

Cluster Munitions Convention
Third Review Conference
14.-18.9.2026

Item 9 (a) - Universalization
Statement by Austria

Check against delivery

Mr. President,

Let me first thank the Presidency and the coordinators on Universalization, Norway and Costa Rica, for the efforts put into the universalization of our convention over the past year. We welcome the fact that the Lao PDR has declared universalization to be one of the main priorities of this review conference and that it is duly reflected in the Vientiane Capital Action Plan as such. Austria engaged in universalization efforts throughout this cycle bilaterally, notably at the political level, and also joined the activities of the Presidencies, such as the universalization workshops in Addis Ababa this year and Manila last year, as well as initiatives of other stakeholders. We also took advantage of exploiting synergies, such as during a universalization workshop on explosive weapons in Accra co-hosted by Austria, Ghana and the NGO Article 36 in Accra in April this year, when related humanitarian instruments including the CCM were promoted for the better protection of civilians in armed conflict.

The key to promoting universalization is to keep communication channels open with States not yet party to the Convention. This allows us to identify both opportunities and barriers for future accessions.

We welcome Vanuatu's accession to the Convention last September and encourage all states not yet party to join without delay. We need to continue our efforts towards universalization with renewed vigor.

In this context, 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. 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.

Cluster munitions will never add to the security of a country or its people. There is ample evidence that 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.

It is crucial to uphold international law, including international humanitarian law as well as our humanitarian disarmament treaties, and to 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 Review Conference after the withdrawal of Lithuania from the CCM. We remain concerned about the implications of this decision. We call on all States outside the Convention not to use, develop, produce, transfer or stockpile cluster munitions and uphold the life-saving norm of the Convention for the sake of better protecting civilians worldwide. We wish to take this opportunity to reiterate that times of crisis give ever more reason to strengthen the protection of civilians, not to weaken it.

Thank you.