



AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION PRETORIA

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Australia supports efforts towards a mine-free world

From 23 to 27 June 2014, over 1000 representatives of States and international and non-governmental organizations are meeting in Maputo, Mozambique to chart the path forward in the global effort to end the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines.

Speaking at the Maputo Review Conference on a Mine-Free World, Australia's High Commissioner to South Africa and Mozambique, HE Mr Graeme Wilson, reinforced the commitments the Australian Government has made to support the implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

"Australia has had a long and steadfast commitment to this important Convention in recognition of the significant impact that anti-personnel landmines have on individuals and communities, long after hostilities have ceased", Mr Wilson said.

Since signing the Convention in 1997, Australia has provided over \$300 million in mine action assistance and has been a committed donor to partner governments in over twenty affected countries. As part of Australia's commitment to the Convention, the Australian Defence Force destroyed Australia's stockpile of anti-personnel landmines in the late 1990's, several years ahead of the deadline.

Australia is helping several countries to become free of all known landmines including one of the most contaminated countries in the world, Mozambique. Australia's assistance for demining in Mozambique goes back to the 1990s, following the end of the country's long-running civil war. In April 2012, Australia provided an additional \$3 million through the United Nations Development Programme to help Mozambique meet its deadline of achieving mine-free status by the end of 2014.

More than 15 years after the Convention's entry into force and the First Meeting of States Parties in 1999, which was also held in Maputo, the Review Conference will assess the progress made to date and provide a roadmap for the work ahead.

"Mine action not only saves and rebuilds lives, but it contributes to improving livelihoods and enabling economic growth by returning contaminated land to productive use", Mr Wilson said. "We are confident that the Maputo Action Plan provides a clear path to bring us closer to our collective vision of a world free from anti-personnel mines. We must continue our collective efforts until the world is finally rid of this terrible menace."

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