

Universalisation

Mr. President

Thank you for giving me the floor,

Let me begin by congratulating you on the assumption of this important role at the Second Review Conference of the Cluster Munitions Convention and to commend you and your team on your very able stewardship of the Conference

Austria fully aligns itself with the Statement of the European Union **to be delivered later today.**

Let me offer a few additional remarks from a national perspective:

We commend the Presidency's efforts in moving forward with the Review Conference despite the difficult circumstances due to COVID 19 and all its implications. Hopefully we will be able to meet in person next February for the second part of the Conference to adopt substantive decisions.

Ten years after its entry into force, the Second Review Conference provides an opportunity to celebrate the great humanitarian successes of the Convention. No State Party has ever since used cluster munition. In cooperative collaboration between the now 110 States Parties, hundreds of km<sup>2</sup> of cluster munitions residues were cleared, thus saving lives and preventing further casualties. Victim assistance has given the framework for physical and psychological support to survivors. The impact of the prohibition norm goes beyond the States Parties. According to Cluster Munition Monitor, cluster munitions have been used in only seven countries since 2010.

This year Austria together with fellow Article 3 coordinator Australia focused on contributing to advancing stockpile destruction. Art.3 is a success story as well: just under 1.5 million cluster munitions, with 178 million submunitions have been destroyed by the states parties. Today, only

five countries are still in the process of implementing their treaty obligation to destroy their cluster munitions stockpiles.

Let me reiterate our deep concern about the humanitarian impact of the use of cluster munitions. The extensive use of cluster munitions in Syria, as well as uses in Yemen, Libya and most recently in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict are a matter of grave concern and unacceptable. As a State Party to the Cluster Munitions Convention Austria condemns the use of these horrendous weapons by anyone anywhere.

Universalisation will be key for ending the human suffering and harm caused by cluster munition. We therefore warmly welcome the four States, São Tomé and Príncipe, Niue, the Maldives, and St. Lucia who recently joined the Convention. In Dubrovnik we have set ourselves the ambitious goal of 130 States Parties by 2020, a target we are yet to meet, as we have now reached 110 State Parties to the Convention.

To conclude, we strongly encourage States Parties to fulfil their time bound obligations under the Convention as well as their financial obligations in full and on time. We express our appreciation for partners in the front line like the United Nations entities, the ICRC, the GICHD, mine action operators and civil society.

Thank you, Mr President