

ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION

Standing Committee on General Status and Operation of the Convention

UNIVERSALISATION

Australian Statement

Statement delivered by Mr Philip Kimpton, First Secretary, Australian Permanent Mission to the United Nations, Geneva

20 June 2011

Australia welcomes the work of the President of the Convention, His Royal Highness Prince Mired of Jordan as the President's Special Envoy on Universalisation, the ISU and Canada as Coordinator of the Universalisation Contact Group. We are confident that their dedicated work will lead to success. We thank those States not party to the Convention for their updates on progress to accede to the Convention and welcome their progress.

As a country coming from a region of the world that is under-represented in the Convention, Australia continues to advocate strongly for universal adherence to the Mine Ban Convention. We wish to set out briefly steps Australia has taken which illustrates the useful range of work possible on universalisation.

We do this on a bilateral basis, providing support and sharing experiences with those who are yet to join the Convention. Australia will continue to raise the importance of ratifying and acceding to the Convention as relevant in any bilateral considerations and discussions around our mine action assistance.

We also work with international organizations and civil society to promote universalisation. We have consistently contributed to the universalisation activities of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines in the Asia-Pacific region. From 2011, Australia has entered into a three year agreement with the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the Cluster Munition Coalition (providing AUD450,000 per year) to support monitoring, advocacy and universalisation work.

Australia is also a strong supporter of the operations of the Implementation Support Unit. The ISU has contributed significantly to universalisation efforts by supporting the President's outreach and increasing knowledge and awareness of the Convention.

Australia has also supported the Sponsorship Programme under the Convention, enabling the participation of countries at annual meetings who may not otherwise be able to attend. This programme has an important role in promoting increased understanding of the Convention, enhancing our work and promoting its universalisation.

Australia is also supporting the work of Geneva Call in Asia, to promote the adherence to the humanitarian objectives of the Mine Ban Convention by non-state actors.

Among others, we thank UN agencies and the ICRC for their essential work in promoting the Convention.

Once again, we urge States Parties to reaffirm their commitment to universalise the Convention and take steps outlined in the Cartagena Action Plan.

Like others, Australia notes with concern the recent reports of use of anti-personnel mines in the conflict in Libya and in other conflicts around the world. Not only is use contrary to the international norms established by the Convention, their emplacement poses direct risks to the lives of civilians for decades to come, hinders economic development long after the conflict has ended and raises challenges to immediate post-conflict recovery and rebuilding.

With respect to Libya, we welcome the recent announcement by the Transitional National Council that it would not use anti-personnel mines.

Australia is deeply concerned at the allegations of use of mines by the forces of Colonel Gaddafi. Like others, we urge Tripoli to refrain from using anti-personnel mines in the immediate future and we urge Libya to join the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention as soon as possible.