

**Convention on Cluster Munitions, Intersessionals 7-9 April 2014  
Session on Victim Assistance, 9 April 2013**

**Statement by Austria**

Thank you, Mr./Mme. Coordinator.

We warmly thank the Coordinators for Victim Assistance, Afghanistan and Mexico, for their leadership and commend them for their efforts.

It is worth recalling that the Convention on Cluster Munitions has set the highest standard on victim assistance in humanitarian disarmament treaties so far with its comprehensive definition and set of provisions in Art 5 and reporting obligations. Our Convention hence plays an important leading role in ensuring the rights of victims of any type of weapons. We appeal to all States not yet party to the CCM, and in particular those with responsibilities for victims of cluster munitions, to accede to the Convention as soon as possible and in the interim to adhere to the norm on victim assistance and benefit from the guidance this instrument offers for ensuring that the rights and needs of survivors, affected families and communities are met.

The regular reporting by States – in close reference to their national plans and policies they have put in place to provide victims of cluster munitions with adequate assistance – is crucial for all States Parties to the Convention to monitor progress and be alerted to the needs for cooperation and assistance. Only if reporting is specific, measurable and time-bound, it allows all States Parties to gain an adequate understanding of the situation of victims on the ground and to fulfil their obligations to provide cooperation and assistance where needed. Reporting should less be a burden and more an opportunity to make good practices as well as gaps in assistance and arising needs known.

The 4th Meeting of States Parties called on States Parties to fully integrate victim assistance efforts with the wider agenda on development, disability and human rights, and to make best use of opportunities that allow for a holistic approach that encompasses all victims of explosive remnants of war. We strongly support this approach. We believe that reporting on victim assistance is an area of example, in which the increased informal exchange between States Parties to this Convention and related international legal instruments, such as the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, could be fruitful to explore best practices in how to organise and carry out reporting processes at a national level, from the collection of relevant data, the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders to the effective streamlining of reporting requirements under various legal instruments. Reporting is just one example that shows the potential challenges in coordination and collaboration that are involved with integrating victim assistance into the broader human rights, disability and development policies and plans. At the same time, it also demonstrates the great opportunities that arise from such an integrated approach for the effectiveness and efficiency of needs communicated and assistance provided.

I thank you.