

## **Mine Ban Convention: Eighth Meeting of States Parties**

**Intervention by H.E. Ms Caroline Millar  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations  
in Geneva**

**Sunday, 18 November 2007**

### **Universalisation**

Mr President

Australia is committed to efforts to universalise the Mine Ban Convention. Global adherence to the Convention is essential to realising full implementation of its humanitarian and disarmament goals.

We warmly welcome the five states which have joined the Convention - Montenegro, Indonesia, Kuwait, Iraq and today Palau.

We also welcome observer states to this meeting. We encourage these states to proceed towards accession or ratification as speedily as possible and would be pleased to offer assistance in this regard.

Mr President

As President of the 7MSP, Australia issued an *Action Plan to Universalise and Implement the Mine Ban Convention*. The plan set out a series of commitments to promote the Convention bilaterally, regionally and multilaterally.

Australia has taken concrete action in respect of each of the points in this Action Plan.

I mentioned some of these at the outset of this meeting and set them out in more detail here.

Mr President

As President of the 7MSP, I wrote to all state not parties in April 2007 encouraging ratification or accession to the Convention without delay.

Australia conducted bilateral outreach to each remaining signatory state, including through a visit by Australia's Special Representative for Mine Action to Warsaw in September 2006, urging these states to proceed swiftly to ratification.

Australia has placed great emphasis on conducting outreach on the Convention during the UN General Assembly's First Committee, which provides a ready audience of both states parties and states not parties.

At the First Committee in 2006, I gave a presentation to New York-based disarmament delegations on the work of the Convention and the outcomes of the 7MSP. The presentation was attended by a number of states not parties.

I also held bilateral meetings with states parties not represented in Geneva, who are facing implementation challenges. As a result of these meetings, one of the states submitted its initial transparency report. In addition, I held bilateral meetings with various states not parties in the Pacific region.

At the First Committee in 2007, with the assistance of its Chairman, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the UN Mine Action Service and the GICHD, Australia organised an expert panel discussion during the plenary session to mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mine Ban Convention. The speakers addressed various aspects of the Convention, including the lack of military utility, clearance and victim assistance.

This was the first time a non-UN Convention was given such profile in the First Committee and provided a valuable opportunity to engage states not parties on the work and achievements of the Convention.

Australia has for the past two years authored and promoted the First Committee resolution on the Convention. I am pleased that this Convention continues to attract an overwhelming positive vote and that no votes against the Convention have been recorded in the past two years. Two states have also changed their vote to support the resolution.

Mr President

Australia has actively promoted universalisation in the Asia-Pacific region, which remains under-represented in the Convention.

Australia and Vanuatu jointly convened a workshop for Pacific countries in May 2007 to advance universalisation and implementation of the Convention.

And Australia will shortly hold, together with Canada and Indonesia, a workshop on the Convention for South-East Asian countries in Bali.

Australia also provides funding for universalisation and advocacy activities by civil society. In the 2006/2007 financial year, we provided funding to ICBL for the 2007 Landmine Monitor Report as well as its Universalisation Strategy in Asia.

Australia has also provided funding to the Convention's Sponsorship Program, which is vital in ensuring the participation of key affected states in the Convention's processes. The Program also provides a useful universalisation role by encouraging states not parties to attend as observers.

In undertaking this universalisation work, Australia was greatly assisted by the provision of practical advice, expert information and moral support from a number of states parties, international organisations and NGOs, most notably, the ICRC, the ICBL, the GICHD, UNMAS, ODA and the ISU.

Mr President

Though Australia has now ended its presidency, we remain committed to universalisation efforts. Our work in this regard will focus on our own region, but we will also continue to promote the Convention in universal and regional settings.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Jordan and you, Mr President, for the outstanding work already undertaken in your own region to advance universalisation of the Convention.

I look forward to working closely with Jordan, all states parties and civil society to advocate further global adherence to the Convention.