

Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention Intersessional Meetings, 8-9 June 2017

Statement of Australia on International Cooperation and Assistance

Australia thanks the Committee on International Cooperation and Assistance for its work to promote and implement the individualised approach to facilitate partnerships with individual countries to assist them to implement remaining obligations of the Convention in an effective and expedient way. This initiative has significant potential to better match the needs of affected states with donor states parties and thereby improve the level of cooperation and assistance under the Convention.

We welcome in this regard the event hosted by the Committee in the margins of these meetings on the Mine Action Programme of Sudan. We also encourage continued information sharing on the individualised approach between the Committee on Cooperation and Assistance of this Convention and the Presidency and Coordinators on Cooperation and Assistance of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which are working to implement a similar approach in the form of country coalitions. There are clear synergies between the two approaches, which can each be strengthened by lessons learned through implementation of the other.

Australia is committed to supporting the implementation of this Convention and other international action towards a world free of landmines and other explosive remnants of war.

Last year Australia's total expenditure on mine action was over USD 10 million.

Australia's has a three-pronged approach to providing support.

Australia funds international agencies working globally across all areas of mine action including in mine clearance, risk education and victim assistance including the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Handicap International.

Through bilateral programmes, we fund clearance work in affected countries. In June 2016 we contributed USD 3.7 million to UNMAS's humanitarian and stabilisation activities in Iraq. We have a five-year, USD 7 million project in Cambodia, building on a long partnership with that country's peak body for monitoring and coordinating mine action activities, the Cambodian Mine Action and Victims Assistance Authority (CMAA). We also support victim assistance efforts in Cambodia through support to the Disability Rights Initiative

Cambodia. This year we will complete a three-year USD 2 million project to clear unexploded ordnance in Palau.

Australia also supports the effective operation of the Convention through our role as sponsorship coordinator and an annual contribution of USD26,000 to the sponsorship programme. Australia extends its thanks to the other states parties that have contributed to the sponsorship programme.

The programme has enabled delegates from ten states to attend this meeting. We encourage states parties who are able to contribute to this programme to do so in order to facilitate the full participation of all states parties in the operation of the Convention.

Australia also makes an annual voluntary contribution of USD 100,000 to the Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit.

The challenge of identifying the needs of affected states parties and matching them to donors is a challenge for us all. Australia encourages a continuation of this important work. It is critical for the successful implementation of the Convention.