



Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling,  
Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

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**Sponsorship Programme – Donors Group**

**Presentation by John Wattam (UK) Programme Co-ordinator**

**at the**

**Standing Committee on the General Status & Operation of the Convention**

**Intersessional Programme, Geneva, 3 February 2003**

**Interpreters copy**

Thank you Mr President,

- Well, what a different view you get from here. Not least because you can see more clearly a number of new faces amongst those that are familiar.
- And that is what the Sponsorship Programme is about – the bringing together of a range of States Parties and others with a day-to-day exposure to & experience of APL's, those who need assistance to meet their obligations under the Ottawa Convention or those who need help to sign up and ratify it. It is an essential tool of partnership that underscores our important dialogue on assistance, co-operation and implementation of the Convention.
- The Sponsorship Programme, like the Convention itself, is unique. Unique to the Convention and unique in its approach. From its first tentative steps three years ago, it has grown in size, acquired a reputation of excellence and been successful, with a year on year growth in the number of those States Party representatives it has been able to assist.
- But the number of delegates that can be sponsored ultimately depends upon available resources. When I took on the Co-ordinators role from Canada last year, I took up where my predecessor left off and started to lobby current and potentially new donors for necessary funding. Fortunately, for this meeting the generosity of its current donors – UK, Germany, Sweden, Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, Norway, Austria, the Netherlands and Canada, joined for the first time by Denmark, Australia, and France, has allowed the programme to assist a record number of delegates for an intersessional meeting (and the second largest number after the 4MSP last September). But, like universalisation, ratification and compliance of the Convention, funding is a work in progress.
- If the current flow of income continues, I am optimistic that the programme is on course financially to meet expectations for sponsorship assistance for the next intersessional meetings in May. But additional pledges and contributions will be needed to sustain the programme at the 5MSP in Bangkok and thereafter into 2004.

- May I thank all of you who have made a financial contribution to date and encourage those of you who haven't and are in a position to do so to follow suit. Looking around this room, the benefits of doing so speak for themselves.
- Can I also take this opportunity to sow seeds for some creative thinking which, if taken up, might supplement and enhance the level of sponsorship assistance. For example, I am certain there are some States Parties who may wish to help, but may not be in a position to join the Donors Group. In that situation would they be willing to enter into individual bilateral sponsorship deals (outside of the formal sponsorship programme) with their neighbouring countries? Could regional groups do more to assist those most in need in their area to attend these meetings? Perhaps a little more controversially, would those States Parties who have consistently received a certain level of assistance from the programmes inception, but are now stronger in their commitment to and implementation of the Convention and financially better placed than they once were, be willing and able to be more self-supporting and less reliant on the Sponsorship Programme, thereby releasing funding to allow others to make a similar degree of progress. As I have said earlier, resources for sponsorship are limited. We therefore must ensure that they are distributed in an equitable manner, and a manner that is consistent with the Convention's most pressing implementation challenges.
- Looking ahead, the Programme, like the Convention, will need to meet not only current high expectations but also future demands. We need to be careful that a valuable support tool for all does not become an indispensable crutch for a few. It is important to ensure as widespread and sustainable participation as possible in intersessional meetings this year and, especially, in the run-up to the review of the Convention next year.
- Looking to 2003, as many of you know, this year is a crucial one for those States Parties that face imminent stockpile destruction deadlines. With this in mind, the donors, took an early decision to give priority consideration to applications from those States, as well as to those that are mine-affected and least able to help themselves. Some of you may have been disappointed that we could not meet your requests in full, but wherever possible we

have considered requests for sponsorship for 1 to 2 delegates for;

- States Parties that are mine-affected Least Developed Countries (LDCs);
- for other mine-affected States Parties that may have a need for support;
- for other States Parties that are LDCs;

and, in some cases, for the presence of a delegate from States not yet party to the Convention that have a need for support and which have demonstrated they are on the path to acceptance of the Convention.

The Programme has also supported some expert speakers at meetings of the Standing Committees (ISCs), on the basis of nominations made by the Co-Chairs.

- We are particularly pleased that so many of the requests we received were in accordance with the Programme's procedures and within the deadline of 10 January. Some of you may have considered this a little tight coming so early in the New Year, but it was essential for us to enable Catherine Borrero and others tasked with organising the practical arrangements of your attendance to put them smoothly into place in the most cost-effective way.
- As Co-ordinator I am just the front-man for the Sponsorship Programme. There are many others who work behind the scenes to ensure it successfully meets its objectives. I cannot close without expressing my appreciation and thanks to the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), particularly to Catherine Borrero, and Nelson Matute for administering the Programme – at no additional cost to the Programme's donors. I would also like to thank Kerry Brinkert of the Implementation Support Unit for providing advice and information and, my fellow colleagues on the Donors Group for their co-operation and support.
- Last but not least, on behalf of the Donors Group may I welcome all those delegates we have been able to assist in bringing to this meeting – especially those new faces here for the first time. We look forward to your contributions and engagement in the Ottawa process.