



**Written comments by SPAIN on the draft Political Declaration on  
Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian  
Consequences that can arise from the use of Explosive Weapons with  
Wide Area Effects in Populated Areas**

1. As a general remark, Spain would appreciate more accuracy in terminology. Spain believes that **terms such as “wide area effects”, “reasonably foreseen” and “reverberating effects” lack a clear definition** and should be avoided. For instance, “*direct and indirect humanitarian impact*” would be a preferred option over “*reverberating effects*”.
2. On paragraph 1.2, Spain would appreciate the inclusion of references to **communication and education**. Spain suggest the following language:

“1.2 Explosive weapons ~~with wide area effects~~ can have a devastating impact on civilians and civilian objects in populated areas. Blast and fragmentation effects cause immediate deaths and injuries. Beyond these direct effects, civilian populations can also be exposed to severe and long-lasting indirect effects ~~—also referred to as ‘reverberating effects’~~. When critical civilian infrastructure is damaged or destroyed, such as energy **and communication** networks, water and sanitation systems, the provision of essential services such as healthcare **and education are** ~~is~~ disrupted. These services are often interconnected and, as a result, damage to one component or service can negatively affect services elsewhere, causing harm to civilians that can extend far beyond the weapon’s impact area.”



3. On paragraph 3.1, some States (like Spain) have developed or implemented **national policies** already. Spain therefore suggests the following language:

“3.1 ~~Review, develop, implement,~~ and, where necessary, **develop, implement or** improve national policy and practice with regard to the protection of civilians during armed conflict in populated areas.”

4. **Spain does not support the inclusion of new obligations under International Humanitarian Law** in a Political Declaration and, consequently, Spain suggests the **removal of current paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4**. These paragraphs seem repetitive. Spain therefore suggests to **merge both paragraphs in a new paragraph 3.3** with the following language:

“3.3 **Ensure that our armed forces make every effort in the planning of military operations and the execution of attacks in populated areas by taking appropriate mitigation measures to limit the risk of harm to civilians and civilian objects and restricting the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas.**”

5. On the follow-up process (paragraph 4.6), Spain believes that **the establishment of new fora or bodies to review the implementation of the Political Declaration would not be the most efficient mechanism to work on the way forward**. Spain supports the idea of working ahead through discussions within the CCW framework.