

**Convention on Cluster Munitions, Intersessional Meeting 16-18 April 2013**  
**Session on General Status and Operations, 18 April 2013**

**Statement by Austria**

At the outset, allow me to express our gratitude to the Coordinators for General Status and Operations for their leadership and outstanding efforts. In the following, my delegation would like to address a few issues related to the normative realm of the Convention.

Austria attaches great importance to the obligation of all States Parties to fully bring into effect the international norms of the Convention and not to allow for any loopholes to exist in their national legal frameworks. In this context, Austria would like to underline that all State Parties are obliged to undertake best efforts to discourage States from using cluster munitions. In our view, exceptions in national legislation with respect to interoperability clauses risk to run counter to the object and purpose of the Convention.

Mr. Coordinator,

Austria is concerned about any allegations of new use of cluster munitions. Austria strongly supports the universal prohibition of cluster munitions and condemns all use of cluster munitions. We call on all States concerned to fully investigate these allegations and clarify these matters in a transparent way and to do their utmost to ensure that cluster munitions are never used again.

It is the indiscriminate effects and unacceptable humanitarian consequences that have led to the ban of cluster munitions by the Convention on Cluster Munitions. And we reiterate that the obligation to protect civilians from unnecessary harm applies to all States.

Austria remains deeply concerned about new reports on the continued and increased use of cluster munitions in Syria during recent months. The Austrian Foreign Minister, Michael Spindelegger has urged the Syrian government in the strongest terms to protect its civil society and to refrain from committing further blatant human rights

violations against the population through the use of cluster munitions or any other indiscriminate and inhuman weapons.

The continued use of cluster munitions only underscores the need to fully universalize the norms of this instrument of international humanitarian law.

Finally, Austria would in this context also like to highlight the victim assistance norm that is a strong and exemplary one that is at the heart of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We encourage all States to continue their efforts to implement the victim assistance obligations and to further promote them beyond this Treaty, aiming at strengthening the rights and addressing the needs of all survivors of explosive weapons, their family members and affected communities and persons injured or disabled by other causes.

I thank you for your attention.