Constitution on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)

Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War
Meeting of Experts – April 2012

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE

Statement by Australia

26 April 2012

Statement delivered by XXX

Thank you Mr. Coordinator.

We appreciate your efforts undertaken in preparing for this session, and we offer our full support.

Australia is committed to implementing our obligations enshrined in Articles 7 and 8 of Protocol V, by assisting States affected by explosive remnants of war.

As UNMAM has stated this week, there is still substantial contamination of explosive remnants of war in many countries, and this can exceed the challenges posed by mines. Adequate attention needs to be given to explosive remnants of war by affected States and donors, in order to reduce the danger to civilians who are living and working in close proximity to the contamination. Further, the threat that the explosives may be harvested and used by insurgents and other actors for criminal purposes must be addressed.

As part of our broader Mine Action Strategy, we have partnered with a range of States to help clear land affected by explosive remnants of war. In 2011, Australia provided assistance to countries such as Afghanistan, Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Georgia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libya and Sri Lanka.

We will also provide assistance to the Pacific State of Palau, which was the scene of intense fighting during World War II, and where there are still thousands of unexploded bombs throughout the country. This poses a serious risk to residents and tourists and prevents the use of large tracts of land.

Our annual report for Protocol V contains further details on Australia’s assistance in mine action.
We are also increasingly reflecting on physical security and stockpile management in our partner countries, to consider how we might assist. As was pointed out by MAG in its presentation yesterday, we have recently provided support to improve stockpile management and security in Somalia.

Mr. Coordinator,

The provision of assistance to affected States has broader development benefits and encourages national capacity building. By working with partner governments, communities and NGOs, Australia is assisting people to reclaim their land and to enhance physical security. It is life-saving work and we are proud to be actively engaged in it.

Thank you.