



ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION TENTH MEETING OF STATES PARTIES

VICTIM ASSISTANCE

Statement by Australia

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

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Improving the quality of life for victims of landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war is a major focus of Australia's mine action assistance.

Between 2005-10, Australia provided \$25 million in survivor assistance support to a number of the 26 States Parties which have reported responsibility for significant numbers of mine victims under the Mine Ban Convention, including Angola, Afghanistan, Cambodia and Iraq, as well as Laos and Vietnam.

Mr President

Existing development programs do not always reach the most needy - only 3 to 4 per cent of people with disability are estimated to benefit from international development assistance.

Since launching our disability inclusive strategy in 2008, Australia has made significant progress in embracing a disability inclusive aid program marking a change in the way the aid program is designed and delivered. We are progressively changing the way work to ensure that people with disability participate in, contribute to and benefit equally from Australia's aid program.

Mr President

Australia is pleased to announce that work has started on a handbook to enhance understanding on assisting survivors in the context of disarmament, disability and development for all. We believe that such a publication is necessary to facilitate the engagement of a broader range of actors to ensure that the principles and

understandings that we as States Parties have adopted at the First Review Conference and reaffirmed in Cartagena are put into practice at the national level.

The target audience for the handbook will be actors working on issues and in sectors that can potentially assist survivors, including relevant ministries and other actors in affected States, Geneva-based diplomats, development agencies, associations of survivors and other persons with disabilities, and UN and other international agencies, non-governmental organisations, and service providers. Engaging more actors has the potential to ensure that efforts to assist survivors are integrated into broader frameworks. We believe this is essential for coherence, closer cooperation, efficiency and achieve the greatest impact on the ground in affected communities.

The specific objectives of the handbook are: (a) to enhance understanding on victim assistance in the context of disarmament instruments, including the AP Mine Ban Convention, Protocol V of the Convention on Conventional Weapons, and the Convention on Cluster Munitions; (b) to raise awareness on new developments related to victim assistance; (c) to raise awareness on the linkages between victim assistance and the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities; (d) to propose strategies for effective implementation and sustainability of victim assistance-related efforts; (e) to strengthen understanding and linkages between actors working in other fields such as disability, inclusive development and human rights; (f) and, to facilitate progress in efforts to improve the quality of life of survivors, the families of those killed or injured, and other persons with disabilities, through the integration of victim assistance-related efforts into broader frameworks.

The handbook will be launched at the intersessional meetings in June next year.

Mr President

Australia is a strong supporter of integrated mine action, victim assistance and development that includes and benefits persons with disabilities. In this regard, Australia advocates for greater linkages between victim assistance and disability-inclusive development, including under relevant humanitarian disarmament treaties and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Australia promotes greater synergies and cooperation by the international community to avoid duplication in efforts and reporting across overlapping victim assistance obligations under the Mine Ban Convention, Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (particularly Protocol V), Convention on Cluster Munitions Convention and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

The decisions that we have made as states parties provide a strong foundation to ensure that states should not discriminate against or among victims, between cluster munitions victims and other victims of armed conflict and other persons with disabilities. Any differences in treatment should be based only on medical, rehabilitative, psychological or socio-economic needs, taking into account age and gender sensitivities.

Finally, Mr President

Australia was pleased to support the Parallel Programme for Victim Assistance Experts this week. This event was invaluable in sharing of information and expertise and we thank all involved in its organisation and those experts who participated.

The parallel programme served as the Geneva launch of the Guidelines on Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR). The Guidelines were developed by the WHO in collaboration with the ILO, UNESCO and the International Disability and Development Consortium, and many other individuals and organisations. CBR is a multisectoral strategy for the inclusion of peoples with disabilities and their families in development initiatives. The Guidelines provide us with a practical tool to help ensure development and decision making processes specifically reach, include and benefit people with disabilities, including victims of landmines and other remnants of war. In this way, the CBR Guidelines can help our efforts to realise the Millenium Development Goals for all citizens.