories to this new political declaration to place the impact on people at the core of their concern when working on its implementation.

We have our commitments; now we need to act. The urgency couldn't be higher.

This was the meaning conveyed by the ceremony of the unknown civilian that was held this morning with our friends from INEW, where we were glad to invite states, the UN, the ICRC and civil-society partners to share in the commemoration.

I can tell you that our 5000 HI employees all around the world are joining me in this moment of hope and celebration. I would like to share my joy with all the partners from INEW. I would like to congratulate the leadership from Austria and Ambassador Hajnoczi, who initially launched this process. The Vienna conference was a decisive moment in the whole dynamic.

Most importantly, I praise the great work performed by Ireland, under the leadership of Ambassador Gaffey. We have all here recognized his role and I want to add HI's voice to the collective praise and gratitude. Thank you.