

Cluster Munitions Convention
Third Review Conference
14.-18.9.2026

Item 9 (e) – Victim Assistance
Statement by Austria

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Mr. President,

Let me thank the coordinators for Victim Assistance, Niger and Japan, for their efforts in the past year.

Cluster munitions and their remnants continue to disproportionately impact civilians. According to the Cluster Munition Monitor, the overwhelming majority of reported victims are civilians, and almost half of them are children. Every incident stands for a human life. Every incident stands for a family, a community, being permanently affected. We need to ensure that victim assistance can reach all of them.

Victim assistance has always been a truly cooperative endeavor. Its impact goes well beyond the individual and is beneficial for the broader affected community. Empowering survivors and their communities is therefore crucial. Their perspectives need to be heard and included on all issues relevant to the Convention. Austria continues to support the participation of survivors and their representative organisations in our meetings, wherever possible, and we welcome the particular recognition of the importance of survivor perspectives in the implementation of the Convention as contained in the Vientiane Capital Action Plan.

For Austria, a human-centred approach assuring the full, equal, effective and non-discriminatory participation of survivors in society remains at the heart of our Convention. We commend affected States and all stakeholders that have undertaken or supported measures on victim assistance. Victim assistance must correspond to the specific needs of victims. Incorporating gender and diversity considerations is therefore essential to ensure that all those in need can benefit from victim assistance in accordance with their rights.

In this regard, we want to express our appreciation for the field visit organized by the Presidency to the UXO Lao Information Center and the UXO Lao Operation Site on Sunday. Seeing the enduring challenges and suffering caused by cluster munitions is a crucial reminder of the importance of the Convention in general and of victim assistance in particular; setting the scene for a conference that focuses on effective implementation.

Mr. President,

To effectively harness our expertise, resources and ensure a wider impact, we need to build stronger links between existing disarmament, humanitarian, human rights and development instruments, including the CCM, Protocol V of the CCW, APMBC and the CRPD. In addition, the Political Declaration on EWIPA incorporates provisions on victim assistance and offers further potential for collaboration on a policy and practical level.

Austria currently serves as a Member of the Committee on Victim Assistance of the APMBC and as Victim Assistance Coordinator of the Protocol V of the CCW. In our roles in these Conventions we will continue to engage with the Victim Assistance Coordinators of the CCM to share experience and knowledge to strengthen our work across the different instruments. Such exchanges have demonstrated the general challenge of access to emergency care and continued medical care and rehabilitation services, which remains limited for survivors and other persons in need living in rural or conflict-affected areas. Addressing such challenges together will ultimately benefit affected communities and ensure that no one is left behind.

Thank you