

Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (21 MSP)

Australia – Intervention – International Cooperation and Assistance

President,

We commend you and the coordinators for your efforts this year in encouraging State Parties to continue supporting the universalisation of the Convention, with the ultimate goal of a world free of Anti-Personnel Mines.

A world free of Anti-Personnel Mines remains a priority for Australia, particularly at a time where our global landscape is evolving and changing, testing well established norms against the use of these mines.

Anti-Personnel Mines can pose a disproportionate threat to civilian populations and host nations prospects of rebuilding in a post-conflict environment, and harm sustainable economic and governance architectures.

Australia recognises that international assistance and cooperation is critical in achieving our shared goal. In our delivery of this assistance, our region, and the significant challenges it faces, remains a priority.

Australia's longstanding program to remove unexploded ordnance - Operation RENDERSAFE - continues to support our Pacific Island family. In July, at the request of the Government of Nauru, Australia rapidly deployed Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) technicians and health personnel. The technicians worked with the Nauru Police Force to assess and ultimately safely dispose of the unexploded WWII-era bomb.

This year, through the GICHD, Australia has invested in a major multi-year uplift in our international assistance to the region aimed at achieving a mine impact-free Pacific.

Australia also remains concerned by ongoing contamination in parts of Myanmar. UN OCHA reported a near 170% increase in the number of casualties reported due to landmines and ERW in Myanmar in the first seven months of this year compared to last year's total.

Beyond our region, we are also pleased that Australian funding to the GICHD enables the organisation to carry out the critical work of the APMBC Implementation Support Unit. This includes the provision of technical support to all state parties on the implementation of the convention.

President,

Australia cannot ignore the devastating impact of anti-personnel mines in Ukraine as a result of Russia's illegal and immoral invasion.

Australia has provided funding to UNOCHA in aid of humanitarian demining and other needs in Ukraine along with several tranches of demining equipment to the Government of Ukraine. Like others, we welcome Ukraine's undertaking to investigate the allegations of use of anti-personnel mines by the Ukrainian armed forces.

President,

As we continue to grapple with an evolving and complex landscape, new and emerging technologies present opportunities in mitigating the risks in areas such as detecting, mapping and removal of unexploded ordnance. We welcome discussions from the recently concluded Innovation Conference held by GICHD. Australia, through key science and research institutions, is keenly engaged in researching innovative solutions to the explosive ordnance risk reduction challenges, including remote detection, ground penetrating radar, and detection algorithms.

President,

While every year is a year that we should ask ourselves how our international cooperation and assistance can be improved, we particularly encourage states to turn their minds to this question over the next twelve months ahead of the Convention's Fifth Review Conference. In this regard, we welcome Cambodia's expression of interest to host the RevCon.