



Eighteenth Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Geneva, 16-20 November 2020 (virtual meeting)

Australian Intervention on Cooperation and Assistance

Mr President,

International cooperation and assistance are vital to our efforts to support our collective aspirations for a world free of landmines and implementation of the Oslo Action Plan. Australia considers clearing of mines – including improvised mines – to be a humanitarian imperative for the successful distribution of aid and safe return home of thousands of displaced people. We also support efforts by states parties to pursue work on stockpile management and victim assistance and encourage cooperation in capacity building and establishing and sharing of best practice.

Mr President,

In recent times, Australia has provided more than \$15.5 million for explosive hazard reduction and victim assistance activities. This includes:

- UXO risk education and clearance activities in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Iraq, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Syria;
- Victim assistance in Myanmar and Syria;
- Support to global mine action, advocacy, coordination and research organisations, including the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, United Nations Mine Action Service, United Nations Development Program, Humanity and Inclusion, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, Mines Action Canada among others.

In addition, between 2015 and 2019, Australia has invested more than \$115 million to equip elements of the Afghanistan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF) with over 224,000 improvised explosive device (IED) electronic counter measure units. We will provide an additional 15,000 units in 2020.

Mr President,

In the health and disability context, Australia supports providing explosive hazard victim support through access to mainstream health and disability services. This approach aligns with national ownership, brings health-related victim assistance in line with best practice development assistance, and frees up resources for explosive hazard clearance.

The Australia-Cambodia Cooperation for Equitable Sustainable Services (ACCESS) program is supporting sustainable and inclusive services for people with disabilities in Cambodia. Through ACCESS, Australia has helped six physical rehabilitation centres in Cambodia to provide services to 18,393 people with disabilities since September 2018 – a third of them were victims of landmines or explosive remnants of war.

In closing, Mr President, I assure you of our continued commitment to international cooperation and assistance in the context of the Mine Ban Convention.

Thank you Mr President.