

Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Intersessionals 7-8 June 2018

Victim Assistance

Statement Austria

Mr Chair,

Austria fully aligns herself with the statement delivered by the European Union. In a national capacity allow me to add the following remarks.

We join others in thanking the Committee on Victim Assistance for their presentation and preliminary observations. I also wish to thank those states that just informed other states parties about their victim assistance programs and policies.

For years the work within our Convention was rewarded by annually decreasing numbers of new victims. Regrettably this trend has been reversed. This is of utmost concern to my delegation.

Our Convention followed a humanitarian call and today victim assistance must remain at the heart of our Convention. We shall not forget that as long as mines persist in the ground there will be inevitably new victims, and even if mine clearance is completed and no new victims occur, the need for assistance is potentially a life time cause.

Victim assistance is a long term endeavor that needs to be sustained through integrated policy approaches. In order to develop the most appropriate and effective policies accurate detailed information is of grand value. At the same time precise data remains one of the challenges we are facing in victim assistance. In order to better understand the specifics of each country with significant number of mine victims, we encourage national reporting under Article 7 as well as engagement with the victim assistance committee. We see this as a promising possibility for enhancing the implementation of victim assistance on a sustained basis. Therefore, we welcome that this year for the first time the committee encouraged states to include also gender aggregated information in their reporting and we particularly wish to thank Belgium and Italy in this regard.

We welcome that the Committee continued to actively reinforce synergies with other relevant actors and instruments. Austria believes that these exchanges are particularly valuable when explored with the Victim Assistance Coordinator of the Cluster Munitions Convention, the Protocol V of the Convention on Conventional Weapons and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

In addition to funds provided to victim assistance via the EU through its latest Council Decision, Austria is pleased that in 2018 already we were in the position to contribute financially through the ICRC to mine victim assistance in Syria. Last year, Austria among others provided Ukraine with humanitarian aid to mine victims. This support amounted to € 1.000.000,-.

I thank you.