

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

**Fourth Review Conference
Oslo, 26-29 November 2019**

Agenda Item 7 d) Assisting the victims Austria Statement delivered by Ambassador Thomas Hajnoczi

Mr. President,

It is the humanitarian concern about the catastrophic effects of anti-personnel mines on civilians that has led to the adoption of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Preventing new victims and seeking to reduce the impact on survivors' lives have been key drivers for the adoption of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention more than 20 years ago.

Our Convention was the first multilateral disarmament instrument explicitly recognizing the need to assist victims. The provisions of Article VI are historic. Austria continues to fully believe that we need to keep people at the heart of our Convention. Even when all mines are cleared, all stockpiled mines are destroyed, victim assistance will require persistent national and multilateral efforts.

Victim assistance has always been a truly cooperative endeavour of the Convention. It is important to underline that in order to understand how victim assistance can be more effective, we need to listen to survivors, who know best how to better address their needs. Austria sees a huge benefit for our joint goals to take into account the experience of organisations involved in the field, the ICRC, the ICBL, Humanity and Inclusion and other civil society organisations. We welcome that since the last Review Conference the ISU has employed an expert on victim assistance and we applaud the ISU that they have chosen Firoz Alizada, an excellent expert on victim assistance.

Over the years States Parties to the Convention have thus developed a better understanding of survivors' needs, how victim assistance can and should be implemented, how victim assistance integrated in health and social policies, increases effectiveness and efficiency. For Austria, victim assistance remains one of the areas, where the mine ban community should step up its efforts. Therefore Austria supports more victim assistance both in States Parties as well as in countries that have not yet acceded to the Convention. It is about humanitarian assistance to survivors, regardless where they live.

Mr. President,

Austria believes the actions outlined in the draft Oslo Action Plan provide an excellent basis to advance our efforts. We can therefore fully support Chapter VII and related other provisions in the Oslo Action Plan.

Finally, allow me to thank the members of the Committee on Victim Assistance for their excellent and committed work throughout the year.