

**ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION SEVENTEENTH MEETING  
OF STATES PARTIES**

**STATEMENT OF SPONSORSHIP COORDINATOR (AUSTRALIA)**

Madam President,

Australia has been pleased to serve as Sponsorship Programme Coordinator again in 2018.

Thanks to the ongoing support of a small number of donors in 2017- namely Austria, Croatia, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Turkey and Australia – the Programme commenced 2018 with just under CHF38,000 available to it.

In February 2018, a joint letter from the Presidency (Afghanistan), and Australia, as Sponsorship Coordinator, was sent to all current and recent donors appealing for further contributions to the Programme. A further appeal for contributions was made at the Pledging Conference earlier this year and at the Informal meeting of the 17<sup>th</sup> MSP in September, preceded by a communication sent to all States Parties. In 2018, and following appeals, the Programme received contributions and pledges from Canada, Croatia, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Australia, bringing the total available to the Programme in the first six months of the year to just over CHF 136,596. I must point out that many of these are multi-year contributions which is particularly helpful to the programme.

On this basis, and on the advice of the ISU, the Donor Group agreed to offer sponsorship to 14 delegates to attend the intersessional meetings in June. We offered sponsorship to delegates from countries submitting Article 5 extension requests, delegates from countries due to submit work plans in

support of Article 5 clearance commitments, and delegates with Article 5 deadlines in 2019, 2020 and 2021, and other States that required support to participate. Of the offers made, the following ten countries took up sponsorship and attended the Intersessional Meetings: Angola, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Niger, Senegal, Sudan, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan and Zimbabwe.

The cost to the Programme of these sponsorships amounted to just over CHF 24,271.

Madam President,

Our objective for this MSP was to support 31 delegates to attend. With this in mind, in consultation with the Donor Group we issued a total of 31 invitations to take up sponsorship for this MSP:

- two delegates from countries with extension requests to be considered at this meeting; (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sudan)
- one delegate from a country which has submitted or is obliged to submit updated work plans for their Article 5 mine clearance commitments; (Angola)
- five delegates from countries that will need to submit requests for extension of their mine clearance deadlines in 2018; (Chad, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Niger Tajikistan)
- one delegate from a country close to completion of its Article 5 obligations; (Mauritania)
- Six delegates from countries in the process of implementing Article 5 obligations with upcoming deadlines in 2021 and beyond;
- 16 delegates from countries that have indicated having responsibility for a significant numbers of landmine survivors.

Of those invited, 5 countries did not nominate delegates for sponsorship. Ultimately, 26 delegates of States Parties have been sponsored to attend the 17<sup>th</sup> MSP. The total approximate cost of the participation of sponsored delegates is around CHF83,735, at an average cost of around CHF3,200 per delegate.

Madam President

In summary, the Sponsorship Programme has supported 40 delegates to attend meetings of the Convention this year, compared to 27 delegates last year.

We are very pleased that the trend toward fewer contributions and lower numbers of sponsored delegates we experienced in 2015 and 2016 has been reversed, thanks to the generosity of our small group of committed donors. We wish to thank again Austria, Canada, Croatia, the Netherlands, and Switzerland for joining Australia in contributing to the Sponsorship Programme in 2018. We would note also that the lower-than-expected take-up of offers of sponsorship for this Meeting of States Parties means the Sponsorship Programme will carry around CHF28,430 into 2019, providing it with a solid base for the new year.

However, we would urge against complacency. To avoid the situation faced over the past two years, in which numerous appeals were needed to secure the funding required to support relatively small numbers of delegates to attend the intersessional meetings and Meetings of States Parties, we would encourage all States Parties to consider including pledges to the Sponsorship Programme in the pledges they will make at next year's Pledging Conference.

Next year, we also enter a Review Conference year and in this regard, the high level participation from States Parties is even more crucial for its success.

Madam President

We have all seen the direct benefit of the Sponsorship Programme through the extensive engagement of sponsored delegates in our proceedings at this meeting, in particular through their interaction in plenary with the Committee on Article 5 implementation, with the Committee on Cooperative Compliance, with you on the issue of stockpile destruction and with the Committee on Victim Assistance which has held an important Victim Assistance Experts Meeting to push our agenda forward in this regard and contribution to the purpose of our Convention..

The Sponsorship Programme plays a critical role in ensuring that all States Parties – and in particular those with limited resource capacity and with whom the Convention Committees need to engage on implementation of clearance and stockpile destruction obligations – have the opportunity to attend the meetings of the Convention. In this respect it is a key enabler for the implementation and universalisation of the Convention. We urge all States Parties with the capacity to do so to contribute to the Programme.

Thank you Madam President.