

## **Convention on Cluster Munitions**

### **Intersessional Meetings**

#### **CLEARANCE AND RISK REDUCTION**

##### **Statement by Australia**

28 June 2011

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

We welcome the progress made by many States in undertaking clearance. Not only is clearance a core obligation of the Convention but it has considerable humanitarian and developmental benefits.

It is pleasing to hear that solid progress has been made or attention is being paid to contaminated areas, even where they are not large.

Many of the challenges surrounding clearance are well known and understood. In some cases it is now, primarily a matter of political will and application of national and international resources to completing clearance.

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

It is worth noting that like many donors and implementing operators, Australia takes a comprehensive approach to mine action and does not differentiate between action on mines, explosive remnants of war and cluster munitions.

Depending on the country context, it will continue to be difficult in some circumstances to distinguish the funding we provide for cluster munition clearance and risk education from that we provide for clearance of anti-personnel mines and other explosive remnants of war.

Since our last meeting at 1 MSP, I have the pleasure to advise that Australia has committed further funding for clearance of benefit to this Convention. This includes:

- In Laos, a further \$1.5 million through the Lao Unexploded Ordnance Trust Fund to clear unexploded ordnance.
  - This is in addition to the \$1 million announced at 1 MSP and demonstrates Australia's commitment to assisting a regional partner with the largest degree of cluster munition contamination in the world.
  - Australia has provided \$23.3 million to the UXO sector in Laos since 1996.

- In Lebanon, Australia has provided \$500,000 to the Mines Advisory Group and \$300,000 to the Norwegian Peoples Aid to clear cluster munitions.

In Afghanistan, through a \$20 million contribution to UNMAS and the Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan, funding for clearance and risk education for 405,000 people.

We will continue to support affected State Parties to implement their Article 4 obligations and commitments under the Vientiane Action Plan.