

Cluster Munitions Convention
13th Meeting of States Parties
16.-19.9.2025

Item a - Universalization
Statement by Austria

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Mr. President,

Let me first thank the Presidency and the coordinators on Universalization, Norway and Peru, for the efforts put into the universalization of our convention over the past year and making universalization a matter of priority.

We commend the workshop organized by the Presidency in Manila in March with countries from South East Asia and the Pacific. Austria, as coordinator on General Status and Operations, was glad to have contributed to the open and frank deliberations during the workshop. Keeping communication channels open with States not yet party to the Convention allows to identify barriers and hurdles for future accessions.

We warmly welcome the deposit of the instrument of accession by Vanuatu on 5 September, just two weeks ago, making it the 112th State Party and first to accede since 2023. The value of regional outreach and exchanges on shared experiences **cannot be overstated**. Several states outside the Convention have put moratoria on the production, use and transfer of cluster munitions and we welcome all intermediary steps that can be taken towards full accession, which is the essential objective to translate the often tacit respect for the norms into legally binding obligations.

Mr. President,

Cluster munitions continue to kill and maim civilians throughout the world and we deplore the recent increase in use. We are alarmed by the resulting number of casualties. Europe is confronted by a brutal and the illegal war of aggression waged by Russia against Ukraine, which includes widespread use of cluster munitions. We are severely concerned by such widespread use by Russia of a weapon, that has been stigmatized and prohibited because they are inherently indiscriminate and cause unacceptable suffering.

Cluster munitions will never add to the security of a country or its people. There is ample evidence of this from all conflicts that we have seen, the immediate and long-term impact of any use of cluster munitions for the civilian population has been extremely severe. All this is very well documented and the powerful testimonies of survivors speak for themselves in this regard.

In such times it is crucial to uphold international law, including international humanitarian law and well as our humanitarian disarmament treaties, and insist on the progress that has been achieved over decades to reduce human suffering and prevent or mitigate civilian harm. Austria therefore regrets that this is the first Meeting of States Parties after the withdrawal of Lithuania from the CCM that entered into force on 6 March. We are concerned about the implications of this decision and call on Lithuania like on all States outside the Convention not to use, produce, transfer or stockpile cluster munitions and uphold the life-saving norm of the Convention for the sake of better protecting civilians worldwide

Thank you