

**Convention on Cluster Munitions
Eighth Meeting of States Parties Geneva,
3 - 5 September 2018**

Agenda item 7 (a) Universalization

**Statement Austria
delivered by Minister Wolfgang Banyái**

Mr. President,

Let me ensure you of the full support of my delegation to your presidency. Austria fully aligns itself with the Statement of the European Union. In our national capacity we wish to add the following remarks.

Austria is proud to be among the first countries that more than a decade ago started to advocate an international prohibition of cluster munition. As we celebrate the 10 year of the Convention we are humbled by the impressive collective progress achieved so far. Within the last 10 years 1.5 million cluster munitions and more than 175 million sub-munitions have been destroyed by States Parties to the Convention. This is more than 99% of cluster munitions initially declared. 18 States have ceased manufacturing cluster munitions. Thousands of victims have received assistance under the Convention.

But still, we must not forget that cluster munition and its remnants continue to kill or maim civilians, obstruct economic and social development, impede post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction, delay or prevent the return of refugees and internally displaced persons and negatively impact national and international peace-building and humanitarian assistance efforts. Austria firmly condemns any use of cluster munition anywhere and by any actor, including in Syria and Yemen.

As the vice-President of the ICRC Gilles Carbonnier underlined this morning “achieving the goals of the Convention depends on the norm being globally accepted.” Universalisation efforts play a key role in this regard. We wish to thank the Coordinators on Universalization - France and Panama, for their update and efforts throughout the year to bring us closer to achieving our goal of 130 States Parties by 2020 as we laid out in the Dubrovnik Action plan. It is therefore our pleasure to welcome Benin, Sri Lanka and Namibia to our Convention.

We also wish to commend Australia and New Zealand’s effort to organize the Pacific Conference on Conventional Weapons Treaties and for informing our meeting through statements but also through the submission of the text of the Auckland Declaration on Conventional Weapons Treaties.

We wish to join others in commending the work of the Cluster Munition Coalition and are looking forward to their side event today.

Before I conclude, let me also take this opportunity to thank the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu for taking the time to send a message to our meeting, reiterating her support for the humanitarian objectives of the Convention in the 10th anniversary year.