

Convention on Cluster Munitions

General Exchange of Views

Statement by Australia

- . Mr President, we congratulate you on your appointment and thank you for your warm and generous hospitality. We offer you our full support and cooperation.

- . Australia has maintained a steadfast commitment to this Convention recognizing that the work of the Convention saves and rebuilds lives and enables socio-economic development.

- . Since we joined the Convention, Australia has provided over \$120 million to reduce the threat and socioeconomic impact of cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war.
 - We have sought to alleviate the devastating impacts of these weapons with a focus on our own region.
 - Australia has also provided support for promotion and advocacy of the Convention and in this regard acknowledges the ongoing commitment and work of the Cluster Munition Coalition and its partner civil society organisations.
 - We are pleased to have supported two CMC representatives from Asia to attend this meeting.
 - Australia recognizes the advocacy and monitoring efforts of the CMC including in producing the annual Cluster Munition Monitor.

- . One of the major elements of the 2014 Cluster Munition Monitor is the recent reported use of cluster munitions in Syria, South Sudan and Ukraine.
 - This reported use defies the growing international norm established by the Convention.
 - It also underlines the need for all states to become a party to the Convention to end for all time the suffering and casualties caused by these indiscriminate weapons.
 - Australia urges all parties to the conflicts in Syria, South Sudan, Ukraine, or elsewhere, to refrain from using cluster munitions.

Mr President

- Australia's new development policy, released a few weeks ago introduces key shifts in our aid program reflecting both our national interests and the changed context in which our aid program operates.

- The Australian Government's aid program will promote prosperity, reduce

poverty and enhance stability with a strengthened focus on our region, the Indo-Pacific.

- We will deliver aid in a way that reinforces the responsibility of partner governments to plan and fund their own economic development and poverty reduction strategies.
- . Within the framework of our new development policy, Australia is considering how best to direct our future mine action assistance.
 - This will be informed by an independent evaluation of the *Mine Action Strategy for the Australian aid program* planned for the later part of 2014.
 - We expect to position our future mine action assistance to continue to make a real and measurable contribution to improving socio-economic conditions amongst the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in our region. We also expect our mine action assistance will continue to progress the work of this Convention and related instruments of international humanitarian law.

Mr President

- . This week we must look ahead to the key implementation challenges that need to be addressed as we move closer towards the First Review Conference
 - : States parties need to ensure we maintain the momentum on stockpile destruction and step up efforts to prioritise clearance and risk reduction within national development plans, particularly where it will reduce casualties, enhance livelihoods, or promote peace and security.
 - : The challenges to ensuring the effective reach and sustainability of assistance to victims are not new, but we need to find more practical ways, of supporting States parties and civil society organisations in providing victim assistance.
 - We welcome our newest State Parties, Belize and Republic of Congo and urge all States parties to pursue all avenues to promote the Convention.
 - It is a concern that the rate of the submission of transparency reports continues to drop.
 - : States parties need to consider how to reinvigorate the reporting system to ensure it better enables States parties to monitor progress on implementation, and be used as a tool to match assistance needs and opportunities for cooperation.
 - We look forward to a fully functioning Implementation Support Unit (ISU) in time for the first Review Conference in 2015.

- We thank Zambia in its Presidency in concluding agreement with the GICHD for hosting of the ISU.
- Finally Mr President we look forward to working with state parties to support both the President and President-designate, for productive discussions at the First Review Conference.

Thank you.