

Convention on Cluster Munitions 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties

Victim Assistance

Statement of Australia

Australia thanks the Coordinators on Victim Assistance – Chile and Italy – for their work over the past year to assist States Parties in the fulfilment of their commitments related to victim assistance under the Dubrovnik Action Plan. We welcome the report of the Coordinators on progress in implementing these elements of the Action Plan, and identification of the good practices and challenges faced by States Parties in implementing Article 5 of the Convention on victim assistance.

We note and support the Coordinators' observations regarding good practices and challenges in relation to national legal and regulatory frameworks, data collection, national coordination, effective provision of services and socio-economic reintegration.

We also welcome the Coordinators' efforts to continue to improve the level of coordination on victim assistance with the victim assistance committees of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

Australia considers cross-convention coordination on victim assistance to be of critical importance. Victims – both survivors and indirect victims - of cluster munitions, landmines and other ERW all have the same rights and similar needs for care, rehabilitation, and social inclusion. The efforts we make to support the rights and meet the needs of victims need to occur no matter which weapon caused the suffering. There are

considerable advantages to developing common approaches to the provision of victim assistance.

We welcome the Coordinators' assessments that highly developed legal and regulatory systems have been put in place to address victims' needs in a comprehensive manner, that States parties continue to report integration of victim assistance efforts with the disability sector, and that non-discriminatory service provision based on the evaluation of specific needs remains a challenge.

In order to ensure sustainable support for victims, it is essential to realize victim assistance obligations in a non-discriminatory manner both through specific initiatives, and also through broader development, human rights, and humanitarian efforts under national plans, policies and frameworks. This dual approach to victim assistance, involving both specific and broader efforts, is referred to as an integrated approach to victim assistance.

Australia is contributing AUD600,000 over three years to support Handicap International's work supporting states' efforts to implement an integrated approach to victim assistance.

That funding enabled Handicap International to support the development by Australia, together with Chile, Italy, Iraq and Austria, of the Guidance on an Integrated Approach to Victim Assistance. The Guidance was launched at the 2016 Meeting of States Parties of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in recognition that cooperation in victim assistance is necessary across conventions.

This Guidance highlights good practices and national examples. It demonstrates that an integrated approach is feasible. It shows how an integrated approach is being implemented in practice by some affected and donor States. We commend this Guidance as a useful tool for States Parties to this and other conventions. It can be downloaded from the CCM ISU website.

In addition, Australia continues to support the provision of assistance to victims of landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war through a number of other global and bilateral initiatives.

We are providing AUD1.9 million over three years to the ICRC's MoveAbility program. This contribution is funding MoveAbility's work rehabilitating persons with disabilities, including cluster munitions and other ERW survivors, in 32 rehabilitation centres and prosthetic and orthotic schools across 14 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. We also contributed AUD500,000 to the ICRC's Special Appeal on Disability and Mine Action in 2016.

In Cambodia, we have contributed AUD2.5 million to the Disability Rights Initiative Cambodia, which is administered by the UNDP, WHO and UNICEF. The initiative is improving the lives of persons with disabilities, including cluster munitions and ERW survivors.

Australia looks forward to continuing working with others, both inside and outside this Convention, to provide non-discriminatory and sustainable assistance that improves the quality of life and upholds the rights of all victims.