

Assisting the victims

Mr President

- . Australia commends the progress made by States Parties and their collaborating partners in assisting victims and persons with disabilities in accordance with the Cartagena Action Plan
 - we welcome efforts to incorporate victim assistance within national health, disability, development and human rights frameworks and mechanisms
 - as well as efforts to promote the full inclusion and effective participation of all survivors and persons with disabilities in the social, cultural, economic and political life of their communities.
- . We also recognise the substantive ongoing challenges faced by the 26 countries that have reported significant numbers of landmine survivors. The challenges include:
 - linking victim assistance programming with other relevant sectors, including disability, health, education, employment, development and poverty reduction;
 - taking a holistic approach to victim assistance and providing medical assistance and rehabilitation for victims combined with ongoing livelihoods support and training; and
 - developing appropriate data collection within national reporting systems.

Mr President

- . Improving the quality of life of victims of landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war continues to be a major focus of Australia's mine action assistance
 - Since 10 MSP we have committed over \$15 million to support victim assistance work.
 - we focus particularly on initiatives that integrate services for victims, and persons with disabilities generally, into governments' development, health, education and socio-economic policies and budgets, particularly in heavily affected countries.
- . Our goal is to support the care, rehabilitation and reintegration of victims, with an emphasis on improving livelihood and well-being.
- . In addition to supporting victim assistance work, Australia is also developing a broader Disability Inclusive Aid Program
 - this is based on the twin-track approach, where disability-specific initiatives (such as some rehabilitation services) are implemented alongside the mainstreaming, or integration, of disability into existing sectoral initiatives.
- . Under this approach, we work to ensure that victim assistance support is beneficial to victims as well as other persons with disabilities by drawing on disability-inclusive

development principles from humanitarian disarmament treaties and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

- the Cambodian Initiative for Disability Inclusion is an example of an Australian-supported program which has increasingly embraced a more integrated approach to disability-inclusive development
 - : the program's Disability Inclusion Assistance Fund is now open to applications for all persons with disabilities, as opposed to previously being limited to landmine/UXO survivors.
 - : I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the strong commitment by the Royal Government of Cambodia on the rights of persons with disabilities, including landmine survivors.
 - : We also very much welcome your statement, Mr President, that assisting the victims will remain central to the work of the Convention and a priority under Cambodia's Presidency.

Mr President

- . At the June 2011 intersessional meeting of the Mine Ban Convention, Australia was honoured to launch a publication entitled *Assisting Landmine and other ERW Survivors in the Context of Disarmament, Disability and Development*, which I would like to briefly introduce again today
 - the publication aims to further 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 into broader frameworks
 - it also highlights the importance of understanding and links between people in various fields including disability, inclusive development, human rights, and mine action.
- . We now have three different disarmament instruments, AP Mine Ban Convention, Protocol V to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, with a uniform approach as concerns assisting victims and survivors of landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war
 - a determined and sustained effort is needed to ensure that these instruments deliver on their promise to victims and survivors.
 - progress could be enhanced if survivors were further empowered to participate actively in the disability and development fields at the national, regional and international levels to ensure that their rights and needs are part of the agenda.
- . We must increase our collective efforts. Whether we work on disarmament, disability, or development we must ensure coherence in our efforts to ensure sustainability and maximise the impact on the ground.
- . The victim assistance publication is intended as a resource and a guide to implementing this approach within all Conventions and we take this opportunity to commend the publication to those working in this area.

- . Australia was pleased to support the publication and it is our sincere hope that it will make a positive contribution to improving the coherence of and cooperation in our victim assistance efforts
 - the publication is available from the Implementation Support Unit and we thank them for their work in preparing the publication.
- . Finally, Mr President, it is pleasure to Co-Chair the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration along with Uganda during 2011. We are also pleased to have provided financial assistance to support the 2011 Victim Assistance Parallel Programme
 - we hope the parallel sessions prove useful to furthering the victim assistance work of the Convention.

Thank you Mr President