

Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Fourteenth Meeting of States Parties

Report of the Informal Sponsorship Coordinator (Australia)

Thursday 3 December 2015

Mr President,

Throughout 2015, Australia continued to serve as the Coordinator of the Sponsorship Programme.

The Sponsorship Programme is one of the Convention's oldest implementation support mechanisms. It was established on a voluntary basis by an interested group of States Parties in 2000, in advance of the Second Meeting of the States Parties.

The Programme supports widespread participation in the work of the Convention, particularly by States Parties with few means and which are in the process of clearing mined areas, assisting victims and destroying stockpiles.

The Programme has allowed capital and field-based delegates, selected on the basis of their expertise, to share information which enhances our discussion, and in turn, enriches their own work when they return home.

The Programme has also been essential to the work of the Committees who have used the opportunity to interact with the delegates.

The architecture established during the Maputo Review Conference is one that benefits greatly from the interaction and exchange of information between representatives of mine action centres and experts that work on disability issues in capital.

The Sponsorship Programme is instrumental in further strengthening this important dialogue. Indeed, most mine-affected States would not be able to take part at expert-level in victim assistance and other discussions under this Convention without the Sponsorship Programme.

Mr President,

I wish to thank the Implementation Support Unit and the GICHD, which administers the programme at no cost, for their invaluable advice and support administering the Programme and identifying delegates for sponsorship throughout 2015. I also thank the Programme's Donors' group which at the moment constitutes only Denmark and ourselves.

Mr President

In January 2015, the ISU projected that the programme would have approximately CHF 98,500 and that, on this basis, approximately 33 delegates could be sponsored in total in 2015.

I am pleased to report that for the Intersessional meeting in June, as the meetings took place back-to-back with the meetings of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, sponsorship was split between the Ottawa Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

For the Intersessional meeting a total of 12 States Parties delegates were sponsored - 7 at the victim assistance expert level, 4 at the mine clearance expert level, and an additional state was sponsored on a special request.

For this week's Meeting the Sponsorship Programme had offered sponsorship for 20 delegates from States Parties. Ultimately 18 States took up our sponsorship offers, including 8 experts level victim assistance delegates and 10 mine clearance experts.

In total, 30 delegates have been sponsored to attend meetings of the Convention in 2015.

This was made possible by Australia and Denmark's contributions to the Sponsorship Programme in 2015.

Mr President,

Having noted the important contributions to the work of the Convention that the Sponsorship Programme has made, it is with great concern that we have to advise States Parties that funding for the programme is almost exhausted.

On current projections, we will commence 2016 with less than CHF 6,000 available to the programme, which will support only two, or perhaps three delegates across the entire year in 2016.

We urgently need more States Parties, which are in a position to do so, to invest in this Programme for 2016. We need to ensure widespread participation at the Intersessional meeting on the road to the 15th Meeting of the States Parties as well as participation in the 15th Meeting of States Parties itself, to be held in Chile.

This becomes particularly relevant in to support our Maputo Declaration commitments to continue carrying out our efforts, in the spirit of cooperation and partnership to comply and complete our obligations under the Convention.

Mr President,

Soon after this meeting, we will be writing to all States Parties to urge support for the Sponsorship Programme in 2016. Given that the average delegate cost is reasonably low, between CHF 2,000-3,000, even relatively small contributions to the Programme by States will have a significant, direct impact.

Mr President

Allowing mine-affected States Parties a strong voice in the future direction of the Convention's work is critical.

We encourage all States Parties to consider joining us in funding the Sponsorship Programme, including as part of the commitments they may make at the pledging Conference to be held in early 2016 if, as proposed, this Meeting of States Parties decides to establish such a Conference.

Thank you, Mr President.