Statement Austria

Other Weapons of Mass Destruction

Mr. Chair,

Austria fully aligns itself with the EU Statement.

Austria condemns in the strongest terms any use of weapons of mass destruction. Over recent years, an appalling re-emergence of chemical weapons was documented. The repeated use of chemical weapons seen in Syria, Malaysia but also on the territory of an EU Member State, the UK, is not acceptable and has to be condemned in the strongest terms.

We have committed ourselves to get rid of chemical weapons. As one of three treaties prohibiting weapons of mass destruction, the Chemical Weapons Convention is a key component of the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime. The recent violations of the non-proliferation and disarmament commitments undertaken under the Chemical Weapons Convention are of utmost concern.

There cannot be impunity on the use of these abhorrent weapons. Action has to follow. Austria has therefore supported the OPCW CSP’s decision in June for the establishment of an attribution mechanism. It is essential that the OPCW - based on facts - can also determine who is responsible for the use of chemical weapons. Especially as the OPCW-UN Joint-Investigation Mechanism (JIM) could not continue its work.

Based on our commitment to the rule of law, Austria has joined the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons. This, as well as the EU Sanctions Regime against the use of chemical weapons, is directed against those who commit such awful crimes. Perpetrators have to be brought to justice.

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention was the first Convention banning an entire category of weapons in 1972. The establishment of the meeting of experts has been an important step to contribute to the effectiveness of the Convention and we are looking forward to continuing this expert-level work over the next years.
Mr. Chair,

Austria is concerned about development and modernization of delivery systems related to weapons of mass destruction and in particular the pursuit by several countries of concern of ballistic missiles programmes. As these advances are an important element in the global efforts to outlaw weapons of mass destruction, these programmes should be carefully addressed on bilateral but also multilateral level.

The Hague Code of Conduct serves as an important multilateral transparency and confidence-building instrument in this regard. We encourage all states to join the Code and support this politically binding measure. Austria will continue to act as the secretariat of this vital mechanism.

The only guarantee for non-use is the elimination of all classes of weapons of mass destruction. Therefore disarmament of weapons of mass destruction - be it nuclear, biological or chemical - has always been a priority of Austria. The full destruction of declared chemical weapons stockpiles, which is expected to be finished in the next few years, serves as a milestone. We have to continue on this path.

I thank you.