



Convention on Cluster Munitions - Third Meeting of States Parties

Australia's Statement

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE

Australia is committed to efforts to enhance the availability of and effectiveness of cooperation and assistance in relation to all aspects of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Australia is tracking well against its pledge to commit \$100 million to mine action over the years 2010 to 2014 and is likely to exceed this commitment. Our support is benefitting many countries affected by cluster munitions including Laos, Lebanon, Cambodia, Afghanistan, the DRC and Iraq.

As we did not take the floor during the discussion on victim assistance, we would like to highlight that improving the quality of life for victims of ERW including cluster munitions continues to be a significant focus of Australia's mine action assistance. We are pleased to advise that over 20 per cent of funding under our mine action strategy has been attributed to victim assistance initiatives. Given the significant challenges facing victims, Australia encourages States and donors to prioritise victim assistance.

Mr President

Australia is just past the mid-point of implementing its five-year Mine Action Strategy for the Australian aid program (2010 to 2014) and recently undertook a Mid-Term Review of the Strategy.

The Review found that the Strategy remains relevant and consistent with Australia's overall aid priorities and approach. The Review concluded that the Strategy is being successfully implemented and making good progress against its outcomes.

The Review made seventeen recommendations on issues around Australia's funding approach, geographic focus and future issues to consider in the next mine action strategy. We have commenced implementation against many recommendations and note that a number of recommendations will be useful in developing a future strategy.

Mr President

Our individual efforts will be more effective in achieving our common vision of a world free of cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war, if we work collectively in

strong and closely coordinated partnerships with affected States, implementing agencies and other donors.

In November 2011, Australia assumed the Chair of the Mine Action Support Group (MASG) and in this role is seeking to progress work that explores how our individual assistance efforts can be coordinated and applied to better assist States to address their mine action challenges and meet their Convention obligations.

The Mine Action Support Group has some thirty donor members and currently meets two times per year. Thanks to the generous funding support of the United Kingdom, the Mine Action Support Group is now assisted by a part-time Secretariat.

The Secretariat is currently undertaking two studies to progress the vision of the Mine Action Support Group of cooperating to achieve more effective and efficient mine action.

The first study is on ‘Mine Action Coordination and Partnerships’. The study maps donor interests and support to mine action and considers ways that the Mine Action Support Group may improve donor coordination and partnerships in mine action. The draft study will be refined by the Mine Action Support Group over the coming months.

The aim of the second study is to consider how the Mine Action Support Group may contribute to the “Completion Initiative” established by the United Nations, to effectively assist affected countries complete their mine action clearance.

We also note that the completion concept is relevant to stockpile destruction, mine risk education and that victim assistance will be an ongoing need for the life of victims their families and communities. The study suggests completion is best defined by the concerned country on the basis of their individual country contexts.

Although an affected country may meet its obligations under the APMBC or CCM, the study notes there may be an ongoing problem with ERW in many countries. The study recommended that in these cases, MASG members commitment to ‘completion’ should be linked to ensuring the affected government is willing and able to make credible commitments to assume responsibility for sustaining the operational capacity to deal with residual threats.

In developing a business case to attract support for ‘completion’ the study recommends that countries include a number of elements in their proposals including:

- Definition of completion as relevant to their country context;
- Clear performance targets;
- Implementation plans based on value-for-money considerations;
- Clear agreement on the level, organisation and governance of a long-term capacity to deal with any residual threats of ERW; and
- Financing mechanisms that provide incentives for success

This study also remains in draft form and will be refined by the MASG over the coming months in cooperation with the UN's completion initiative.

Under Australia's Chair, the MASG is also working to improve communication between members and other partners and to this end has set up a dedicated website to support the work of the MASG Group. The MASG website is hosted by the e-mine website and we thank the United Nations for its work in supporting this initiative.

We look forward to working with State Parties, UN agencies, implementing partners and other donors to assist States in meeting their obligations under the Convention.