

Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Intersessionals 25/26 June 2015

Statement by Austria

Mr. President,

My delegation would like to congratulate you for presiding over this meeting and to assure you and your team of our full support. Austria is aligned with the statement by the European Union delivered on this agenda item.

At the outset my delegation would like to commend the efforts of all actors that have been engaging on strengthening victim assistance efforts and ensuring that the rights of survivors, affected families and affected communities are being met for their participation in all aspects of life on an equal basis with others. These efforts lay at the heart of the Mine Ban Treaty and deserve and require our community's full commitment.

We would like to thank the Committee on Victim Assistance for their report and preliminary observations. As a former co-chair for victim assistance, we are particularly pleased to follow the work of this committee and highly commend their work. We are grateful for States Parties that have victims and have already provided information in their Art 7 report or in addition to their Art 7 report, and particularly in line with actions 12, 13 and 14 of the Maputo Action Plan. Such reporting is valuable and so essential to gain a full understanding of the situation of victim assistance in the respective countries, the national plans established for support to survivors, affected families and communities and challenges and needs for cooperation and assistance, in short to make victim assistance under the Treaty measurable. We also thank delegations that have shared today national updates with us. We very much value this information. We are grateful for Belgium's leadership with regard to providing guidance and assistance for victim assistance reporting across related Conventions and we thank all stakeholders engaged in this exercise.

In this regard, I would also like to express our appreciation for the briefing paper by the ICBL-CMC entitled „*Victim Assistance and the CRPD, Article 11*“, which contains an obligation to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict and humanitarian emergencies. The paper elaborates on the particular challenges of survivors and other persons

with disabilities in situations of conflict and other humanitarian emergency situations, that are among the most vulnerable of society. The paper highlights the relevance of this obligation under the CRPD for a rights-based approach to victim assistance. My delegation would like to encourage States Parties that have victims and are also party to the CRPD to link their reporting under the CRPD, the Mine Ban Treaty and the reporting under any other related international legal instrument with reporting obligations for areas relevant to victim assistance.

Following the objective of integrating victim assistance into the broader development, disability and socio-economic frameworks, it will be of utmost importance to monitor that the rights and needs of survivors, affected families and communities are indeed met throughout this integration process. Such monitoring is only possible through strengthening the links between the Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the CRPD and other related international legal instruments and activities carried out in implementing the provisions of these instruments. I was honored to participate in a discussion on this issue that the Committee on Victim Assistance organised on 23 April this year in Geneva with the aim to further explore ways to follow up on the great initiative of the Medellin Conference in Colombia to build „Bridges between Worlds“.

Austria also commends Thailand for organising the „*Bangkok Symposium on Landmine Victim Assistance*“ on 14-17 June. Austria was pleased to participate in this event that contributed valuably to strengthening the implementation of the Maputo Action Plan.

I thank you.