

AUSTRIA

*[TOP 2.b Conclusions and recommendations related to the mandate of the Committee on Victim Assistance]*

Mr President,

we thank the Chair of the Committee on Victim Assistance for the presentation of conclusions and recommendations related to the Committee's mandate that we have just heard.

Austria fully aligns herself with the Statement of the representative of the European Union on victim assistance (to be) delivered earlier (later) in this debate. Let me offer a few additional remarks from a national perspective.

It is a great humanitarian achievement of the Convention that since its entry into force some fifteen years ago, the recorded annual global number of mine incidents killing and injuring people, most of them civilians, has gone down sharply by almost two thirds.

The steady downward trend of the last one and a half decades, unfortunately, was halted in 2014, when more casualties than in 2013 were registered according to the latest landmine monitor.

In contrast to the fluctuating annual numbers, the accumulated number of survivors cannot but grow constantly over the years. This means that victim assistance is not only a task that will stay with us for the foreseeable future, but also one that will require increasing, rather than diminishing resources. It is therefore all the more important to ensure maximally efficient use of the funds available for victim assistance.

The 2014 Maputo Review Conference and the Action Plan adopted on the occasion provide important guidance for this endeavour. Let me commend the work of the Victim Assistance Committee established in Maputo. The Action Plan rightly places emphasis on making victim assistance commitments measurable and time bound; on integrating victim assistance under the Convention in broader national and regional policies and frameworks for disability and development; and on the fact that victim assistance will be the more effective the more age and gender

sensitive it is. I would add to this the need to identify and make use of synergies with other international fora, such as the CCM and the CPRD.

~~And of course it is crucial that States which are in a position to do so, continue to possibly increase their international support for northern assistance.~~