

## **Convention on Cluster Munitions**

### **Intersessional Meetings**

### **VICTIM ASSISTANCE**

#### **Statement by Australia**

28 June 2011

Statement delivered by Ms Christine Pahlman, Mine Action Coordinator, Australian Agency for International Development

Australia wishes to inform the meeting that improving the quality of life for victims of landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war continues to be a significant focus of Australia's mine action assistance.

In providing victim assistance support, Australia does not discriminate against or among victims, between cluster munitions victims and other victims of armed conflict and other persons with disabilities.

It is therefore difficult to separate out and identify in precise terms our support for victims of cluster munitions from support provided to victims of antipersonnel mines other explosive remnants of war.

This being so, we wish to advise that since the first meeting of state parties, Australia has committed support to victim assistance which will benefit cluster munition affected countries including through the following initiatives:

- A contribution of \$4 million over four years through the ICRC Special Fund for the Disabled to support rehabilitation services for persons with a disability, including victims.
- A contribution of \$2.5 million to the 2011 ICRC Special Mine Action Appeal for the preventative mine action program and the physical rehabilitation program for victims.
- In Afghanistan, \$20 million over four years to support victims, provide mine risk education and support community based demining activities

In addition to funding victim assistance work, Australia also increasingly focuses on supporting people with a disability. In November 2008, the Australian Government launched its strategy *Development for All, Towards a Disability Inclusive Aid Program*. The Strategy marks a significant change in the way Australia's aid is designed and delivered. Development for All is about improving the reach and effectiveness of development assistance by ensuring that people with disabilities are included in, contribute to and benefit equally from development efforts. Since launching *Development for All*, Australia has committed over \$109.3 million in funding for disability programs.

Australia's mine action program and disability inclusive development program work increasingly closely to ensure both programs are of benefit to survivors and people with a disability.

- For example, Australia's funding to the ICRC Special Fund for the Disabled (\$4 million over the four years 2011 to 2014) is drawn from our disability program budget and is being provided to assist with the physical rehabilitation of people with a disability (including mine victims including by targeting mine affected countries).

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.

We will also continue to progressively and strategically assist affected states in fulfilling their victim assistance obligations by supporting specific victim assistance initiatives that is integrated into broader development frameworks such as in the disability, health and social and economic sectors.

Thank you