



AUSTRALIA

Conference on Disarmament

**Anniversary of the entry into force of the Ottawa
Convention.**

**Statement by H.E. Mr Michael Smith
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United Nations and to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva**

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Mr Chairman

Australia welcomes this opportunity to mark the anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, also known as the Ottawa Convention.

As celebrated at the First Review Conference, held in Nairobi last year, this treaty has been an overwhelming success, both as an arms control and as a humanitarian treaty. Austria, a leading contributor to the Ottawa process from the beginning, and in particular, Ambassador Wolfgang Petritsch, should be congratulated for their excellent work as President of the Review Conference.

In 5 years, the Ottawa Treaty has produced significant results. 144 states parties have ratified the treaty. Some 62 million stockpiled mines have been destroyed. More than 1,100 square kilometres of land have been cleared. Only 2 countries have regularly used mines over the past 5 years. There has been no reported legal trade in anti-personnel landmines. Despite these evident achievements, the Ottawa Treaty still faces challenges in bringing on board key target states and in engaging non-state actors responsible for ongoing landmine use.

For its part, Australia has worked hard to implement the treaty in full and assist regional partners to clear mines, destroy stocks and assist mine victims. Australia will spend \$16 million on mine action in the next 18 months, exceeding by some \$10 million the Government's commitment to spend \$100 million in the decade ending 2005. In the last ten years, Australia has undertaken projects in Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Burma and Sri Lanka in our region, and further afield in Afghanistan, Angola, Iraq and Mozambique.

We have also taken an active role in the intersessional work program, most recently chairing the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Re-integration, together with Croatia. As a State Party we have recommitted ourselves to continue to work on the implementation of the Action Plan, adopted at the Review Conference. We will work together with others over the next 5 years to expand universalisation of the treaty and continue the task of clearing the world of mines and assisting victims.

One of the striking features of the Ottawa treaty is how it was negotiated, outside of the UN system and in partnership with civil society. Governments, organisations and individuals of goodwill took direct action to remedy what was revealing itself as a horrific humanitarian tragedy. This negotiation on landmines had to be taken out of the CD in order to produce real results that have impacted positively on millions of people's lives. And, frankly, the situation here has not improved since that happened 6 years or so ago. We seem to have lost the ability to react and respond to new challenges in the arms control/disarmament field, or indeed to the old challenges.

Drawing this comparison serves to highlight the serious problems facing the CD. CD members should be clear that the status quo cannot continue.