



AUSTRALIA

**Dublin Diplomatic Conference
On Cluster Munitions**

General Statement

**Caroline Millar
Ambassador for Disarmament
Permanent Representative to the United Nations**

18 May 2008

Mr Chairman

The Australian Government truly believes that the time has come for the international community to address the impact of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable humanitarian harm. And so Australia is pleased to join states representing the majority of the international community in these negotiations to agree the text of a legally binding instrument.

Australia's determination to act is grounded in a long-standing commitment to addressing the impact of explosive remnants of war, in particular in our region. The burden of cluster munition remnants, landmines and other types of ERW, has fallen heaviest on their immediate victims, their families and communities. And the severity of the ERW presence in South East Asia has in some cases undercut national socio-economic development.

Our meeting here is an opportunity to help address these consequences and to provide the basis for a better future for those people affected by cluster munitions. In doing so, we should ensure our efforts contribute to and strengthen, rather than parallel, existing global humanitarian effort to assist victims of ERW, including cluster munitions.

Mr Chairman

The cause of the Oslo Process will be best met by a Convention that is focused sharply on its core humanitarian objective. In our deliberations here, we should be careful to ensure that this humanitarian objective remains our touchstone for action.

We need to ensure that our focus on one aspect of humanitarian action does not undermine complementary approaches.

Cooperation, including interoperability, between nations through peace-keeping and peace-enforcement, including in operations with states that may not be party to this Convention, is a fundamental pillar of international security. Australia firmly believes that we can protect this pillar, while meeting the humanitarian objective of the Oslo Process, through amendments to the draft text.

Our humanitarian objective will also be best served by a clear focus on those cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm. We should adopt a discerning approach to our negotiations that focuses on these munitions, while excluding those that do not fall within this scope.

And we should ensure adequate provisions to enable States to cater for training of personnel to address cluster munition threats during and after their use.

Mr Chairman

Australia recognises that there are other issues that still remain to be resolved after several meetings of the Oslo Process – as well as many that we have all but agreed. Many of these outstanding issues are complex, but Australia firmly believes that they are resolvable.

For if nothing else, in their association with the Wellington Declaration, states have shown a clear commitment to the humanitarian cause of the Oslo Process.

And if all states take a pragmatic, flexible and focused approach, Australia is confident that the Dublin Diplomatic Conference will deliver a treaty that will ban once and for all those cluster munitions that cause unacceptable humanitarian harm.