

Agenda Item #12 Tuesday 20 November 2007 15:00-18:00
Informal discussion on practical ways to overcome challenges in implementing
Article 5

*What steps can a donor State Party take to ensure a sustainable resource flow? –
Presentation by Australia*

Thankyou Mr President

Mine action is an important part of Australia's overseas aid program. Australia has taken 3 key steps to ensure an appropriate and sustainable resource flow: 1) a multi-year pledge to mine action, 2) a multi-year mine action program strategy, and 3) dedicated mine action representatives within government.

1. *Multi-year pledge*

A key feature of Australia's program is a multi-year pledge to mine action – A\$75 million over five years from July 2005.

This follows a pledge of A\$100m over the previous decade, which was realised ahead of time.

A multi-year pledge allows Australia's aid program to develop medium-term mine action strategies for individual country programs, and commit to multi-year mine action activities and programs, which creates greater opportunities for capacity building and sustainable outcomes.

A multi-year mine action pledge also gives our partners greater budgetary certainty, facilitating effective strategic planning in mine action management and resource allocation. This is an important issue, because we as donors advocate strategic planning and prudent fiscal management by our partners, but this is challenging for recipient governments to do effectively without longer-term projections of external aid flows to mine action.

2. *Mine Action Strategy*

The multi-year pledge is supported by a five-year Mine Action Strategy, which guides implementation of the program, including objectives, priority sectors, geographical focus, and a monitoring and evaluation framework. Our strategy aims to create a safer and more secure environment by reducing suffering and the threat and socio-economic impact of landmines and explosive remnants of war. It includes all five pillars of mine action, with a particular focus on the mine-affected countries of the Asian region. De-mining activities currently represent approximately 50 per cent of Australia's mine action funding.

Performance and effectiveness is a strong focus of the strategy, consistent with Australia's overarching policy on its aid program. Being able to demonstrate positive impacts and sustainable outcomes is important in making the argument within our own government structures for continued flows to mine action. Focussing on results

and emerging "good practice" methodologies and approaches for clearance, integrated approaches etc, also increases the likelihood that our limited resources are being used in the most efficient and effective ways, and socio-economic benefits are maximised.

The mine action strategy and program is largely implemented by AusAID, the government's aid agency, but sits within a broader whole-of-government commitment to mine action, involving the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (which plays a key role in policy coordination, representation and advocacy), and the Department of Defence (which provides technical support and assistance on operational elements of mine action, including stockpile destruction and mine clearance).

3. *Mine Action Representatives within Government*

The importance that the Australian Government places on mine action is reflected in the creation of the position of Australia's Special Representative on Mine Action almost ten years ago. The position is currently part of the role of the Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs (an elected Parliamentarian), and supports the achievement of the Australian Government's broader mine action objectives.

The position plays an important role in ensuring the achievement of Australia's commitment to the pillars of mine action, the encouragement of effective global coordination of international donor resources on mine action, and raising the profile of mine action domestically, both with government and the general public.

Australia also has a dedicated position of Mine Action Coordinator within AusAID. The position is a focal point for the mine action program, and monitors expenditure and implementation of the strategy. Control of mine action coordination and representation is critical to maintaining currency of information domestically and internationally. Having a dedicated mine action position within the agency ensures that whilst funding has largely been devolved to country and regional program offices:

- mine action remains on the agenda in developing our country assistance strategies,
- mine action expenditure is tracked, and
- funding targets are realised.

Programming approaches to resource allocation

Although Australia has an overarching funding pledge to mine action, there is no specific budget allocation for mine action. Funding has largely been mainstreamed into broader development assistance streams, and decisions regarding programming and funding have been devolved to country and regional Posts.

Australia works in close consultation with our mine-affected country partners to determine program priorities and resource allocations. In partnership with government, civil society, non-government organisations etc, we determine priority sectors and areas, and funding levels. A key consideration is the particular socio-economic impacts of landmines and explosive remnants of war, and the link to poverty, vulnerability, and social and economic development.

Where possible, our programs align with national development plans, and support good governance through capacity building support to national institutions.

The Australian programs in Cambodia and Laos are increasingly focused on integrated mine action. Integrated mine action programs place mine action within the broader development context, aiming to reduce the direct and indirect impacts of landmines and explosive remnants of war, while simultaneously contributing to sustainable economic and social development. De-mining, mine risk education and survivor assistance activities are integrated with broader development programs, which may include livelihood assistance, land mapping and titling, community infrastructure, and water and sanitation facilities.

An integrated approach to mine action helps ensure a community's broader needs are met, through identifying constraints to economic and social development. It seeks to maximise the socio-economic benefits of mine action activities, and enhance the sustainability of outcomes.

Finally, in determining its funding allocations, Australia believes that strong partnerships are key. It is important for mine-affected states to have strong ownership of its program, ideally under an effective national mine action authority. We look to mine-affected states to articulate its mine action goals and objectives, supported by a clear, specific and realistic national mine action plan with timelines and concrete steps towards goals with which donor countries can align.

It is also important for a mine-affected country to demonstrate good governance and strong leadership, which encourages donor harmonisation and can help attract funding commitments.

We would like to thank you for the opportunity to present Australia's approach to mine action assistance. We hope this outline has been useful, and that other donors may wish to consider these steps – multi-year pledges, long-term mine action strategies, and mine action focal points – to ensure sustainable resource flows for full implementation of Article 5 obligations.

Thankyou.