



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

The Hague, 15-19 November 2021

Australian Comments on Cooperation and Assistance

Mr President,

Australia recognises the fundamental importance of access to international cooperation and assistance in progressing the implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and ultimately achieving our shared goal of putting an end to the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines. This cooperation and assistance plays a central role in building capacity, fostering innovation and promoting inclusivity in mine action.

Mr President,

Last year, Australia provided over AUD9.4 million to mine action activities. Australian contributions fund an array of mine action and explosive remnants of war related assistance in countries including Afghanistan, Cambodia, Syria, Iraq, Sri Lanka. We are also pleased to support global mine action advocacy, coordination and research organisations including the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines.

Mr President,

Australia is committed to ensuring mine action is sustainable and acknowledges the role that building national capacity has to play in achieving this. Australia continues to support UNMAS activities in Iraq, particularly its new partnership model for building capacity within the Government of Iraq, local NGOs, and international mine action organisations with a view towards establishing national ownership and localization of mine action activities.

In our region, we continue to support capacity development in relation to explosive remnants of war more broadly. In August 2021, Australia was pleased to deepen cooperation with Solomon Islands on explosive ordnance disposal through an AUD15 million package of infrastructure works, equipment and training designed to boost the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force capacity to safely extract and dispose of explosive remnants of war.

Mr President,

Innovative ideas and technologies have the potential to drive powerful positive change in mine action. To this end, Australia is pleased to support international organisations developing new tools and solutions in this field, including the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

Mr President,

Inclusivity must be at the core of our collective efforts to end the suffering associated with anti-personnel mines.

In this regard, Australia supports mine action assistance that is gender, age and disability responsive. We encourage and support greater linkages between mine action and the Women, Peace and Security agenda, inclusive of the full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of women and girls in all peace and security processes.

Australia has extended our support to UNMAS in Afghanistan through to the end of December 2022 to promote gender mainstreaming in mine action. In Cambodia, Australia continues to contribute to victim assistance programs through the disability and gender-based violence program, Australia-Cambodia Cooperation for Equitable Sustainable Services (ACCESS). We were also proud to support UNMAS in developing the UN Gender Guidelines in Mine Action in four languages and emphasise the need for all parties to ensure that mine clearance and mine awareness programmes properly consider the needs of different groups in a community, including women and girls.

In closing, Mr President, I assure you of our continued commitment to international cooperation and assistance to alleviate the impact of these injurious weapons.

Thank you, Mr President.