



MINE BAN CONVENTION
13th Meeting of State Parties
Partnership for Implementation panel discussion
Statement by Australia

3 December 2013

Statement delivered by Christine Pahlman.

Thank you to the panellists and thank you Madam President for the opportunity to make a few remarks on the topic of partnerships for implementation and in particular completion on behalf of both Australia and the Mine Action Support Group (the MASG).

Under Australia's Chair during the past two years, the MASG has considered the concept of completion as it applies to the clearance of anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war.

In 2011, the MASG developed terms of reference for a study with objectives to consider how the MASG may contribute to the completion initiative (initiated by the UNDP) and to consider how the MASG could assist mine affected countries meet their clearance obligations.

The study was undertaken by the MASG Secretariat with support from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. I would like to highlight some of the main conclusions of the report:

- . Although we talk about 'completion' of clearance of all mines, cluster munitions remnants and other ERW in a singular sense, the reality is that as the Convention obligations apply to single weapon types, there are a number of different components or 'ways to consider "completion", these include:
 - Completion under (Article 5 of) the Mine Ban Convention (APMBC);
 - Completion under (Article 4 of) the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM);
 - Completion of clearance of all explosive remnants of war (as loosely defined by the Article 3 of Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW); and finally and perhaps most importantly,
 - Completion as defined by a non-State party to any of the above.
- . Given that there are various ways of considering completion within the context of mine action, the report recommended that affected countries and donors should agree on a common definition of what 'completion' is being aimed for in any partnership

agreement. The report noted, that where possible, affected countries should seek to define what completion means to them.

- . The report also noted that given the diverse nature of the ERW problem in many affected countries, that it may be difficult to ever achieve 100 per cent completion of ERW. As such most ERW affected countries will need to maintain some operational capacity to deal with any potential residual threats.
- . The report recommended that country level completion plans be developed based around the definition of clear targets, milestones and deadlines and the financial and resource requirements needed to achieve completion.
- . The report noted that at the country level, there are options to approaching and supporting completion through business models that link international assistance with achieving agreed results, with incentives for success or penalties for failures in progress towards completion.
- . Finally, the report noted that a major element of the business case for completion is economic analysis. In this context, a strong cost-benefit case can usually be made for demining when high priority, high impact areas are being cleared. However, the same does not apply to low impact areas, and in these instances other aspects of the business case such as Convention obligations or political priorities will also be important considerations.

Madame President

The report was considered at the MASG meeting held in New York in September 2012 and Geneva in April 2013, during which donors canvassed a number of perspectives on the issue of completion that I wish to briefly highlight:

- . Donors noted that funding for clearance was generally linked to greatest need and impact, with priority placed on high risk areas within affected countries and areas of greatest humanitarian need.
- . Some donors noted that the impact of countries declaring completion was a notable objective and strong indicator of the success of mine action which in turn helped to maintain its profile and attract funding support.
- . Other donors noted that their focus was on humanitarian need and that they were not necessarily interested in funding the clearance of the 'last mine' or mines that did not present much risk to civilians in order to meet Convention obligations. These donors noted that meeting Convention clearance obligations was a secondary benefit, but that the primary drivers of funding were based on humanitarian demining objectives.

- . Donors also noted demining operations typically cleared all types of munitions and they commented that it is not necessarily sensible or practical to adapt operational strategies to focus only on clearance of a particular munition to meet Convention obligations.

Madame President

Over the last two years, six countries Cambodia, Jordan, Mozambique, Palau, Senegal and Lebanon have shared their perspectives on completion through the annual MASG meeting. All of these countries demonstrated commitment towards clearance and illustrated the breadth of issues facing countries in completing clearance of ERW including landmines and cluster munitions.

As many members of the MASG are also members of the APMBC, the CCM and CCW Protocol V, we expect that the issue of completion will remain an important one for donors and that the MASG will continue to provide a forum for States nearing completion – or having difficulty in achieving completion – to discuss and present their case for international support.

Over the past two years, the MASG also encouraged and supported the UN through the Inter Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action to develop its completion initiative.

While Australia will complete its term as Chair of the MASG at the end of 2013, we hope that the MASG will continue to provide support for efforts such as the UN Completion Initiative and the focus on completion within this Convention. Noting there is diversity in how donors prioritise mine action and consider completion, we conclude there has been value in raising the focus on completion as part of the work of the MASG.

Madame President

Australia would also like to briefly share a small part of its experience as a donor working in close partnership on mine action implementation in a heavily affected country facing a significant challenge in completing its mine clearance.

Australia has been a long-term supporter of mine action in Cambodia. Faced with a considerable challenge, Cambodia has made significant progress to meeting Article 5 obligations of the Anti-Mine Ban Convention through strong partnerships with international agencies and donors.

Australia's current support for mine action in Cambodia is now exclusively through the Clearing for Results (Phase II) project. This is a multi-donor project managed by UNDP and Cambodia's national mine action body, the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA). The project focuses on clearing landmines and other unexploded ordnance, and building the capacity of CMAA.

Australia has committed \$10.2 million over five years (2011-12 to 2015-16) to the project. While there is a long way to go before Cambodia can achieve completion, the project is

achieving significant results, and it has assisted CMAA in making considerable advancements in leading the mine action sector towards greater efficiency, accountability and the targeting of mine clearance resources on development priorities.

Capacity of the CMAA has been built and enhanced through the implementation of a Capacity Development Plan. Mine action policy and strategic frameworks and national mine action standard have been developed and are set up in place to meet international mine action standards.

A National Mine Action Strategy (NMA) was developed, and guidelines were disseminated for provincial authorities to prioritise and monitor clearance based on community needs. CMAA also led the development of key initiatives such as the Baseline Survey and Land Release Policy and Standards which have the potential to dramatically improve the effectiveness of the sector in the future.

In addition, a series of coordination mechanisms and policy dialogues have also been established and the key elements of this coordination process is a Mine Action Technical Reference Group (including CMAA and Mine Clearance Operators). These mechanisms have paved the way for a certain level of coordination and consultation and have certainly moved the CMAA's role as the Mine Action Authority forward.

Mr President

These achievements clearly demonstrate CMAA's increased capacity in policy making, strategy formulation and monitoring of mine clearance. Indeed, the CMAA is now equipped with a solid regulatory capacity both at policy and operational levels; it ensures timely collection of mine clearance data and oversees a bottom-up system to plan and monitor the prioritisation of mine clearance tasks.

Partnership Principles were developed to promote greater coordination, harmonisation, and alignment of development partner efforts to the National Mine Action Strategy as well as to promote sharing of information in the sector. These strategic and policy milestones have led to a greater recognition of the role of the CMAA with external stakeholders as well as within the Government and had led to increased allocation of government resources to the mine action sector.

Cambodia has also demonstrated its strong commitment to the Mine Ban Convention by leading the formulation and promotion of a comprehensive and sound request for a ten year extension of its deadline under Article 5 and in hosting the 11th Meeting of States Parties in 2011.

Cambodia has hosted a large number of visits from delegations from other countries to share experiences and build networks in the region. Cambodia deminers have assisted other countries in their mine clearance work.

A recent, independent, mid-term review of Clearing for Results Phase II highlighted many positives, as well as several areas where additional effort is needed to ensure effective local capacity to lead the sector.

The report noted that CMAA's ability to play a central role is an extremely important factor in terms of guaranteeing the long-term quality of the national mine action programme – not only in the area of landmine and ERW clearance but also in terms of promoting quality in the overall implementation of the national mine action standards.

The CMAA is increasingly capable, responsible and accountable for the delivery of the project, and this clearly demonstrates CMAA's capacity to manage and implement mine action into the future.

The success of the project lies very strongly in Cambodia's ownership of the mine action problem and the primary importance it has given to the sector through resourcing and strong leadership. Leadership at the top of the CMAA has enabled the agencies leading role as national demining operators and given confidence to donors that the demining sector is being appropriately managed.

This has been the key to ensuring ongoing donor commitment which is important for this heavily affected country that has a significant challenge in completing clearance. We know there is still work that needs to be done to ensure CMAA is fully capable on independently leading the sector. The mid-term review will now help to guide what actions are required.

We look forward to working with Cambodia and its mine action partners to continue implementation of the Clearing for Results program and achieving progress towards their completion of Article 5 obligations.

Finally, Madame President, we note that Australia was pleased to be one of the donors which renewed its partnership for mine action with Mozambique, contributing \$3.5 million towards Mozambique's drive to complete its clearance by 2014.

I thank you Madame President.