

## OFFICIAL

### Cluster Munitions 11<sup>th</sup> MSP

#### Australia - Intervention – International Cooperation and Assistance

President,

We commend the coordinators, Germany and Lebanon, for their efforts this year in encouraging States Parties to make known their need for international support, and to focus on using an evidence-based approach in their national plans.

Australia is a proud contributor to the CCM Implementation Support Unit and to the CCM Sponsorship Program and we provide direct assistance in a range of ways, with a particular focus on our region.

In July, at the request of the Government of Nauru, Australia rapidly deployed Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) technicians and health personnel under Operation RENDER SAFE. Our technicians successfully disarmed a sizeable piece of unexploded ordnance' which, had it exploded, could have caused catastrophic damage and significant loss of life. We returned to Nauru in August to conduct a reconnaissance mission ahead of future disposal of remnants of war.

Over the past 12 months, under Operation RENDER SAFE, we have provided assistance to Nauru, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu. I would like to highlight two examples.

Australia supported the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force through the provision of an embedded Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) advisor and operational funding. We delivered two training courses to the Police Force's EOD team to accredit UN International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) level 3. And we will support the Police Force to deliver an IMAS level 1 course to Papua New Guinea and Nauru in the near future.

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We also deployed a specialist Australian Defence Force team to Tuvalu to conduct maritime-based reconnaissance of explosive remnants of war for disposal earlier this year.

Australia has been a staunch supporter of civil society groups working to reduce the risks to civilian from unexploded ordnance. Earlier this year, we significantly elevated our commitment to the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) to support them over the next 4 years, especially for mine action work in our region.

In 2022, Australia contributed over 4.5 million Australian dollars to mine action. We supported the UNDP programs in Cambodia, Mine Action Group activities in Sri Lanka, and Association FSD France's work in the Philippines.

Australia remains committed to the international cooperation and assistance tenets of the treaty. Aside from the vital need to prevent casualties from unexploded ordnance, in a changing climate of more frequent severe weather events placing food security increasingly at risk, the importance of cleared, safe land for agricultural pursuits is paramount.

Thank you.

(398 words)