

**Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
17th Meeting of States Parties**

**Agenda Item 7: General Exchange of Views
26 November 2018**

General Statement - Australia

Mdm President

Australia extends its appreciation to you and your team for your excellent preparatory work in advance of this meeting. You can be assured of our support.

We also extend our gratitude the **Implementation Support Unit** and to all Committee Members engaged in promoting the Convention of behalf of all States Parties.

Australia congratulates the **International Campaign to Ban Landmines** for producing Landmine Monitor 2018 – a publication that examines progress towards a mine-free world. We are pleased that the Campaign concluded that between October 2017 and October 2018, there have been no allegations of the use of anti-personnel mines by States Parties to the Convention.

Australia would like also to acknowledge a new book entitled “**In Search of Safe Ground in the Pacific**” that was produced by SafeGround. That book was launched on 19 November. The book examines challenges posed by ERW in Palau and the Solomon Islands following the Second World War. It recommends a non-technical survey of all ERW- contaminated Pacific Island nations, followed by systematic clearance work.

Mdm President

Australia remains firmly committed to supporting international action towards the goal of world free of landmines by 2025.

We acknowledge that a lot has been achieved over the last twenty-one years – i.e. since the adoption of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Unfortunately, anti-personnel mines continue to be used, particularly by non-state actors. Much remains to be done to eliminate the scourge of landmines and other explosive remnants of war.

Mdm President

The **Australian Defence Forces** has made an important contribution to global humanitarian demining efforts through an initiative called **Operation Render Safe**, which together with other defence partners, removes Second World War explosive remnants of war in the South West Pacific. I am pleased to say that planning is currently underway for the next iteration of Operation Render Safe to take place in 2019.

Mdm President

Finally, Mdm President, Australia believes that it is important to apply a gender lens on mine action. The regrettable truth is that women and girls are often as much at risk of violence from landmines and other forms of explosive remnants of war. Australia regards the work it does in promoting the Convention as making an important and positive contribution to eliminating violence against women and girls. We encourage other States Parties to adopt a similar approach. Australia reaffirms its commitment to this objective against the backdrop of the *International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and 16 Days of Activism*, which commenced on 25 November.

Thank you Madam President.