



Convention on Cluster Munitions

Third Meeting of States Parties

CLEARANCE AND RISK REDUCTION

Australia Statement

Mr President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates

Australia thanks Ireland and Laos for their leadership on clearance and risk reduction, and for their preparations for today's meeting. We offer them our full support.

Australia welcomes the progress made by many States in undertaking clearance. The clearance obligations of the Convention clearly provide considerable humanitarian and developmental benefits.

Although the main responsibility for achieving obligations under Article 4 rests with national governments, Australia is fully committed to fulfilling our obligations under the Convention with respect to cooperation and assistance.

Clearance of cluster munition remnants will be challenging for many States, particularly due to the danger, cost and technical capacities required to survey, detect, clear and destroy cluster munition remnants.

Australia's support towards reducing the risk of civilian exposure to cluster munition remnants is aimed at helping ensure clearance is undertaken in the safest and most efficient manner possible. Australia encourages States to share the challenges and experiences they have in clearing cluster munition remnants. It is important that we build our collective knowledge and experiences to help overcome the operational obstacles which constrain some States in implementing Article 4.

The full range of available measures to identify and remove the contamination of cluster munition remnants should be used for the effective implementation of Article 4 obligations. Reporting by States of their clearances activities helps ensure that future efforts are suitably targeted and tailored. Clear reporting by States of the contamination challenges is an important element in the process of attracting the resources required to meet Article 4 obligations.

Through the mine action strategy for the Australian aid program, Australia has committed \$100 million over 2010 to 2014 to reduce the threat and socioeconomic impact of

explosive remnants of war including cluster munitions. Reducing the risk of death or injury to people living in affected areas is a key objective of the strategy. Since 2010, Australia has contributed \$69 million to clearance and risk education activities which has benefitted a number of countries affected by cluster munitions including Laos, Cambodia, Lebanon, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Australia's assistance is directed to identifying and clearing contaminated lands that affect civilians, and providing risk education and risk reduction support. Australia's assistance for mine risk education is typically carried out in coordination with mine clearance activities and depending on the particular context and circumstances of contamination covers all aspects of the risks related to cluster munitions, mines and other explosive remnants of war.

In countries facing long-term clearance challenges, Australia seeks to support the national mine action program including to build capacity for a nationally led and delivered mine action program. We seek to ensure that the mine clearance programs we support results in positive developmental impacts by linking mine action with broader development programs.

Finally, Mr President, we will continue to encourage affected State Parties to implement their Article 4 obligations and commitments under the Vientiane Action Plan. Australia will also continue to offer its support for clearance and risk education programs within the framework of our Mine Action Strategy.

Thank you