



High Level Statement by Parliamentary Secretary and Special Representative for Mine Action, Mr Bruce Billson MP, at the First Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction.

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Let me at the outset thank our host, Kenya, who has welcomed us so warmly.

I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Wolfgang Petritsch of Austria – as the President of the Review Conference – States Parties and the international and non-government organisations present here, in particular the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, for the work you have all done to bring us closer to our ultimate goal of a mine free world.

Key achievements to date

Looking at what we have achieved, I am quite in awe.

- . In 5 short years, 144 states have ratified the Treaty, joined this week by Ethiopia.
- . 62 million stockpiled mines have been destroyed.
- . More than 1,100 square kilometres of land have been cleared.
- . By setting an example to states not party, only 2 countries have regularly used mines in the past 5 years, and there has been no reported legal trade in anti-personnel landmines.

Here at the First Review Conference, we should not underestimate the success of this treaty.

Australia's key achievements

For its part, Australia has worked hard to assist regional partners to clear their mines, destroy their stocks and assist their mine victims.

The Australian Government committed to spending \$100 million on mine action by the end of 2005 and has undertaken projects in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Vietnam, Burma and Sri Lanka in our more immediate region, and also further a field in Afghanistan, Angola, Iraq and Mozambique.

Australia has also been working to support pragmatic and workable solutions to the humanitarian problems posed by anti-vehicle mines, through the CCW and hope that we can negotiate a new AVM protocol next year.

The CCW consensus process incorporates states which are not part of the Ottawa Convention. We view the CCW and Ottawa as complementary not competitive forums. We need to work for progress in the CCW process just as we seek to advance our shared purpose here.

Challenges ahead

But as we have all attested, we have huge challenges ahead:

- . Key states remain outside the Convention, including major mine producers and users.
- . Uncleared mines and unexploded ordnance still affect people in 83 countries.
- . Mines are still being buried in dozens of conflicts around the world, including by non-state actor groups, groups which by definition can not become party to the Ottawa Convention.
- . Long after the last landmine is removed, our work will not be done. There are between 300,000 and 400,000 mine survivors living in the world today, together with their families, that need on-going physical and psychological support and assistance to reintegrate into their communities, both socially and economically.
- . And sadly there are new victims to landmines every day, despite the clear gains.

Collective response

So, in the face of these daunting challenges, what can we do?

Firstly, we must collectively redouble our efforts to universalise the treaty.

Secondly, we must all reconfirm our commitment to support mine action.

We must also find creative ways, inspired by endeavours of leading organisations like Geneva Call, to reach out to non-state actors and convince them that anti-personnel mines are simply not legitimate weapons.

What will Australia do?

So, what will Australia do over the next 5 years?

I can promise that we will:

- . Continue to be a leading nation in mine action
 - over the next year and a half, we will spend over A\$16 million on mine action, to well exceed our \$100 million 10 year commitment.

Over the next five years, guided by our learnings and the forward agenda shaped by the Review Conference, Australia's Mine Action Framework will focus on:

- developing programs which recognise the important links between mine action, sustainable development and improved living standards.
- this is about removing the landmine impediment to ordinary people, giving them access to land, improved incomes, schooling, access to health services or successful resettlement.

- building national capacity in mine-affected states through assistance with training in project management and technical skills, including in de-mining;
- continuing work on the treatment, rehabilitation and socio-economic reintegration of survivors and mine-affected communities, in an attempt to empower disabled people in developing countries.
- Supporting NGOs which have displayed the know-how and capacity to effectively collaborate with mine-affected communities and local administrations of a both state and a non-state character, to achieve meaningful mine action outcomes.

In addition, we will:

- . Continue our efforts to promote universalisation of the Treaty, with a particular focus in the Asia-Pacific region; and
- . Increase our efforts to persuade and facilitate non-state actors to abide by the Convention

Conclusion

Distinguished guests, delegates, ladies and gentlemen

One thing is clear - mine affected countries can not prosper until landmines are gone, and people can not return to their communities freely and in safety until landmines are gone.

Australia's strong support for mine action will continue in future years to ensure the best possible outcomes for our regional friends and neighbours - we remain a committed partner in this process.

Once again I would like to congratulate Kenya, Austria, and all delegates and participants for a highly successful Review Conference.