Australia: Statement on stockpile destruction (non-retention of mines for training)

Scheduled for the morning of Friday 22 May (but given rolling agenda may need to be delivered late in the afternoon of 20 May)

Venue: WMO

1. The Mine Ban Convention permits under Article 3 the retention of anti-personnel landmines for training purposes.

2. However, there is no agreement on what constitutes an appropriate number of anti-personnel landmines to retain for training.

3. When Australia signed the Mine Ban Convention, we considered 10,000 to be an acceptable limit on the number of mines to be retained for training purposes.

4. Australian Defence Force (ADF) doctrine in the 1990s – when the decision was made on the numbers of anti-personnel landmines to be retained for training purposes – was primarily focused on conventional conflicts in which anti-personnel landmines might be deployed in large numbers against the ADF.

5. However, the ADF’s focus in the past decade has been on current and continuing non-conventional operations in Afghanistan and elsewhere
   - Anti-personnel landmines have not been used for the purposes initially envisaged by ADF doctrine
   - the use of anti-personnel landmines for training purposes has been less than was anticipated in the late 1990s.

6. A review of anti-personnel landmines training and research stocks was conducted in both 2012 and 2013,
   - resulting in over 90 per cent of the stock being destroyed, including all 100 serviceable detonator assemblies.

7. The remaining bulk of Australia’s anti-personnel landmines stocks were destroyed in 2014 and 2015.

8. In our 2015 Mine Ban Convention Annual Report to the UN we stated that Australia had reduced its total number of retained anti-personnel landmines by 454 to just five.

9. The five remaining landmines were removed from training and research stocks, and destroyed in late November 2016.

10. Defence undertook a stocktake at the end of 2016, and verified that no live mines remained.

11. Australia no longer uses land mines for training and research purposes.

12. Training is now adequately supported by the use of replicas and inert mine stimulants.

13. We are pleased to be able to report that Australia no longer holds any anti-personnel landmines.