

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

**Twenty-Second Meeting of States Parties, 1-5 December 2025**

**Victim Assistance**

**Statement by Austria**

Madam President,

Austria is aligned with the statement of the European Union.

Our Convention was the first multilateral disarmament instrument that explicitly recognized the rights of survivors, affected families and communities. For Austria, a human-centered approach with the full, equal, effective and non-discriminatory participation of survivors lies at the heart of our Convention. Effective victim assistance respects the dignity of affected individuals and communities and prioritizes their needs. Incorporating gender and diversity considerations in all relevant aspects of the Convention is essential to ensure its effectiveness, and that all those in need can benefit in accordance with their rights.

According to the Landmine Monitor, 2024 saw the highest number of casualties of mines and ERW recorded since 2020. 90% of them were civilians, almost half of them children. We strongly deplore this negative development and must reverse this trend.

This is a shared responsibility. We are pleased to support the Secretary General's Campaign on humanitarian disarmament and mine action. The testimonies of survivors and affected communities portrayed in the exhibitions in Geneva and New York are a powerful reminder that we must collectively reinforce the stigma on anti-personnel mines to protect civilians in and after armed conflict,

Mme. President,

The decrease in international funding for victim assistance is concerning. Conversations about innovative financing must address this issue and ensure to leave no one behind.

Austria has been actively supporting victim assistance efforts in different regions. Survivors and affected communities know best how to most effectively address their needs. In this light, we are pleased to have just entered a cooperation with the Amputee Self Help Network Uganda and ICBL to support a project on the economic empowerment of women survivors through sustainable peanut butter production in Northern Uganda.

We commend affected States and all stakeholders that have undertaken or supported measures for victim assistance. Austria will be honored to serve as chair of the Committee on Victim Assistance in the coming year.

Madame President,

To effectively harness our expertise, resources and ensure a wider impact, we should make use of synergies in victim assistance with other existing instruments, including the CCM, Protocol V of the CCW, the CRPD, the Women, Peace and Security and the Children in Armed Conflict Agenda. In addition, the Political Declaration on EWIPA incorporates provisions on victim assistance and offers further potential for collaboration on a policy and practical level. We are encouraged to see more States Parties endorsing the Declaration.

Thank you