

## **Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention Intersessional Meetings, 8-9 June 2017**

### **Statement of Australia on Victim Assistance**

Australia thanks the Committee on Victim Assistance for assisting States Parties to fulfil their commitments under the Maputo Action Plan in relation to victim assistance, and for its Preliminary Observations on the progress, achievements and challenges of States Parties on victim assistance.

As Coordinator on Victim Assistance for the Convention on Cluster Munitions in 2015 and 2016, Australia was pleased to work with the Victim Assistance Committee to build cooperation on victim assistance between the two conventions, and also with Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

This cooperation was motivated by Australia's shared convictions that:

- victims – both survivors and indirect victims - of cluster munitions, landmines and other explosive remnants of war all have the same rights and similar needs with regard to care, rehabilitation, and social inclusion;
- the efforts we, as States Parties, make to recognise these rights and meet these needs are therefore complementary, regardless of which convention we are working within; and
- consequently, it is possible, and advantageous, to develop common approaches to victim assistance across conventions.

Our cooperation culminated in 2016 in a joint side event at the Meeting of States Parties in Santiago, at which we launched Guidance on an Integrated Approach to Victim Assistance and Guidance on Victim Assistance Reporting –publications which demonstrate the real potential for linking efforts across the disarmament conventions with the ultimate aim of helping States to improve the quality of life and uphold the rights of all victims.

We hope that cooperation between the Victim Assistance Committees of these three Conventions can continue to grow.

Australia places a high priority on providing assistance to victims of landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war, and to supporting the efforts of other states to improve their delivery of victim assistance.

We have committed USD 1.4 million over three years to the International Committee of the Red Cross's MoveAbility Fund. This contribution will fund work in 14 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America where the Fund operates 32 rehabilitation centres and prosthetic and orthotic schools, enabling thousands of people with disabilities, including mine incident survivors to regain their mobility and independence

And Australia contributed USD370,000 to the International Committee for the Red Cross's 2016 Special Appeal for Disability and Mine Action. This appeal provides assistance to persons with disabilities, including survivors of conflict, violence and of mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war.

We understand that, in order to ensure sustainable support for victims, it is essential to realize victim assistance obligations in a non-discriminatory manner both through specific initiatives, and also through broader development, human rights, and humanitarian efforts under national plans, policies and frameworks. This dual approach to victim assistance, involving both specific and broader efforts, is referred to as an integrated approach to victim assistance.

We are contributing USD446,000 over three years to support Handicap International's work supporting states' efforts to implement an integrated approach to victim assistance.

This funding has enabled Handicap International to support the development by Australia, together with Chile, Italy, Iraq and Austria, of the Guidance on an Integrated Approach to Victim Assistance launched in 2016.

This Guidance highlights good practices and national examples that demonstrate that an integrated approach is feasible and how it is being implemented in practice by some affected and donor States. We hope this Guidance will be a useful tool for States Parties to this convention, the Cluster Munitions Convention and Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in our joint efforts to provide non-discriminatory and sustainable assistance that improves the quality of life and uphold the rights of victims.