

Convention on Cluster Munitions
Second Review Conference
Second Part
20-21 September 2021

Statement by Austria

Mr. President

Thank you for giving me the floor,

Let me begin by congratulating you for your personal engagement as well as your teams important role in steering us through the Second Review Conference of the Cluster Munitions Convention and assure you of our full support in achieving the desired substantive and action-oriented outcome.

Austria is fully aligned with the statement (to be) delivered by the European Union.

A Review Conference provides States Parties the chance to look back on and analyze the achievements and the progress made and at the same time to look forward and make sure that obligations under the Convention continue to be implemented.

At the outset let me recall Austria's strong commitment to realize the objective of the Convention. We are proud today to celebrate ten years in force of an international humanitarian treaty that has been making an important contribution to IHL. Austria reiterates its firm condemnation of any use of cluster munitions by any actor.

We wholeheartedly subscribe to the humanitarian message, a clear expression of the ongoing and global stigmatization of cluster munitions due to their inherent, indiscriminate and inhumane nature and to the determination of the international

community to put an end for all time to the suffering and casualties caused by cluster munitions.

We continue to be inspired by the humanitarian achievements of the Convention, especially the enhanced protection of women, girls, boys and men from the threats and effects of cluster munitions and their remnants and by the successes in destroying millions of stockpiled cluster munitions, clearing land and setting up of inclusive education programs on the risks posed by cluster munitions. Countless lives and limbs have been saved as a result of these achievements.

Mr. President,

On the other side, we are gravely concerned by the increase in civilian casualties and by the humanitarian impact resulting from the repeated and well-documented use of cluster munitions since the First Review Conference. This grave concern applies in particular to the use of cluster munitions in Syria, which accounts for the vast majority of global recorded casualties of these weapons, in Yemen and also during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Guided by the object and provisions of the Convention, we condemn the use of this horrendous weapon by any actor under any circumstances.

Putting an end to the harm caused by cluster munitions will require universal adherence with the Convention. Progress in this area constitutes a pressing priority. We welcome the latest accession by the Maldives, Niue, São Tomé and Príncipe, and St. Lucia, bringing the number of State Parties to 110. Nevertheless, we urge all States that have not yet done so to join the Convention without delay. We will intensify our efforts to promote universal adherence to the Convention.

To conclude, we strongly encourage States Parties to fulfil their time bound obligations under the Convention as well as their financial obligations in full and on time. We express our appreciation for partners in the front line like the United Nations entities, the ICRC, the GICHD, mine action operators and civil society.

Thank you, Mr President