

**Cluster Munitions Convention
11th Meeting of States Parties
11.-14.9.2023**

**General Exchange of Views
Statement by Austria**

Mr. President,

At the outset I want to congratulate you on the assumption of the Presidency and thank you, your team and the ISU for organizing this meeting. Please be assured of our fullest support. We also want to extend a warm welcome to Pamela Moraga as the new Director of the ISU.

Austria is fully aligned with the statement delivered by the European Union but we also want to share some views in our national capacity.

We wholeheartedly subscribe to the humanitarian message of our convention, which is a clear stigmatization of cluster munitions due to their inherent indiscriminate and inhumane nature.

In spring this year, the CCM celebrated 15 years since its adoption and our efforts for a cluster munitions free world are more needed than ever. In recent years, we have seen an extremely worrying increase in the use of cluster munitions in different parts of the world, most notably in Ukraine following Russia's brutal war of aggression against the country. This has led to an unprecedented and unacceptable number of victims in 2022. Austria urges all states and non-state actors to refrain from any use of CCMs. Those responsible for the use of these atrocious weapons in breach of IHL must be brought to justice.

Austria deems the supply of cluster munitions for the use in ongoing wars deeply problematic as it undermines global efforts to eliminate these weapons. Cluster munitions are rightly outlawed under the principles and norms of international humanitarian law, which all states, also those who have not joined the CCM yet, are bound to. The focus of our discussions on this topic has to shift to the fact that these weapons leave highly dangerous unexploded ordnance and likely result in long-term humanitarian consequences and devastating implications for the environment.

We call on all States to firmly observe the global norms on cluster munitions and to join us in maintaining the momentum towards the full implementation of the Lausanne Action Plan. While these indiscriminate weapons still threaten the life of civilians around the world, we must continue our joint efforts to protect civilians and to further the ban.

Mr. President,

We cannot stress enough that the cooperative approach that makes the Oslo-Convention so successful needs to be upheld, particularly at a time when other important, agreements and commitments on disarmament and non-proliferation are under pressure. Austria commends the

work of all actors including civil society in working towards a world where children do not have to be scared to play in the fields, communities can return safely to their homes after conflicts have ended and farmers can safely harvest their crops.

Austria welcomes the accession of Nigeria and South Sudan as States Parties number 111 and 112 to the CCM and urge States who are already signatories to the CCM to ratify the Convention without delay. We reiterate to continue our joint universalisation efforts in these crucial times when the international disarmament architecture is under a considerable strain. Putting an end to the harm caused by cluster munitions will require universal adherence with the Convention. We recall that in the Lausanne Action Plan States Parties reaffirmed their determination to advance towards the full universalisation of the Convention and the promotion of its norms, as well as towards its full implementation.

We stand firmly behind the commitment of the Lausanne Action Plan to mainstream gender and diversity considerations across the Convention. Victim Assistance is a central element of our work and the implementation of Article V strongly contributes to the humanitarian impact of our convention.

We appreciate States Parties' commitment to the destruction of its stockpile of cluster munitions and efforts to meet the agreed stockpile destruction deadlines. We urge all countries to comply with their Article 3 obligations in the agreed timelines. In this context we want to congratulate Bulgaria and South Africa to have completed their efforts.

We further want to stress that all allegations of non-compliance are to be fully investigated and clarified without delay in the cooperative and transparent spirit of the Convention.

Finally, we would like to express an appreciation for all the important partners in our collective efforts towards a realisation of the objectives set out in the Convention - the United Nations entities, the ICRC, the GICHD, mine action operators and civil society.

I thank you.