

Australia
3 July 2008 p.m.

CCW: Protocol V: Victim Assistance Statement

Mr Coordinator

Let me first thank you for your efforts in preparing for this session and the way in which you are leading our ~~debate~~ *discussions*.

The questionnaire you distributed will be helpful in guiding our discussions on victim assistance today and in the future. Thank you also for ~~the Elements of Victim Assistance Paper you have distributed~~ *Discussion Paper*. This helpfully reflects global thinking on this issue, as it has developed over the last years. *And a cover*

Mr Coordinator

~~Australia is committed to fulfilling its obligations under Article 8 paragraph 2 of Protocol V to provide assistance for the care and rehabilitation and social and economic reintegration of ERW victims.~~

~~ERW survivors are often among the poorest and most marginalised in societies. And many affected countries are also developing states with limited resources.~~

~~Australia has provided assistance to a number of states with a significant number of landmine and ERW survivors, including Afghanistan, Angola, Uganda, Jordan and Cambodia. To give a few examples of our programs, we support the GICHD's Implementation Support Unit's Victim Assistance Expert. CARE Australia is working to improve service and support for people with disabilities in Laos. And we~~

responded to the ICRC Special Fund for the Disabled Appeal 2007 with a 3-year commitment in Vietnam.

Mr Coordinator

Australia believes that there are a number of principles which should guide victim assistance efforts.

Victim assistance activities should aim to improve livelihoods of ERW survivors, their families and their communities in an integrated fashion.

Australia's survivor assistance projects are often linked to general health sector support, notably in Afghanistan and Cambodia. And we work closely in line with partner government priorities.

integrated

Assistance should also be non-discriminatory. Australia does not differentiate between victims of different forms of ERW and landmines in providing support.

It will be important for the international community to follow this approach across all relevant forums.

~~Further, we consider that the principle of assistance based solely on need should apply to all disabled people, not just to victims of armed conflict. Australia is actively looking at integrating disability assistance into all our aid programmes.~~

non-discrimi

We encourage ERW victim assistance to be provided within the framework of the Convention for the Rights of People with Disabilities so as not to create overlapping mechanisms. ~~Australia is an original signatory to this Convention.~~

overlapping

in general

We would ask countries to include the rights of people with disabilities in their national policy frameworks and provide practical solutions for their integration.

Australia looks forward to working with all High Contracting Parties to operationalise and effectively implement Protocol V victim assistance provisions.

As a final personal note to you, Mr Coordinator, it has been a great pleasure for Australia to work with you across a number of forums to support victims of various weapons types. ~~We~~ note with sadness that you will soon be departing Geneva and, as everyone in this room can attest, you leave very large shoes to fill.

Thank you.