

AP Mine Ban Convention: Intersessional Meeting 25-29 May 2009
Statement by Australia: Universalisation

It is only with universal adherence to the obligations of the Mine Ban Convention that a mine-free world will be achieved. Australia continues to advocate strongly for universalisation activities, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, which remains under-represented in the membership of the Convention.

Over the past two years, Australia's universalisation efforts have focused on promoting accession to the Convention amongst our Pacific island neighbours. Australia supported workshops run by the Implementation Support Unit in Vanuatu and Palau to raise awareness about the Convention, its obligations, the process of ratification and implementation. More recently, we supported the outreach efforts of the Implementation Support Unit to the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Marshall Islands, to encourage these countries to take the final steps towards accession.

In this year of the 10th anniversary of the Mine Ban Convention and in the lead-up to the Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World, we encourage all countries which have not yet done so to consider joining the Convention. We welcome the announcement by the Government of Lao PDR at the Bangkok Workshop on a Mine-free South East Asia in April, to consider accession to the Convention in the future.

Australia recognizes the valuable role of civil society in promoting adherence and accession to the Convention. In 2009, we will fund the universalisation strategy of International Campaign to Ban Landmines in the Asia-Pacific. We also contributed A\$300,000 to the production of 2009 Landmine Monitor Report, which will include an assessment of achievements against the Convention over the past five years.

Since 2007, Australia has supported the Convention's Sponsorship Program – recognizing that this is a crucial universalisation tool to ensure that non-state parties can attend meetings and learn from the experiences of States Parties. We have also maintained annual contributions to the Implementation Support Unit, which plays a vital role in providing information, advice and assistance on implementation of the Convention.