



Mine Ban Convention – Third Review Conference

High Level Segment

Statement by Australia

Delivered by H.E. Mr Graeme Wilson, Australian High Commissioner to Mozambique

- . Firstly, Mr President, may I congratulate you on your success and skill in presiding over this important meeting.
 - Your able guidance has helped us support strong outcome documents that will pave the way for the Convention’s implementation over the next five year period.
 - We offer our support and cooperation to you.
- . I would also like to convey our appreciation to Mozambique for your efforts and organisation in hosting the Third Review Conference and its generous and warm hospitality.
 - We look forward to deepening cooperation and assistance with State Parties under the Mine Ban to realise the Convention’s goals.

Mr President

- . Australia has had a long and steadfast commitment to this important Convention in recognition of the significant impact of anti-personnel landmines on individuals and communities long after hostilities have ceased.
- . The recent IED attack in Afghanistan, one of the most heavily mined countries in the world, which killed eight Afghan de-miners and injured another three, is deeply concerning and provides a stark reminder of the dangers that de-miners face in the field in order to carry out such vital work to make their country a safer place.
- . As part of our commitment to the Convention, the Australian Defence Force destroyed Australia’s stockpile of antipersonnel landmines in the late 1990’s, several years ahead of our deadline.
 - We have actively promoted universal participation in the Convention and made significant contributions to realise international action against anti-personnel landmines.
 - Since we signed the Mine Ban Convention in 1997, Australia has provided over \$300 million in mine action assistance.
 - We have been a committed donor to partner governments in over twenty affected countries.

- . Our support recognizes that mine action is a precursor and enabler of peace, security, stability, the protection of civilians, humanitarian relief and development.
 - We are mindful that mine action not only saves and rebuilds lives, but it can contribute to improving livelihoods and enabling economic growth by returning contaminated land to productive use.
- . Since the Second Review Conference, Australia has been an active contributor to mine action through our \$100 million *Mine Action Strategy for the Australian Aid Program* over the five-year period 2010-2014.
 - Through the Strategy we have worked to address the devastating impacts that landmines and other explosive remnants of war have on individuals, communities and states.
 - We have sought to alleviate the constraint that these weapons place on economic growth in our own region.
- . Our support has achieved substantial results and benefits to people affected by landmines.
 - In Afghanistan, Australia’s support has provided mine risk education to over 350,000 people and led to the clearance of over 8.3 square kilometres of hazardous land, benefitting more than 135,000 people.
 - In Cambodia, our contribution of over \$8 million to Cambodia’s Clearing for Results program has helped to clear or release 46.43 square kilometres of contaminated land and reduced the casualty rate by 45% in target provinces.
 - In Sri Lanka, Australia’s support has cleared and released more than 70 square kilometers of land for resettlement and farming, enabling over 35,000 internally displaced persons to return to their lands.
 - We have provided rehabilitation services to tens of thousands of people helping to rebuild shattered lives. We recognise that this work must be ongoing as many people will require support throughout their lives.
 - We also assisted Guinea Bissau, Jordan and Uganda to eradicate all known landmines, helping to release the citizens of these countries from the threat of further deaths or injuries.
 - Australia’s involvement in de-mining here in Mozambique goes back to the 1990s following the end of the country’s civil war
 - : we were pleased to provide an additional \$3 million through UNDP in 2012 to help Mozambique achieve mine-free status
 - : confirmation of the mine-free status of Maputo Province in March was a significant milestone and we look forward to Mozambique achieving its complete eradication goal.

Mr President

- . Last week, on the 18th June, the Australian Government released its new development

policy.

- The policy, "*Australian aid: promoting prosperity, reducing poverty, enhancing stability*" introduces key shifts in our aid program reflecting both our national interests and the changed context in which our aid program operates.
- The Australian Government's aid program will promote prosperity, reduce poverty and enhance stability with a strengthened focus on our region, the Indo-Pacific.
- The purpose of the aid program is to promote Australia's national interests by contributing to sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction.
- . Australia will prioritise economic growth, private sector development and aid-for-trade as part of an agenda to promote economic development through partnering with the private sector.
- . We will deliver aid in a way that reinforces the responsibility of partner governments to plan and fund their own economic development and poverty reduction strategies.
 - Australian aid will not displace or undermine these core sovereign responsibilities.
- . Australia will retain a strong focus on human development particularly with respect to empowering women economically, improving access to quality education and health systems and targeting programs that improve outcomes for disadvantaged people and groups (including those with disabilities, remote and rural communities).
- . Australia remains firmly committed to assisting the most disadvantaged, including people with disability, find pathways out of poverty.
- . Women's economic empowerment, women's leadership and combatting violence against women will be major pillars of Australia's aid program.

Mr President

- . Australia is also considering how best to direct our future international efforts towards a world free of landmines and other explosive remnants of war.
 - Our thinking will be informed by the outcomes of this Review Conference.
 - It will also be informed by an independent evaluation of the *Mine Action Strategy for the Australian aid program* planned for the later part of 2014.
 - We expect to position our future mine action assistance to continue to make a real and measurable contribution to increasing stability and prosperity amongst the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in our region.
 - We will continue to pursue opportunities to support States that require assistance to address the impact of landmines.

Mr President

- . This week in Maputo, as States Parties, we have looked back on what has already been achieved under this Convention, and we look ahead to the challenges that remain

- The scale of the challenges that lie ahead is very different to what we faced when States Parties last met in Maputo in 1999.
 - : We are confident that the Maputo Action Plan provides a clear path to bring us closer to our collective vision of a world free from anti-personnel mines
 - : And that the new implementation machinery will better focus and progress our work to fulfil the commitments under the Maputo Action Plan, as well as previous action plans.
- We welcome the ambitious, but realistic, goal that we have set ourselves for the next five years
 - : We welcome the Maputo +15 Declaration as encapsulating the revitalised political will and energy of States Parties towards fulfilling their respective obligations under this Convention
 - : Mozambique is indeed a fine example to those States Parties with obligations still to meet, of how such ambition can be realised.
- . We encourage all countries to fully adhere to the humanitarian norms established by the Mine Ban Convention.
 - We encourage State Parties to provide adequate support for the victims and to integrate victim assistance into broader disability frameworks.
 - We must continue our collective efforts until the world is finally rid of this terrible menace.
 - Australia remains committed to efforts to eliminate the destructive menace of anti-personnel mines and to help rehabilitate those already suffering from their deadly force.

I thank you Mr President