



ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION

2012 Intersessional Meetings

CLEARANCE AND RISK REDUCTION

Australian Statement

23 May 2012

Statement by Ms Christine Pahlman, Mine Action Coordinator, Australian Agency for International Development

Madame Co-Chair

Australia would like to congratulate Guinea Bissau and Jordan on their recent mine free declarations. These are significant achievements. We also welcome progress made by other states against their Article 5 clearance obligations.

Whilst we acknowledge that primary responsibility for clearance rests with national governments, Australia, as a country in a position to assist, has committed significant assistance to clearance and mine risk education.

In order to program our assistance, we urge affected countries to prioritise clearance within their national development plans and budgets and identify and prioritise the required international assistance for mine action within broader national and bilateral aid discussions so that mine action can receive the attention it deserves amongst the many other competing aid priorities.

We also look to affected countries to provide national leadership and coordination of their mine action programs.

We expect that affected communities will be involved in the process of prioritising areas for mine clearance and in planning development and poverty reduction activities after clearance.

Under our mine action strategy, Australia has so far committed \$84.9 million to mine action of which \$60 million has been committed to clearance and mine risk education.

In addition, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) provides a range of technical assistance and training to regional countries affected by explosive remnants of war (ERW), including landmines, through cooperative ERW clearance, removal and destruction activities.

Since 11 MSP, Australia has committed \$3 million to assist Mozambique to complete

its Article 5 deadline by 2014. We have also committed \$1.35 million to assist Palau to clear ERW. This is the largest single amount of assistance that we have provided for mine action in the Pacific and we commend the efforts of Palau in developing a clearance initiative and for championing the work of the Convention in the Pacific.

Madame Co-Chair

We are continuously exploring how we can best assist countries to complete their clearance and meet the obligations of the Mine Ban Convention.

As earlier mentioned by the UNMAS Director, Australia, as Chair of the Mine Action Support Group (MASG), is overseeing an initiative amongst the mine action donor group to achieve a better understanding of what resources are required to help countries achieve their end state in mine action, including completion of Article 5 obligations under the Convention.

Whilst there are a number of countries facing long-term clearance challenges, the majority will be able to meet their clearance deadlines over the short to medium term with the provision of adequate international assistance. Some countries require relatively small amounts of assistance to complete clearance but have little or no donor support. Other countries may need assistance that is beyond the levels of the donors currently active in the country.

To maintain the momentum of this Convention, it is desirable that countries nearing completion or countries with only small clearance challenges are assisted in a timely and coordinated way so as to reduce the number of countries requiring extension requests and to maximise the number of countries that become mine free.

The MASG is undertaking a desk study to explore how donors may better contribute to helping countries complete clearance. The Secretary of the MASG (Mr Ian Mansfield) will undertake the study and prepare a draft report by September 2012.

We expect to report further on the efforts of the MASG at 12 MSP.

Thank you