



ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION

2012 Intersessional Meetings

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE

Trust Funds to support implementation

Statement by Australia

25 May 2012

Statement delivered by Christine Pahlman, Mine Action Coordinator, AusAID.

Co-Chairs

Australia is very supportive, in principle, of Trust Funds as a mechanism to manage and invest in mine action. We have contributed significantly to trust funds in the past and will continue to do so in the future. Through the pooling of resources and centralizing management and implementation, trust funds can be an effective modality to enhance the coordination of effort. Importantly, nationally executed trust funds can assist in the process of supporting and developing the leadership and ownership of the national authority.

Australia is currently contributing to the UN Voluntary Trust Fund, the Lao UXO trust fund, the ICRC Special Mine Action Appeal, the ICRC Special Fund for the Disabled and the trust fund established to support the CRPD. We are also supporting nationally led and coordinated programming in Afghanistan and Cambodia which in some ways operates similar to a trust fund approach.

The UN Voluntary Trust Fund and the ICRC trust funds are very useful mechanism for donors in that they provide flexibility to program assistance across a range of countries and can absorb varying amounts of funding. For example, they enable Australia to support countries in which we don't have a bilateral aid program and therefore can broaden the reach of our assistance. Australia appreciates the flexibility of such trust funds in accepting funding at any stage of the year and for funding within a particular year or across years. In other words trust funds generally present a very flexible financing model for our investments in mine action.

We value the accountability and transparency structures that trust funds offer. We also greatly value the purpose and utility of national trust funds in building and sustaining national mine action programs. For example we value the Lao UXO trust fund as it enables us to support the

nationally led and managed UXO program and helps to ensure that our assistance is targeted at priority programs and is well coordinated.

The transaction costs of trust funds needs to be considered as they can be high. For example, in global managed trust funds an administrative fee can be paid twice or more, first to the trust fund administrator and then to the administrator or implementer of the mine action project. This can also adversely affect the speed of the disbursement. We need to ensure transaction costs are kept to a minimum and the disbursements are timely.

Given the number of trust funds already in place and the broad mandate of mine action Australia does not see a need to establish a trust fund specifically to support the mandate of this convention. As you know, much of the victim assistance, mine risk education and mine clearance work that we all support is cross cutting and also beneficial to the CCM, CCW and even the CRPD. We see very limited opportunity to contribute to a Trust Fund dedicated to only supporting the work of the Mine Ban Convention.

As outlined by the Director of the Implementation Support Unit, we also recognize the added administrative burden on the Convention in managing such a trust fund as well as a lot of overlap with the scope and range of existing trust funds. We do however, see scope for more trust funds to be developed at the national level designed to support nationally led programs. A well-executed and supported trust fund can indeed make a big contribution to improving the national ownership and management of a national mine action program as well as improving the coordination of national and international mine action resources that are being applied in the country.

Thank you.