

Check against delivery

**Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Third Review Conference**

High-level Segment

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**Statement by
AUSTRIA**

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**Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me at the outset to warmly congratulate you, Mr President, and your team, for the excellent manner in which you have prepared and steered the work of this important conference. The Austrian delegation will continue to lend its full support to you.

We are grateful to Mozambique to host this conference and thank the people of Mozambique for the great hospitality that we have been enjoying. With Mozambique's consistent efforts to become free of anti-personnel mines by the end of the year, and its wealth of expertise to offer in this regard, your country is a role model for States Parties. We appreciate the efforts Mozambique has been undertaking for the African continent to play a leading role in fulfilling the promises of the Mine Ban Treaty.

Austria fully aligns herself with the statement by the European Union (still to be) delivered (earlier) during this exchange. Let me add some remarks from a national point of view. Returning to Maputo fifteen years after the first meeting under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention was held here in this city, States Parties altogether can look back on remarkable achievements. Since the entry of the treaty into force, use and production of these inhumane weapons have steadily declined, while trade has almost been brought to a halt. Major stockpiles have been destroyed and large contaminated areas have been cleared. Most importantly, however, annual global numbers of accidents killing and maiming people have gone down to a third of what they were at the beginning of the period. The Convention has certainly made a difference.

One of the factors for this success has definitely been the spirit of partnership and cooperation characteristic for the Convention, bringing together States Parties, international organisations, and not least non-governmental organisations and civil society representatives. Without the ICBL we would not have achieved this convention.

Austria has been an active supporter of the Convention from its drafting process, and has continued to contribute to its success over the years. We have been advocating universalisation of the Convention with our partners. We have provided financial support to mine action in a number of countries, most recently in Afghanistan, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Libya, and Mozambique. Presently acting as Co-Chair of the Convention's Standing Committee on Victim Assistance, together with Costa Rica, Austria has been engaged in finding ways how survivors and their communities can benefit more from the Convention.

Mr President,

3,628 accidents with antipersonnel mines registered by the Landmine Monitor in its most recent findings for the year 2012 mean that these abominable weapons continue to cause terrible and wide-spread suffering. In order to rid the world from the scourge of antipersonnel mines, much remains to be done. Enhanced progress in fulfilling clearance and stockpile destruction obligations will be crucial in the coming years to live up to the Convention's commitments and to demonstrate adherence to its norms. We call on States Parties that have not yet adopted the national legislation necessary for implementing the Convention to do so as soon as possible. The provision of

adequate assistance to persons who have fallen victims to anti-personnel mines, which is at the core of this humanitarian treaty, will remain one of the main tasks for States Parties in the future.

It is with great concern that we periodically hear of new use or allegations of use of antipersonnel mines, by States both within and outside the Convention. We have to pay great attention to such cases. It is Austria's conviction that all States, under international law, are obliged to refrain from the use of indiscriminate and inhumane weapons, to which antipersonnel mines undoubtedly belong.

National implementation of the Convention's norms continues to pose a challenge to a number of States Parties. Efforts undertaken by these states should meet the necessary financial and technical assistance by those in a position to do so.

While an overwhelming majority of the world's States have now acceded to the Convention, a number of States, among them possessors of considerable stocks of antipersonnel mines, still have not. We must redouble our engagement with all those who still have not ratified the Convention.

Mr President,

The documents which this Conference is about to adopt will provide much needed stimulus and guidance towards our shared goal of a world free from antipersonnel mines. Mozambique and all those that contributed to the preparation of these documents have done a remarkable job. We commend Mozambique for its ambitious and visionary approach, which

has guided our work. Visions and aspirations are crucial for progress in real term. We have therefore been supportive of the vision for full implementation of the Convention's time-bound obligations by 2025, and we encourage all States Parties to take this vision with them from this Conference and strive to make it a reality.

We are confident that the decisions to be taken at this meeting will help us to preserve the full integrity of the Mine Ban Treaty, to adhere to and strengthen its norms and to ensure effective implementation of its provisions.

A number of positive developments have taken place in the last fifteen years in the broader context and been inspired by this Treaty, including the entry into force of the Cluster Munitions Convention and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the enhanced cooperation and collaboration with related fields of work. They have become a crucial factor for ensuring an effective and successful implementation of the various commitments stemming from these instruments.

It is indeed appropriate at this juncture to reconfirm our shared commitment to the cause of the Convention in a political declaration. We also welcome the decisions to be taken to further enhance the efficiency of the working structures of the Convention and to adapt them to tackle the current major challenges. Finally, Austria appreciates that the Maputo Action Plan sets a number of realistic, concrete, time-bound and measurable objectives, thereby opening a perspective for real progress in the years to come.

Thank you, Mr President.