

Mine Ban Convention – Third Review Conference

Assisting the Victims

Tuesday 24 June

- . Australia remains firmly committed to the victim assistance objectives of this Convention.
- . Since the Second Review Conference, Australia has provided over \$25 million to victim assistance initiatives through its Mine Action Strategy for the Australian aid program.
 - Our victim assistance funding represents over 20 per cent of our mine action funding.
 - Our funding has been prioritised to initiatives that develop and integrates services for victims and other people with disability, into national policies and programs and those that support the care, rehabilitation and reintegration of victims, with an emphasis on improving well-being and livelihoods.
 - In doing so we seek to build appropriate and sustained capacities within affected states to address both the immediate and the long-term challenges of victim assistance.
- . Through its \$5 billion annual aid program, Australia also provides significant but less quantifiable levels of indirect victim assistance through the support it provides to strengthening the national health and socio-economic development programs of partner countries.
 - By way of example, Australia is pleased to be assisting Cambodia to develop a new *National Disability Strategic Plan (2014 – 2018)* and supporting this opportunity for Cambodia to use the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as the guiding framework in developing the new Strategic Plan.
- . Under its *Development for All Strategy, Towards a Disability Inclusive Aid Program*, Australia has contributed over \$219 million over the past two years to initiatives which improve the quality of life for people with disability.
 - Australia’s programming in disability aims to balance both disability-specific programs that increase participation and services for people with disability; and disability-inclusive programs that seek to ensure that all of aid interventions and programs are made accessible to people with disability.

Mr President

- . Australia is developing a new strategy to ensure that people with disability play an active and central role in Australia’s aid program beyond 2015 and benefit equally from it.
 - The Strategy will reflect the Australian Government’s focus on building skills, creating jobs and fostering economic growth in the Indo-Pacific region, and will build on the achievements of our *Development for All Strategy*.
 - The next phase of this Strategy will reflect on the role and inclusion of people with disabilities in economic development by linking in with our broader development efforts to build skills, create jobs and foster economic opportunities for people with disabilities.

- In addition to a strategic focus on our region, the Strategy is intended to strengthen performance measures and will introduce rigorous benchmarks to make sure our aid program is delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible.
- The Strategy will advocate for better data collection and disaggregation so that we can better understand the impacts of persons with disabilities and build the evidence base of what works.
- We are already collaborating with the World Health Organisation and others on this approach.
- The Strategy development process which is currently underway is intended to be consultative, accessible and inclusive to prioritise the direct engagement of people with disability and their representative organisations.

Mr President

- Since the Second Review Conference, Australia has supported the Implementation Support Unit to carry out initiatives to deepen our understanding of ways and means to fulfil our promise to mine victims and survivors.
- In particular, the ISU has conducted and issued a publication on the role of mine action programmes and national authorities in victim assistance, with a focus on the sustainability of efforts.
- This research has furthered our understanding of victim assistance and the magnitude of the effort being made to assist States in developing the responses necessary to meet the rights and needs of all individuals who are injured, or who live with disabilities, including landmine survivors.
 - Whether we label our support "victim assistance" or not, we should be clear that States Parties may be fulfilling our obligations to provide assistance for mine victims in a variety of different ways and with a variety of different labels.
 - What is important is that our support makes a difference, be in the short term or in the longer, and in the most sustainable way through building national capacities.
- Looking forward, we need to balance ongoing conversations in the context of Convention, which we do quite well, with efforts to take our messages beyond this Convention and to engage a wider range of actors, which is something we can do better.
 - We have seen, such as through the participation of the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights (Navi Pillay) in the 12MSP that we share a common agenda with other priority issues and forums.
 - We need to build new bridges and strengthen those that already exist.
 - We therefore welcome the clear recognition of engagement with other related domains and integration into broader national policies in Part IV of the Maputo Action Plan.

Finally, Mr President

- Australia will continue to look for opportunities to better utilise scarce resources to meet the Convention's promise to assist victims.
- Australia encourages mine-affected States, with support from development partners, to proactively assess and integrate victim assistance requirements into national plans that address disability, healthcare, rehabilitation, social services and employment.

- In particular, the fulfilment of Actions #12, #13 and #14 by each State Party with mine victims will be vital towards the integration and enhancement of victim assistance into broader national policies.
- This will help ensure that victim assistance is addressed by national institutions and predictably funded into the future.

