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**Inter-sessional Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Geneva
19-21 June 2023
Australian Comments on Agenda Item 5 - Cooperation and Assistance**

Mr President,

International assistance and cooperation is critical to achieving our goal of a world free of Anti-Personnel Mines, including those of an improvised nature. As a firm supporter of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, and other instruments including the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Australia is committed to efforts to counter the risks posed by anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions, improvised explosive devices, and explosive remnants of war.

In 2022, Australia supported a range of positive efforts on mine action. Our funding, including through civil society groups and the UN Development Program, flowed to mine risk education, clearance of mines, and advocacy activities in the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Cambodia. At the 20th MSP last November, we highlighted Australia's work in the Pacific assisting with removal of explosive remnants of war, including through the OPERATION RENDERSAFE program.

Australia was also pleased to join the landmark political declaration on explosive weapons in populated areas – EWIPA – in Dublin in November last year.

We support your timely focus on Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) more broadly as a priority theme at this intersessional meeting. Australia recognises the terrible impact of IEDs and welcomes initiatives to reduce the threat posed by them.

Mr President,

Australia has been actively prosecuting cooperation and assistance to reduce the threat of IEDs in our region and in international fora. We initiated, and have been a co-lead with France, of the UNGA resolution on 'Countering the Threat posed by Improvised Explosive Devices'. In 2015, we jointly put this forward as the first ever UNGA resolution dedicated to

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IEDs, and it continues to serve to maintain the international community's attention on issues and actions to address threats posed by IEDs and, by association, on anti-personnel land mines.

Australia is a member of the International Bomb Data Centre Working Group which meets annually and shares technical information on IEDs. Our focus is on our region where our engagement with ASEAN countries has resulted in significant improvements in countering the threat posed by IEDs. This Working Group shares technical information relating to IEDs and related events and provides an international collective from which analysis and technical advice can be obtained.

Australia has assisted in the establishment of Bomb Data Centres in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. The sharing of technical information relating to bombings, attempted bombings, and extremist activities enhances security across the region.

Mr President,

We welcome initiatives by the international community to reduce the number of casualties cause by IEDs of all descriptions, including anti-personnel landmines. We recognise and applaud the efforts and courage of clearance operators in their difficult and dangerous work. And we encourage the support of new technologies to reduce risk, including remote detection, ground penetrating radar, and detection algorithms.

In concluding, Mr President, we are pleased to announce our continued collaboration with and support for the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). We have just finalised a multi-year grant which represents the third largest agreement in the GICHD's history. This will help the GICHD to maintain a stable footing allowing it to undertake critical mine action activities, including to assist our Pacific family.

Thank you

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