

## **Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction**

**Fifth Review Conference, Siem Reap, 25-29 November 2024**

### **Victim Assistance**

#### **Statement by Austria**

Mr. President,

Austria aligns with the statement delivered by the European Union.

new victims and seeking to reduce the impact on survivors' lives continue to be key drivers in the implementation of this Convention. Our Convention was the first multilateral disarmament instrument explicitly recognizing the rights of survivors, affected families and communities to have their needs met and for all states to assist comprehensive victim assistance in a non-discriminatory manner. For Austria, a human-centred approach with the full, equal, effective and non-discriminatory participation of survivors in society remains at the heart of our Convention. Incorporating gender and diversity considerations is essential to ensure that all those in need can benefit from victim assistance in accordance with their rights. In this regard we also endorse the joint statement on gender to be delivered by Japan today.

This review conference convenes at a time when the number of yearly incidents is rising again. We strongly deplore this negative development. According to the Landmine Monitor, most of them civilians and many of them children. These are staggering numbers.

We need to work together closely to prevent any further use of anti-personnel mines and we need to do more to ensure that victim assistance can reach all those affected by anti-personnel mines. Therefore Austria has been actively supporting victim assistance efforts both in States Parties as well as in countries that have not yet acceded to the Convention.

Victim assistance has always been a truly cooperative endeavour. Survivors and affected communities know best how to most effectively address their needs. Therefore Austria organized a side event together with ICBL and Humanity & Inclusion on Tuesday on how support for local organizations enables survivors' groups and others working on behalf of mine-affected communities to achieve a powerful and sustainable impact.

Mr. President,

To effectively harness our expertise, resources and ensure a wider impact, we must make use of synergies in victim assistance with other existing instruments, including the CCM, Protocol V of the CCW, and the CRPD. In addition, the Political Declaration on EWIPA incorporates provisions on victim assistance and offers further potential for collaboration on a policy and practical level.

The efforts undertaken since the last Review Conference brought us to Siem Reap. Austria is convinced that every survivor representative who spoke this week should give us the confidence and

determination to move ahead with renewed commitment to the implementation of the Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan in the area of victim assistance. We commend the Checklist on Victim Assistance for the Action Plan that was presented during the Victim Assistance Expert meeting. This checklist will assist the work of national victim assistance and disability experts in implementing and reporting on relevant actions of the Action Plan in the years to come.

Mr. President,

We commend affected States and all stakeholders that have undertaken or supported measures for victim assistance. Let me particularly commend Cambodia for its commitment to victim assistance by having organized the Third Global Conference on Victim Assistance held in October 2023 and as President of this Review Conference for his leadership. We thank the Coordinators on Victim Assistance for their efforts to address all pillars of victim assistance. Austria is honored to have been nominated a member of this Committee for the next two years.

Thank you