



ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION

2012 Intersessional Meetings

UNIVERSALISATION

Australian Statement

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

21 May 2012

Madame Co-Chair

Thank you very much. We are honoured by the presence of the Convention's President, HE Mr Prak Sokhonn of Cambodia, and thank him and the Co-Chairs for their preparations for these meetings of the Standing Committees.

Australia continues to advocate strongly for universal adherence to the Convention, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. We warmly welcome and support the efforts of the Convention's President and HRH Prince Mired Raad Al-Hussein of Jordan, as well as Belgium as Coordinator, on their efforts to promote the universalisation of the Convention

We welcome Tuvalu as one of the newest States Parties to the Convention, and congratulate Prince Mired for his invaluable assistance in obtaining Tuvalu's agreement to join the Convention. Tuvalu's ratification is a welcome step towards universal membership of the Convention in the Pacific with only 3 of the 16 Pacific Islands Forum States yet to join the Convention. We support all States in the Asia Pacific – a region traditionally under-represented – becoming similarly engaged with the Convention and where possible working towards accession where they are not already a party.

We also welcome Finland's accession to the Convention in January this year and South Sudan's succession in November last year.

With 159 States now parties to the Convention the international community's commitment to the principles of the Convention is growing, although there is still work to do to achieve universalisation.

We are also encouraged by moves from a number of States, including Somalia, Tonga and Poland, towards joining the Mine Ban Convention. We urge all States yet to become party to the Convention to consider doing so as soon as possible.

We recognise the continuing and important role that civil society, the ICRC and United Nations play in advancing the momentum towards universalisation. We continue to contribute to the universalisation activities of the ICBL in the Asia-Pacific region.

Since 2005, Australia has provided financial assistance for the production of the annual Landmine Monitor Report. This is a valuable resource that helps the international community to measure progress, address remaining landmine challenges and increases the transparency of outstanding issues.

Australia remains a strong supporter of the activities 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 is particularly pleased with the focus over the last year in the Asia-Pacific region.

Australia has also been a key supporter to the Sponsorship Programme under the Convention, enabling the participation of countries at annual meetings. This programme has had a crucial role in promoting increased understanding of the Convention, enhancing implementation and promoting universalisation.

Madame Co-Chair

Lastly, we would like to mention an important issue that touches on both universalisation and compliance matters on our agenda. Australia is concerned to hear reports of new use of anti-personnel mines in the past year. If accurate, these cases go against the growing international consensus against the use of these indiscriminate weapons.

We join the international community's call for all States to join the Convention, and in the interim, urge States not Party as well as non-state actors to refrain from use of these weapons. Where there are credible allegations of use, we also urge States to investigate and provide information on these cases to States Parties.

Thank you.