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**Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and
Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction**

Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties

Agenda Item: UNIVERSALIZATION
6 December 2012

Statement by AUSTRIA



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Mr. President, as this is the first time that my delegation takes the floor during this meeting, I would like to congratulate you for presiding over the 12th Meeting of States Parties and assure you of the full support of my delegation.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention has contributed importantly to the strengthening of norms of international humanitarian law and human rights law and the anchoring of humanitarian concerns in the disarmament context more broadly.

Beyond the legal norms contained in the Convention, the use of anti-personnel mines has been stigmatized. Anti-personnel mines have been shunned as inhuman and indiscriminate weapons.

Nevertheless, these weapons are still being used. The Austrian Vice Chancellor and FM Michael Spindelegger, in reaction to recent reports on new use of anti-personnel mines by a state not party to this Convention, strongly condemned all use. He reiterated that “*anti-personnel mines are internationally shunned and prohibited under the Ottawa Treaty – precisely because these weapons pose an acute danger to the civilian population even decades after the fighting has stopped.*” He recalled that the international legal obligation to protect one country’s own civilians from unnecessary harm applies to all States.

The persisting humanitarian problem of anti-personal mines highlights the need to fully universalize this norm of international humanitarian law and human rights law. In this context, we warmly welcome the States that have recently joined the Convention, Finland, Somalia and Tuvalu. The imminent accession of Poland will soon bring all EU Member States under the realm of the Convention. Austria appreciates all universalization efforts and would like to commend in particular the work undertaken by the former and the incoming Presidency as well as the Convention’s Special Envoy, His Royal Highness Prince Mired Raad Al-Hussein of Jordan, the ICRC and the ICBL.

Mr. President,

We regard it as the responsibility of all States Parties to the Convention to jointly act as guardian of the norms of this Treaty. In this light, we express our concern about the allegations of use of States Parties to the Convention that we have been reported about during the Standing Committees in May and during this meeting. We call on all States Parties concerned, to fully investigate these allegations and to clarify the matter in a transparent manner and report back to the Conference as early as possible.

Thank you.