

**Statement by H.E. Ms Caroline Millar**  
**Ambassador for Disarmament**  
**Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations**  
President-Designate of the Seventh Meeting of States Parties of the  
Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of  
Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

12 May 2006

Mr Co-Chair

It is with honour that I take the floor as President-Designate of the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties to outline Australia's ideas for the meeting. Australia very much sees our Presidency as an extension of our long-standing commitment to this Convention.

As states parties we have a lot to celebrate. As we have heard this week, we are making good progress toward fulfilling the obligations and aims of our treaty.

But we are moving into a more difficult phase. States parties must act decisively to address looming mine-clearance deadlines and the needs of survivors, and to realise the treaty's universalisation.

Australia aims to build on the success of our meeting in Zagreb to ensure an effective meeting of states parties in September. As a first step, we will reorder the agenda to reflect the pressing implementation challenges facing the Convention. A revised draft of this agenda has been distributed to you today.

We also want states parties to focus on what they have done since Zagreb and on the measures we can pursue in the year ahead to help ensure we implement the Convention's obligations and the Nairobi Action Plan in full.

As President-Designate, I encourage delegations to take an analytical approach to their interventions. By all means, report your successes – and your shortcomings.

But help others learn from your experience by explaining how and why these measures did or did not work.

We see such an approach as being particularly important to our discussion of mine clearance, on which we propose to hold two sessions.

First, we will focus a plenary session on the measures each of us is pursuing to ensure states parties meet their mine clearance obligations. The experiences of states that have completed their article five obligations, and those of practitioners working in the field, will be vital to ensuring the value of this exchange. And we encourage mine-affected states to distribute their mine-clearance plans to the meeting.

Secondly, we listened carefully to the debate on mine clearance extensions yesterday. I should like to thank the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education and Mine Action Technologies for their paper which makes a

constructive contribution to the debate. Clearly, this is a vital issue and we shall hold further consultations. At the Meeting of States Parties we shall dedicate an informal session to this issue. We hope that informality will yield an interactive and concrete exchange. And should states parties wish to take decisions stemming from this discussion, we shall reconvene in plenary.

On victim assistance, we want to facilitate further progress on states parties' planning and implementation of effective measures to address survivors' needs. We need to consider a wide range of issues in this session, encompassing immediate medical aid to victims as well as their longer term socio-economic rehabilitation needs.

Our meeting in September will be a good opportunity to welcome our newest states parties. As past Presidents have done, Australia shall develop a strategy for promoting universalisation of this treaty during our Presidency. We shall share our proposals with you and will encourage you all to contribute to this vital work.

Of course, there are many other aspects of the treaty we shall discuss in September. And we will work closely with the co-Chairs of the Standing Committees to build on their work on these and other issues since Zagreb.

In keeping with our aim to get down to business, we will encourage delegations to refrain from delivering general statements. But I think we would all agree that we should make an exception for those states newly acceded to the Convention. For this will be their first opportunity to speak formally as states parties.

Other delegations should feel free to circulate general statements or fact sheets about their efforts to implement the treaty in hardcopy through the Secretariat.

Australia will produce a focused 'Geneva 2006 Progress Report'. The report will capture implementation progress since Zagreb. And it will set out priorities for the coming year.

To ensure timely production of the report, Australia proposes to hold open informal consultations on a draft on 17 July. We shall advise you in due course of the time and place for this meeting.

In conclusion, I look forward to working cooperatively with all states parties, the ICBL, and key international organisations in the run up to the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties and throughout our presidency.

It is our hope that through such cooperation we shall all bring our treaty closer to its full and effective implementation and universalisation.