



## **Convention on Cluster Munitions 9th Meeting of States Parties**

Geneva 2-4 September 2019

### **Australia – Comments on Victim Assistance**

Mr President

Australia provides victim assistance as part of its international cooperation and assistance to other States Parties. Australia supports integrating explosive hazard victim support through existing health services, in the spirit of the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. This approach brings victim assistance in line with best practice development assistance, and frees up resources for explosive hazard clearance.

As a State Party to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, Australia observes that there is significant overlap in the commitments under all three conventions regarding the provision of assistance to victims. This has been forefront in our activities to promote an integrated approach to victim assistance.

Australia encourages all states to consider integrating victim assistance into broader health and disability policies, whilst at the same time ensuring that the specific needs of victims continue to be met within their lifetimes.

Clearly however, Mr President, circumstances remain where host Governments may be unable to provide victim assistance through health and disability services, particularly in humanitarian situations. In these cases, it is necessary that victim assistance is provided through those organisations with the specialist skills to do so.

For example, Australia provided 8 million Australian dollars last year to UNMAS in Syria to deliver explosive hazards risk education and provide victim assistance for survivors and their families. Among other vital humanitarian assistance measures, a further two million dollars was provided to international humanitarian organisations to support survivors, including by providing prosthetics and physical therapy.

In this way, Australia is demonstrating its commitment to Victim Assistance under the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Thank you Mr President.