



## **Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention**

### **Twelfth Meeting of States Parties**

#### **Clearing mined areas**

#### **Statement by Australia**

**5 December 2012**

Statement delivered by Ms Namdi Payne, Second Secretary, Australian Mission to the UN, Geneva

Mr President

Australia would like to congratulate Guinea Bissau, Jordan, Uganda, Denmark and Republic of Congo in completing their mine clearance obligations during 2012. We are pleased to have contributed to this achievement in Guinea Bissau, Jordan and Uganda.

We also welcome progress made by many other affected States Parties towards their Article 5 clearance obligations.

While primary responsibility for mine clearance rests with national governments, Australia is fortunate to be in a position to assist numerous countries with their clearance obligations.

At the Second Review Conference in 2009, Australia committed \$100 million to mine action funding over the period 2010 to 2014.

Since the beginning of 2010, Australia has provided over \$70 million for mine clearance across 19 countries.

This support reflects our integrated and comprehensive approach to mine action, which to the extent possible includes clearance, risk education and facilitating the return of contaminated land to productive civilian use.

Part of Australia's effort has been focusing on supporting countries to complete their Article 5 obligations. In 2012, we directed further resources to assist Uganda become mine free and in so doing avoid the need for an extension request.

We are also one of several donors supporting Mozambique's efforts to meet its Article 5 declaration by 2014. Since the beginning of 2012, we have committed \$3.5 million for this purpose.

We urge others States and donors in a position to assist to consider supporting countries such as Mozambique that have a well-developed and coordinated plan to meet their clearance deadlines.

Mr President

In order to effectively direct our assistance, we urge affected countries to commit to addressing the problem by ratifying the Convention and identifying and prioritising mine action within their national development plans and national budgets.

We look to affected governments to provide national leadership and coordination of their mine action programs.

We also urge affected countries to provide accurate information on the extent of their territory contaminated by landmines and the resources required to address the problem.

Australia continues to encourage all affected States to intensify their efforts to identify all remaining mined areas and conduct mine clearance as rapidly as possible given the risks that mined areas pose for civilian populations and the constraints that mined areas impose on development.

Clearance of landmines should be given priority in national development plans where it has a high potential to reduce casualties, enhance livelihoods, reduce poverty and vulnerability or promote peace and security.

Affected communities should also be involved in the process of prioritising areas for mine clearance, handing cleared land back to the communities, and planning development and poverty reduction activities after clearance.

Australia supports the provision of assistance for mine risk education that is carried out in coordination with mine clearance activities and includes appropriate community consultation.

In accordance with the Cartagena Action Plan, we call on States Parties to complete their mine clearance as soon as possible, especially those that have been granted extension requests.