

First of all, I want to pay tribute to the Chilean Presidency for the exemplary way in which you have presided over this MSP and throughout the whole year. My gratitude goes in particular to you, dear Marta, but also to your able team for the dedication, your determinedness and positive energy that has led our meeting here to a successful outcome.

Let me also thank the Executive Secretary and the ISU for their hard work which is indispensable for all of us.

It is a great honour for Austria to have been entrusted with the Presidency for 2017 and I want to thank you all for your confidence. I can assure you that, after a seamless transition, we will continue to work in the same spirit as Chile did.

Austria was among the first countries to demand a ban on APMs and had the responsibility to elaborate with the help of our partners the draft for the Convention. We feel strongly committed to the Convention. Therefore we want to make a new contribution by assuming the presidency.

Cooperation and partnership has been a hallmark of this Convention since its earliest days. Cooperation and partnership among States, cooperation and partnership with civil society, international as well as regional organisations, the ICRC, but also with institutions such as GICHD will be sought by the Austrian Presidency. For it is a common endeavor and our common objective to free the world from APMs by 2025.

In this spirit we intend to establish an Informal Universalisation Working Group and will seek in a concerted effort with the help of Prince Mired and Princess Astrid to convince more States to join the Convention.

On victim assistance a lot was achieved under the Chilean Presidency, especially a closer cooperation with other conventions like CMC, CCW and CRPD resulting in common guidance. Now we have to foster the implementation of this guidance and certainly to continue to foster an integrated approach to victim assistance.

It is of utmost concern that the number of mine victims has grown considerably in 2015, mostly because of the increased use of improvised APMs. Therefore we have to better address this problem.

As cooperation with other conventions yielded tangible results with regard to victim assistance, we see value in seeking a similar common consideration concerning land release. Best practices could be applied universally. In order to meet the 2025 objective, all of us have to do our best to be more effective and efficient in the implementation of the Convention's mine clearance obligations through intensified national and international action including an increase in funding.

The Austrian Presidency would also like to give renewed attention to the issue of stockpile destruction. We could look into why stockpile destruction still remains a challenge for some countries and how to assist them, but also why sometimes high numbers of retained APMs for training purposes do not decrease.

We have seen during this MSP that we share the concern for the financial problems caused by not paying in time the assessed contributions to the MSPs. We intend to further pursue this issue and will try to achieve early and complete notifications by the UN, in order to enable States Parties to follow their sometimes time-consuming national regulations and still make their payments in time. Again, it will only be possible to avoid a repetition of this year's crisis, when all of us cooperate and show solidarity by meeting our

financial obligations. Here, too. Austria will follow the good example set by Chile and organize a Pledging Conference on 28 February.

I am sure to speak for all of us to thank the Chilean Presidency for their great hospitality. It makes a difference to be here in Santiago and concentrate fully on the APM topic. Therefore I would like to invite you all to Vienna where the 16<sup>th</sup> MSP is scheduled to take place next year from 18 to 22 December. This is one the best times of the year for a stay in Vienna due to the festive atmosphere and the Christmas markets.

The dates for the main events during the Austrian Presidency you will find at the end of the priorities paper that has been distributed.

So I hope to see you all next year in Vienna.