

**Seventh Meeting of States Parties of the
Convention on the Prohibition of the Use,
Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of
Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction**

Statement by H.E. Ms Caroline Millar

**Ambassador for Disarmament
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of
Australia to the United Nations
President of the Seventh Meeting of States Parties**

18 September 2006

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen

At the outset, I wish to express my appreciation for the confidence you have shown in me and my delegation in appointing Australia to the Presidency.

Australia will approach this presidency with the same level of commitment to the Convention that we have demonstrated since its founding.

Our commitment is substantial, as evidenced by our recently announced Mine Action Strategy.

But it is more than simply about funding mine action.

It is based on a conviction that the indiscriminate nature of anti-personnel landmines presents an unacceptable humanitarian threat that must be dealt with.

For this reason, Australia will be a very active President, beginning with this Meeting of States Parties.

At this meeting, we must measure our progress since the Zagreb Meeting of States Parties against the yardstick we have set ourselves in the Convention and through our commitments to the Nairobi Action Plan.

I understand that we will hear of significant developments in the implementation of our Convention this week.

We must also turn our attention to the future of the Convention, for we face several significant challenges.

Foremost among these is implementation of Article 5 mine destruction obligations.

With the first of these deadlines a little over two years away we must develop strategies for accelerating mine destruction and handling extension requests.

States Parties also need to focus on other urgent tasks, including stockpile destruction deadlines and addressing the continuing needs of survivors.

How we deal with these issues is vital to the interests of this Convention and its States Parties.

Our Convention was founded on the just cause of ending the suffering caused by anti-personnel landmines for all time.

We must continually deliver outcomes towards this end for the sake of the credibility of our Convention.

Let us not allow this Convention to stand as a reminder of promises unfulfilled.

With this in mind, I will issue a President's Action Plan for Universalising the Convention later this week.

Through this plan, and with your cooperation where possible, it is my hope that we will bring our Convention closer to its universal adherence.

Distinguished delegates

Australia takes on the Presidency knowing that our task is made easier for the work that was done before us.

I would like to pay tribute to Croatia, and Dijana Plestina in particular, for the considerable and tireless efforts of the out-going Presidency.

I would also like to thank Kerry Brinkert Manager of the Implementation Support Unit and the many colleagues who have helped me in my preparations as President-Designate.

And I would like to thank all delegates for the efforts, knowledge and cooperation you will bring to this meeting.

I look forward to working with you toward fulfilling our common goal.