

Universalisation of the Mine Ban Convention

As President-Designate, Australia places particular emphasis on encouraging universalisation of the Mine Ban Convention.

In this context, Australia joins others in welcoming the decision of Ukraine, Haiti, and in our own region, Brunei Darussalam and the Cook Islands, to ratify the Convention.

We are working actively to promote universalisation within the Asia-Pacific region. Australia is currently supporting a number of regional activities that focus on advocating the Convention.

For example:

Australia has sponsored the translation of a Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining publication into Chinese, Lao and Vietnamese. 'Developing Mine Action Legislation: A Guide' is a practical guide which details legislative and administrative processes required to coordinate and regulate mine action activities in mine-affected States. We are currently discussing with GICHD proposals for in-country launches in each of these languages.

Australia is supporting the Australian Network - International Campaign to Ban Landmines to continue landmine advocacy work through the Program to Promote and Advocate the Ottawa Convention in South East Asia (SEAP II). This is the second phase of a two-year program building on the success of an earlier phase (SEAP I). The objective of this program is to encourage governments of South East Asia and the Pacific Region, who are not signatories to the Mine Ban Convention, to accede to it.

Finally, as part of Australia's new five-year \$75 million commitment to mine action, which represents a significant increase on our original pledge, we are currently finalising a new Mine Action Strategy for Australia's aid program. The strategy focuses on the five pillars of mine action, including advocating the worldwide implementation of the Convention. It also includes support for the work of international organisations such as Geneva Call in encouraging non-state actors to adhere to the principles of the Mine Ban Convention.

Australia looks forward to working with all states parties in the lead up and at the 7th Meeting of States Parties.