



PERMANENT MISSION OF AUSTRIA

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Geneva, 23 March 2012

To the Permanent Representatives of the
States Parties, Signatory States and Observer States
to the Convention on Cluster Munitions
Geneva

Excellency,

At the Second Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), held in Beirut in September 2011, Austria and Bosnia and Herzegovina were appointed Coordinators of the Working Group on Victim Assistance.

In these capacities we are pleased to address you today and inform you on the preparations for the victim assistance session at the 2012 Intersessional Meeting of the CCM, which will take place in Geneva from 16 to 19 April 2012.

We may recall the responsibilities that States Parties have undertaken with regard to victim assistance under the CCM, Article 5, and the Vientiane Action Plan, which was adopted as an instrument that can assist States with the practical implementation of the CCM provisions at the national level.

In our joint effort to advance with the full implementation of our common mandate to assist victims of cluster munitions according to their needs, we invite delegations to prepare their contributions to the Intersessionals' Session on Victim Assistance along the following three lines:

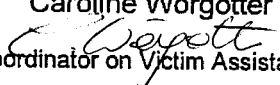
- a) The Coordinators encourage affected States as well as States in a position to provide assistance and cooperation to **report on the progress as well as the challenges/difficulties they are experiencing with implementing the provisions of the Vientiane Action Plan** related to victim assistance. A better understanding on the state of implementation in the different countries is needed in order to ensure that CCM States Parties can successfully promote technical cooperation, information exchange on good practices and other forms of mutual assistance in accordance with Action 35 of the Vientiane Action Plan.

- b) This year's Session on victim assistance will lay a particular focus on the collaboration and cooperation between government and civil society actors/NGOs at national and local level. We encourage States to **prepare contributions** for this debate focusing on the **concrete examples of collaboration between governments and civil society organizations/NGOs in providing assistance to the victims on the ground**, which could inter alia focus on the benefits and challenges of such cooperation in data collection and assessment, information sharing, policy-making as well as advocacy. One of the main aims of this session will be to explore the benefits of a close cooperation between the government sector and civil society organizations. NGOs often have a direct access to the victims and their needs, as well as to the extent of implementation on the ground.
- c) This year's session will further concentrate on how States, in accordance with Action 23 of the Vientiane Action Plan, **integrate the implementation of the victim assistance provisions of the CCM in existing coordination mechanisms**, such as those created under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) or other relevant international legal instruments, and how they ensure coordination and streamlining of victim assistance measures. We encourage all participants to actively contribute to this debate and share their experiences in this regard.


The Coordinators further strongly encourage delegations, in accordance with **Action 31 of the Vientiane Action Plan**, *"to include relevant experts, including cluster munitions survivors, and representatives of disabled persons organizations, to be part of their delegations in all convention related activities"*.

We look forward to lively discussions and an in-depth exchange of information and national practices. Should you have any further queries or seek additional information, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

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