

Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) Intersessional Meeting

COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE

Statement of Australia

16 April 2013

Madame Coordinator

Australia wishes to thank the Coordinators for their leadership on international cooperation and assistance, including in their preparations for today's meeting.

Australia is committed to realizing the aims of the Convention by providing effective international cooperation and assistance that builds capacity and delivers lasting humanitarian and development impacts.

We have provided support to a number of countries affected by cluster munitions including Laos, Lebanon, Cambodia, Afghanistan, the DRC and Iraq.

Overall, Australia continues to take a comprehensive approach to our mine action cooperation and assistance and it is not always possible to differentiate between action and funding on cluster munitions, landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) in situations where one or more of these weapons are relevant.

This also extends to the technical assistance and training that Australia provides affected countries in the neighbouring Pacific region through the Australian Defence Forces's Operation RENDER SAFE. The ADF assistance under Operation RENDER SAFE includes cooperative clearance, removal and destruction activities and has been provided for the eradication of ERW in the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Nauru and Kiribati.

Operation RENDER SAFE is aimed at reducing the threat of ERW in the south west Pacific, fostering goodwill between regional nations and supports strong bilateral relations. The ADF also assists Pacific nations through EOD training initiatives to develop explosive hazard awareness to allow these nations to develop their own independent EOD capabilities.

Madame Coordinator

I am pleased to advise that Australia has not only reached but exceeded the commitment we made to provide \$100 million to mine action over the years 2010 to 2014 over two years ahead of schedule.

Although Australia has achieved its financial commitment to mine action under our current strategy, Australia will continue to support mine action initiatives in the interim as we consider developing a new mine action strategy for the period extending beyond 2014. In doing so, we recognize both the considerable progress and the remaining challenges of mine action across the world.

We expect to consult on the draft of Australia's next strategy during the early part of 2014 and welcome constructive dialogue on how we should develop our future strategy.

Madame Coordinator

It is widely appreciated that individual efforts will be more effective if we work in a strong and closely coordinated partnership with affected States, other donors and implementing agencies.

This is one of the reasons Australia has been chairing the Mine Action Support Group (MASG). In this role we have been exploring, together with our partners, ways in which donors can cooperate to assist countries meet their Convention obligations including Article 4 on clearance. To this end, we oversaw two studies that were undertaken by the part-time Secretariat of the Mine Action Support Group, which was established with the generous funding support of the UK.

The first study is on 'Mine Action Coordination and Partnerships' and maps donor interests and support to mine action and considers ways that the MASG may be able to improve donor coordination and partnerships in mine action. The study identified ways that the MASG could be more proactive in coordinating the work of its members through joint assessments, information exchange, joint monitoring and evaluations etc. The study made a number of recommendations on how the MASG may contribute to strengthening its coordination and partnerships in mine action. The recommendations will be refined and taken forward by the MASG Secretariat in coordination with MASG members over the coming months and discussed and reviewed as part of regular MASG meetings.

The aim of the second study was to consider how the MASG may contribute to the "Completion Initiative" established by the United Nations, to assist affected countries complete their clearance work and meet their APMBC and CCM clearance obligations.

The study concluded that each individual country will need to define what completion means in their country context. In developing a business case to support 'completion' the study found that any case requires credibility and recommended it contains the following components;

- Clear performance targets
- Implementation plans based on value-for-money considerations
- Clear agreement on the level, organisation and governance of the long-term capacity to deal with residual threats of ERW
- Financing mechanisms that provide incentives for success.

The study made a number of recommendations on how the MASG may contribute to assisting countries to complete their mine action work. The recommendations of this study will also be refined and taken forward by the Secretariat over the coming months and discussed and reviewed as part of regular MASG meetings.

Madame Coordinator

In conclusion, Australia encourages affected States to continue their efforts to confirm the extent of their cluster munition remnant contamination and identify their assistance needs to the international community.

To effectively plan and program our international assistance in mine action we look to affected States:

- to provide accurate information on their cluster munition challenges and resource requirements,

- to demonstrate ownership and the national priority accorded to cluster munition action including through ratifying the Convention and providing national contributions; and
- to provide effective national leadership for and coordination of cluster munition action.

We thank State Parties and signatories for the efforts they have already made and look forward to working with State Parties, UN agencies, implementing partners and other donors to assist States in meeting their obligations under the Convention.

Thank you for your attention.