

**Thank you Chair,
Excellencies, distinguished colleagues,**

First of all, since Cambodia just joined this Consultation for the first time, we would like to thank ICRC for the invitation to join the Global Initiative on IHL and express our sincere appreciation to ICRC and co-founding States for their leadership and valuable contribution to strengthening the international humanitarian law through this important initiative.

Now we would like to address for the guiding question 1

1. How can states strengthen adherence to humanitarian disarmament norms, including arms transfer controls, prohibitions, and the legal review of weapons, to reduce the risk of IHL violations and prevent escalation?

A way to strengthen adherence to humanitarian disarmament norms is to embed them into a State's national legal infrastructure and instruments, thus making international norms local. For example, in 1999, Cambodia passed a law banning all kinds of anti-personnel mines, which includes the prohibition of its production, importation, exportation, possession, and the use of this type of weapons. In 2005, Cambodia passed a law aimed at regulating the management of weapons, explosives, and ammunition of all types in our sovereign territory. Again, in 2009, Cambodia further passed laws on the prohibition of chemical, nuclear, biological and radiological weapons. These laws govern the possession, utilization, purchase, sale, trading, transportation, production, stockpiling, importation/exportation of these types of weapons.

Another way to strengthen adherence to humanitarian disarmament norms is to ensure that they are applied in all circumstances, both during armed conflicts and in peacetime. In the Commentary of 2016 of Article 1 C (2) of the Geneva Conventions, it clearly states that the application of IHL norms is to be applied 'in all circumstances', which has even been reflected from the language that it used to address, the obligation could have addressed 'Parties to the conflict' but instead it has been addressed to 'High Contracting Parties'.

By combining the incorporation of international humanitarian disarmament norms into domestic law with their effective implementation in all circumstances, these norms are likely to be reflected in everyday practice. This, in turn, can reduce the risk of IHL violations and mitigate the potential for escalation should an armed conflict arise.

Now we move to the guiding question 2:

2. What good practices exist for integrating disarmament commitments (such as weapons control measures or provisions related to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration) into peace negotiations in a way that builds trust, protects civilians and supports lasting agreements?

A proven practice that has been internationally recognised for integrating disarmament commitments into peace negotiations, ensuring trust, and prioritizing lasting peace and civilian protection is to employ an impartial third party in the peace process, namely the United Nations or an appropriate regional organisation to any specific region of the conflict. In this respect, the third party can engage with armed groups in complex environments to mediate, build trust, and draft peace negotiation provisions. If such a strategy is pursued by the host State's apparatus, the opposing group(s) may be less inclined to place confidence in the negotiation process, given the likelihood of the divergent objectives. In comparison, third-party engagement can enhance perceived impartiality and is generally oriented toward peace and stability.

However, it is important to recognise that this approach is more readily applicable in certain intra-state contexts and is considerably more difficult to operationalise in inter-state conflicts. In situations of armed conflict between two States, even with the engagement of an impartial

third party, either would be reluctant to undertake meaningful disarmament commitments for fear that doing so could reduce its readiness to respond to threats and expose itself to heightened risk from the other party. Furthermore, States typically invest substantial resources in defence capabilities to protect territorial integrity and safeguard strategic interests. As a result, unilateral or even asymmetrical disarmament during a state confrontation is rarely viewed as a viable option. Moreover, even where a State was, in principle, willing to reduce particular capabilities to build trust and confidence in a peace negotiation process with its counterpart, practical questions arise regarding sequencing, verification, reciprocity, and to whom weapons would be surrendered or transferred, particularly in the absence of a credible, enforceable security arrangement.

Lastly, in inter-state conflict, a ceasefire may represent the closest analogue to a disarmament commitment. However, maintaining a ceasefire, particularly if it is fragile, often requires sustained diplomatic efforts, and where necessary, coordinated economic measures. This, in turn, requires readiness of the broader UN membership and/or regional partners to support implementation and compliance.

Now we move to guiding question 3:

3. How can disarmament measures, such as demining, stockpile destruction, weapons collection and environmental remediation, support recovery, safe return of displaced people, and long-term resilience?

Disarmament measures, such as demining, stockpile destruction, weapons collection and environmental remediation, can help reduce the risk of renewed violence by limiting access to weapons and mitigating explosive threats. When implemented alongside broader stabilization and reintegration initiatives, these measures can encourage armed actors to disengage and support their transition back into civilian life. Improved security conditions can then facilitate the safe, voluntary return of displaced civilians and, over time, reduce the number of internally displaced people. In the long term, efforts to restrict illicit weapons flows may also contribute to greater societal resilience and reduce the risk of relapse into conflict.

Lastly, we move to the last guiding question:

4. What national approaches or institutional safeguards help ensure continued adherence to disarmament treaties and avoid treaty withdrawals or suspensions, so that commitments made in time of peace stand the test of armed conflict, which they are intended to mitigate?

One effective safeguard is to institutionalize disarmament treaty commitments through legislation and durable governance mechanisms, so that compliance does not depend solely on the preferences of any one administration. Because changes in government can bring shifts in policy preferences, States may strengthen continuity by adopting and implementing laws, assigning clear mandates to appropriate authorities, requiring periodic reporting to parliaments or any other types of legislative bodies, and establishing transparent procedures, potentially including legislative approval for any decision to suspend or withdraw from relevant treaties. These measures may help insulate treaty adherence from short-term political pressures and changes.

A further safeguard is collective support from the international community. Because many treaty regimes depend on cooperation, transparency, and political will, consistent engagement by State Parties, through review processes, reporting, technical assistance, and coordinated responses to serious concerns, can reinforce compliance. Where breaches are perceived to carry few consequences, confidence in the treaty framework may weaken; where compliance is encouraged and supported, adherence is more sustainable. Accordingly, State Parties, alongside relevant international and regional organizations including the UN and, where appropriate, the

ICRC, can cooperate to promote implementation and maintain the credibility of disarmament and any other international obligations.

In conclusion, Cambodia attaches great importance to regional cooperation and constructive dialogue in advancing compliance with International Humanitarian Law to further advance the humanitarian objectives.

Thank you!