

Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) Intersessional Meeting

VICTIM ASSISTANCE

Statement of Australia

16 April 2013

Thank you Mr Coordinator

Australia appreciates the work undertaken by Bosnia & Herzegovina and Afghanistan in the area of victim assistance. We offer them our full support.

Improving the quality of life for victims of explosive remnants of war, including landmines and cluster munitions, continues to be a significant focus of Australia's mine action assistance. Through its mine action programs, Australia supports the victim assistance work of a range of countries including Afghanistan, Cambodia, Laos, Mozambique and Chad.

In providing victim assistance support, Australia does not discriminate against or among victims of cluster munitions, victims of other explosive remnants of war, or other persons with disabilities. It is therefore difficult to separate out and identify in precise terms our support for victims of cluster munitions from the support provided to victims of other ERW, such as antipersonnel landmines.

Nonetheless, over 20 per cent of Australia's mine action funding under its \$100 million mine action strategy has been attributed to victim assistance initiatives. This includes funding to support physical rehabilitation programs for victims and people with a disability through the ICRC Special Fund for the Disabled and the Special Mine Action Appeal.

Australia is also working to improve the reach and effectiveness of its development assistance by ensuring that people with disabilities are included in, contribute to, and benefit equally from development efforts. Funding for this work is expected to exceed \$140 million between 2008 and 2015 and includes around \$80 million for improving the quality of life for people with disabilities. An example of this work was provided in the technical workshop on cooperation and assistance which noted Australia's contribution to the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Australia will continue to advocate for greater linkages between victim assistance and disability-inclusive development, including under relevant humanitarian disarmament treaties and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. To this end, Australia's own mine action programs and disability-inclusive development programs work closely to ensure both programs are of benefit to survivors and people with a disability. We support both dedicated victim assistance and disability initiatives and are also seeking to mainstream disability inclusive development throughout Australia's aid program.

We will continue to progressively and strategically assist affected States in fulfilling their victim assistance obligations by supporting specific victim assistance initiatives that are integrated into broader development frameworks such as in the disability, health and social and economic sectors. As a donor we seek to ensure that our resources build appropriate and sustained capacities within affected States, in order to address the long-term challenges of victim assistance.

Thus, the integration of victim assistance and disability issues within an affected State's broader development planning is an important step in providing greater national and donor priority to the issues of victim assistance and disability and in attracting resourcing needed to build national capacities and sustain programs. We also endorse the comments made yesterday on the importance of raising and addressing victim assistance and disability in all relevant humanitarian, health, development and disarmament fora.

As a donor we look to our affected State partners to provide accurate information on their victim assistance and disability challenges and resource requirements and to provide effective national leadership and coordination of mine action. We thank State Parties and signatories for the efforts already made in this regard.

We look forward to working with State Parties, UN agencies, implementing partners and other donors to assist States in meeting their obligations under the Convention.

Thank you for your attention.