

17MSP ANTI PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION

Agenda Item 9. Consideration of the general status and operation of the Convention

(a) Assisting the victims: Conclusions and recommendations related to the mandate of the Committee on Victim Assistance

Statement Austria

Madame Chair,

Austria aligns itself with the EU statements. In a national capacity we would like to add the following remarks.

In the interest of time Austria has followed your advice, Madame Chair to rather give preference to statements under relevant agenda items to contributions to the general debate. As this is the first time I am taking the floor, allow me to congratulate you Ambassador Dalil to your successful leadership during the 17MSP Presidency and assure you of my delegation`s full support.

At last year`s MSP in Vienna we opened the second day with the Panel entitled "Keeping People at the Heart of the Convention: Effective Victim Assistance". Beyond doubt, victim assistance is at the heart of our Convention. Even when all mines cleared, all stockpiled mines are destroyed and we have save lives and limbs, victim assistance will require persistent multilateral efforts. It was the overwhelming humanitarian concern about the effects of antipersonnel mines on civilians that lead to the adoption of our Convention. This was duly reflected in the preamble as well as in the historic provisions of Article VI.

We wish to thank the members of the Committee on Victim Assistance Belgium, Croatia, Ecuador and Mozambique for their efforts throughout the year. In the Convention States Parties committed to ensure to do „their utmost in providing assistance for the care and rehabilitation, including the social and economic reintegration of mine victims“. No matter how much progress we achieve in preventing new victims, the long-term responsibility for people affected for their lives by the scourge of antipersonnel mines, persists. Jointly State Parties seek to „provide assistance for the care and rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration, of mine victims and for mine awareness programs.”

Within our Convention`s family we have 29 States Parties that have indicated responsibility for significant numbers of landmine survivors. The transparency provided through submissions of Article 7 reports is important for the Convention living up to its aspiration with regard to victim assistance. We welcome the updates on victim assistance submitted by Burundi, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Colombia, Iraq, Jordan, Senegal, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Tajikistan.

We continue to encourage all states concerned to cooperate with the Committee and share further relevant information with a view to make the social and economic reintegration of victims as efficient and effective as possible. We hope that the guide on victim assistance remains a pertinent resource in this regard. I thank you, Madame Chair.