



## **Convention on Cluster Munitions**

### **Second Meeting of States Parties**

#### **Victim Assistance**

#### **Australian Statement**

**15 September 2011**

Madam President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates

We wish to thank Austria for its work in victim assistance to date, and look forward to continuing our work in this area with Austria and Bosnia as the incoming Friends of the Chair on victim assistance.

Australia is honoured to have supported a publication on Victim Assistance which we believe will assist States to meet their obligations. The publication, called *Assisting Landmine and other Explosive Remnants of War Survivors in the Context of Disarmament, Disability and Development*, aims to facilitate improvements to the quality of life of survivors, the families of those killed or injured, and other persons with disabilities, through the integration of victim assistance into broader frameworks. Copies are available in the foyer just outside this room.

Prepared by the Implementation Support Unit of the Anti- Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the publication promotes coherence, closer cooperation, and efficiency in our collective efforts to implement relevant instruments of international humanitarian and human rights law.

Today, we have three different disarmament instruments: the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, along with Protocol V to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, all with a uniform approach on assisting victims and survivors of landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war.

It is clear that a determined and sustained effort is needed to ensure that these instruments deliver on their promise to victims and survivors. Affected states must have the political will and appropriate capacities to adequately address the rights and needs of victims.

States in a position to assist should ensure that the resources they provide build appropriate and sustainable capacities in affected States.

We must increase our collective efforts. Whether we work on disarmament, disability, or development, we must ensure coherence in our efforts to ensure sustainability and maximise the impact on the ground to promote the full inclusion and effective participation of all persons with disabilities, including victims in the social, cultural, economic and political life of their communities.

The publication *Assisting Landmine and other Explosive Remnants of War Survivors in the Context of Disarmament, Disability and Development* was written as a resource and a guide to implementing this strategic approach within all Conventions. It also encourages strengthening understanding and links between groups working on issues such as disability, inclusive development, human rights, and mine action.

Australia was pleased to support this publication and it is our sincere hope that it will make a positive contribution to improving the coherence and cooperation of our victim assistance efforts. The publication is available outside, as well as through the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention website and is being translated into French and Spanish. We encourage states to use it as a resource.

Madam President

Improving the quality of life for victims of landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war continues to be a significant focus of Australia's mine action assistance. In providing victim assistance support, Australia does not discriminate against or among victims, between cluster munitions victims and other victims of armed conflict and other persons with disabilities.

As a result, it can be difficult to separate out and identify in precise terms our specific support for victims of cluster munitions from support provided to victims of antipersonnel mines other explosive remnants of war.

That being said, we can advise delegates that since the first Meeting of State Parties, Australia has committed support to victim assistance which will benefit cluster munition affected countries through:

- \$4 million for the ICRC Special Fund for the Disabled to support rehabilitation services for persons with a disability, including victims; and
- \$2.5 million to the 2011 ICRC Special Mine Action Appeal for the preventative mine action program and the physical rehabilitation program for victims.

Australia also increasingly focuses on supporting people with a disability and has committed close to \$110 million in funding for disability programs since 2008.

Our mine action and disability inclusive development programs work closely to ensure both programs directly benefit survivors and people with a disability.

Madam President

Australia will continue to progressively and strategically assist cluster munition affected states in fulfilling their victim assistance obligations. We will do this by supporting specific victim assistance initiatives integrated into broader development frameworks to ensure that cluster munition victims have access to medical, social and public services on an equal basis with others in their communities.