Mr. President,

Austria aligns itself with the EU Statement in the general debate that also referenced the importance of Protocol III. In a national capacity we wish to underline the following points of particular concern to my delegation.

Austria is among the 115 High Contracting Parties that have given consent to be bound by Protocol III. Incendiary weapons are primarily designed to set fire to objects or to cause burn injury to persons through the action of flame, heat, or combination thereof, produced by a chemical reaction of a substance delivered on the target.

Austria reaffirms the importance of Protocol III and its provisions and calls for their full implementation by all High Contracting Parties to the Protocol. Austria wishes to reiterate that under article 2 of the protocol it is prohibited in all circumstances to make the civilian population as such, individual civilians or civilian objects the object of attack by incendiary weapons and that it is prohibited in all circumstances to make any military objective located within a concentration of civilians the object of attack by air-delivered incendiary weapons.

Austria is among the many countries that are deeply concerned about the humanitarian impact caused by the use incendiary weapons and in particular the unacceptable suffering these weapons inflicted. Our concern is aggravated by reports in recent years of use of incendiary weapons in populated areas. We strongly condemn the use of incendiary weapons, in particular against civilians or civilian objects, and any other use incompatible with the relevant rules of international humanitarian law, including the provisions of Protocol III. We would welcome reflection of these concerns in the report of the Meeting of High Contracting Parties.

We urge all High Contracting Parties that have not yet done so to join Protocol III. My country continues to see value in strengthening Protocol III in order to prevent the insidious harm caused by these weapons. We support keeping the issue under review and thus a structured debate on the implementation of Protocol III under a separate agenda item.

I thank you.