

## **ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION**

### **INTERSESSIONAL MEETINGS, 7-8 JUNE**

#### **STATEMENT OF SPONSORSHIP COORDINATOR (AUSTRALIA)**

Madam President,

Australia is pleased to be serving as Sponsorship Programme Coordinator again in 2018.

The Sponsorship Programme is essential to the work of the Convention. It enables participation in the meetings of the Convention and direct interaction with the Convention's Committees by capital and field-based experts from States Parties with limited means. Such participation helps these experts coordinate their countries' implementation of their mine clearance, stockpile destruction and victim assistance obligations.

As we outlined in our joint letter with you, circulated to all States Parties in advance of the Pledging Conference in March this year, at the beginning of 2018, the Programme had just under CHF38,000 left available to it.

Since that time, the Programme has received additional contributions from Australia, the Netherlands and Croatia, and expects to receive a further contribution through an arrangement with Switzerland, which will bring total new contributions so far this year to a little over CHF 38,000. We thank our fellow donors for their generous contributions. This brought the total funding available to the Programme to a little over CHF 75,000 ahead of these Intersessional Meetings.

On this basis, for the intersessional meetings, we offered sponsorship to a total of 16 representatives of States Parties. Unfortunately, for a range of personal and logistic reasons, a number of those offered sponsorship were not able to attend the intersessional meetings.

Ultimately, the Programme provided sponsorship for 10 delegates to attend the meetings, from Angola, Chad, DRC, Niger, Senegal, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan and Zimbabwe. Their attendance has helped support the work these countries have conducted at these meetings in connection with Article 5 extension requests, Article 5 work plans, preparations for extension requests to be submitted in 2019, implementation of Article 5 and submission of initial reports.

The cost to the Programme of these sponsorships amounted to a little over CHF 24'000.

This means that, following the Intersessional Meetings, the Programme will have approximately CHF 61'000 available to support delegates to attend the 17MSP. With this funding, we will be able to sponsor approximately 17 delegates to attend the 17MSP – the same number as in 2017

However, we must keep in mind that this would leave no funding for 2019, a Review Conference year, and that there are more than 19 least developed and low income countries implementing core obligations, including mine clearance and victim assistance, under the Convention which would benefit from sponsorship support to send delegates to meetings in 2018.

We therefore urgently need more States Parties, which are in a position to do so, to invest in the Sponsorship Programme for 2018 to ensure broad participation at the Seventeenth Meeting of the States Parties and next year's Review Conference. Given that the average delegate cost to attend and MSP is reasonably low - between CHF 3,500-4,500 - even relatively small contributions to the Programme by States Parties will have a significant, direct impact.

Madam President

We need significantly increased funding to allow mine-affected States Parties a strong voice in the future direction of the Convention's work. We encourage all States Parties to consider new, renewed or increased funding the Sponsorship Programme.

Thank you Madam President.