

## **Speaking Points Bot. Petritsch Symposium 120207**

### **Opening of the symposium**

State Secretary Winkler, your excellencies, colleagues and friends, Ladies and Gentlemen!

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to Vienna to our Symposium “Assisting Landmine Survivors – A Decade of Efforts”. This symposium marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Vienna Meeting on the Convention for the Prohibition of Anti-personnel Mines which started at precisely this hour ten years ago. This meeting was the first in a series of meetings that lead to the Convention which is now known as the Ottawa Convention.

I am happy to see so many familiar faces – persons engaged in the fight against Anti-Personnel Mines since years – and I am equally happy to see also many new faces in this room. Thus, sending a clear signal that the interest in the issue, the outlawing of APMs and the care for landmine survivors is still on the minds of many.

Before we start, let me briefly express my gratitude to some of those who contributed to this event. My thanks go to State Secretary Hans Winkler for joining us here today and reinforcing our important message. I would also like to thank General Schittenhelm, the Commander of the Austrian Defence Academy for hosting us here in the premises of the Academy; thank Ambassador Caroline Millar of Australia, currently the Convention’s president and a stern supporter of our endeavours and I would also like to thank Margaret Arach Orech, Ambassador of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines – herself a victim of this terrible weapon and an ardent advocate for the cause of survivors.

I also wish to thank Kerry Brinkert, Sheree Bailey and Sophie Delfolie from the Convention’s Implementation Support Unit as well as Markus Reiterer and the team of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Vienna, Dorothea Auer, Alexander Benedict and Monika Fröhler for their hard work in preparing today’s event.

The *Decade of Efforts* that we can celebrate today signifies the hope that this Convention has brought into our world. The convention has experienced the engagement, enthusiasm and energy of many hundreds, if not thousands, of persons, working for this cause. It is important that we do not give up – that we do not stop our work, before the job is done. Yet our job is only done, when the world is indeed free of mines, does not encounter new victims and takes proper care of those who already have fallen victim to this weapon. Such a world is possible, but we have to continue working together, perhaps for a couple of years, a decade or more. I can assure you that Austria is committed to continue to do its share.