



ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION

2012 Intersessional Meetings

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE

The availability of assistance and procedures to obtain it

Statement by Australia

25 May 2012

Statement delivered by Christine Pahlman, Mine Action Coordinator, AusAID

Co-Chairs

Australia is firmly committed to meeting its international mine obligations, including to assist affected countries. We deliver this assistance in a manner designed to maximise its effectiveness, including by using our multi-year mine action strategy to guide assistance. We take a long-term, integrated and comprehensive approach to mine action that is inclusive of risk education and victim assistance so as to remove impediments to development that landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war inflict on communities. We view mine action within the context of national development priorities and programs, which broadens and deepens the developmental impact of mine action, for example, our support for mine action in Cambodia since 1994 has focused on assisting victims to lead productive lives and ensuring affected lands are restored to productivity – both of which have developmental benefits. We support countries to develop their own well coordinated and managed national mine action program. For example, we are directing all of our mine action support to Cambodia through its nationally managed ‘Clearing for Results’ program to ensure that our assistance is well-targeted, coordinated and supports the priorities of the national mine action program. We are increasingly providing multi-year mine action funding to enhance the predictability and flexibility of our support, and reduce administrative burdens and costs. And we are seeking to develop more strategic partnerships amongst the donor community to assist states to advance their mine action priorities

Australia has committed \$100 million to mine action under its current strategy but we do not have a single mine action budget from which we draw and program our mine action

assistance. Australia's funding is drawn from multiple sources within our aid budget, including humanitarian, disability and bilateral funding channels which may involve a range of parameters and funding modalities. AusAID's humanitarian program includes \$2.5 million per year for global mine action work, that is work which has a global reach and benefit including research, universalisation, coordination, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation. The global mine action program does not generally consider funding for mine action in particular countries because its reach its objective and reach is global in nature. Applications for funding under the global mine action program are considered by AusAID's humanitarian program under the management of the Mine Action Coordinator.

The bulk of Australia's mine action funding is drawn from our various bilateral country aid programs against priorities jointly identified with our partner governments including Laos, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Iraq and Afghanistan. In countries where Australia provides bilateral aid, our mine action is programmed against priorities which are identified, discussed and reviewed between Australia and our partner governments as part of normal bilateral aid processes. We see this as a strength - as the mine action work is anchored in a broader development strategy and partnership with the mine-affected countries. It enables the promotion of linkages between mine action and broader development goals such as incorporating mine action programs within the context of community and agricultural development and livelihood assistance. It also means that we have effective mechanisms and resources in place to manage and monitor this mine action work.

It means however that mine action competes against other important bilateral aid priorities for example health and education for funding. Because of this it is important that affected countries identify mine action as a priority for national action and development assistance, including in their national development plans, in aid discussions and in development forums. In other words countries need to prioritise mine action at the national level if we are to prioritise mine action in bilateral aid program to a particular country.

As mine action is considered a humanitarian initiative we are able to access additional funding through humanitarian funding from time to time. These additional funds are generally programmed through international agencies and global funding mechanisms such as the VTF and the ICRC special mine action appeals because they offer a flexible financing model and have a wide humanitarian reach. Unfortunately as the humanitarian budget is designed to support a wide range of humanitarian programs including emergencies and disasters, the funding from our humanitarian program is not guaranteed or predictable.

Thank you.