

# Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

## 16th Meeting of States Parties

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### Statement of Australia on Victim Assistance

Australia remains committed to providing assistance to victims in recognition of the lasting impact of mines on individuals, their families and communities.

We extend our thanks to the Committee on Victim Assistance for its work in supporting States Parties to provide such assistance. In particular, we note the efforts taken to engage with disability and human rights organisations to the benefit of the convention.

Australia is pleased that the Committee has met with the Coordinators of Victim Assistance of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

We believe there is much to be gained by harmonising effort under these conventions and the Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons on the basis that:

- victims – both survivors and indirect victims - of landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war all have the same rights and similar needs with regard to care, rehabilitation, and social inclusion;
- the efforts we, as States Parties, make to recognise these rights and meet these needs are therefore complementary, regardless of which convention we are working within; and

- consequently, it is likely to be advantageous and efficient, to develop common approaches to victim assistance across conventions.

We welcome the increased recognition of the synergies between the Conventions on the critical work of providing victim assistance.

In recognition of the needs of victims and our obligations under this Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, Australia provides assistance to victims of landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war, and supports affected states to improve their delivery of victim assistance.

We have committed \$1.9 million over three years to the International Committee of the Red Cross's MoveAbility Fund. This contribution will fund work in 14 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America where the Fund operates 32 rehabilitation centres and prosthetic and orthotic schools, enabling thousands of people with disabilities, including mine incident survivors to regain their mobility and independence.

And Australia contributed \$500,000 to the International Committee for the Red Cross's 2016 Special Appeal for Disability and Mine Action. This appeal provides assistance to persons with disabilities, including survivors of conflict, violence and of mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war.

We also have a five-year, \$9 million project in Cambodia, which supports the Cambodian Mine Action and Victims Assistance Authority (CMAA), and we contributed \$2.5 million to the Disability Rights Initiative Cambodia in 2016.

We understand that, in order to ensure sustainable support for victims, it is essential to realize victim assistance obligations in a non-discriminatory manner through specific initiatives, as well as through broader development, human rights, and humanitarian efforts under national plans, policies and frameworks. This dual approach to victim assistance, involving both specific and broader efforts, represents an integrated approach to victim assistance.

Recognising the importance of integration, we are contributing \$600,000 over three years to support Handicap International's work supporting states' efforts to implement an integrated approach to victim assistance.

This funding has enabled Handicap International to support the development by Australia, together with Chile, Italy, Iraq and Austria, of the Guidance on an Integrated Approach to Victim Assistance launched in 2016.

This Guidance highlights good practices and national examples that demonstrate that an integrated approach is feasible and how it is being implemented in practice by some affected and donor States. We hope this Guidance will be a useful tool for States Parties to this convention, the Cluster Munitions Convention and Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in our joint efforts to provide non-discriminatory and sustainable assistance that improves the quality of life and uphold the rights of victims.

We take this opportunity to again commend to you this Guidance and underscore Australia's support for its implementation.