

**Statement by Canada on behalf of Sponsorship Programme's donors group  
(Belgium, Canada, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands,  
Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom)**

The Sponsorship Programme is an important mechanism in our collective effort to implement the Convention. The purpose of the Programme is to support widespread participation in meetings related to the Convention. In doing so, it underscores the importance of partnership in achieving the Convention's humanitarian aims, it helps promote a widespread sense of ownership of the Convention and it helps bring to life our important dialogue on assistance and cooperation.

Since its establishment just prior to the Second Meeting of the States Parties, the Programme has disbursed more than CHF1.2 million and supported the participation of more than 270 delegates. Given limited resources, and the imperative to strike a balance between funds for mine action and funds to support participation in the work of the Convention, the Programme's donors have developed priorities to ensure that limited resources are directed to where they are needed the most. The donors group will consider requests for sponsorship for 1 to 2 delegates for those countries according to this list of priority areas:

- for States Parties which 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, to consider support for the presence of a delegate from States not yet party to the Convention which 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, and will continue to consider such requests. However, the approach to the Intersessional Work Programme, which increasingly puts a greater emphasis on hearing about progress in implementation of the Convention by States Parties, reinforces the need for enhanced participation from those states.

Given our desire to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of this Programme over the next two years, it is essential that Programme recipients cooperate in the application of the procedures established by the donors group:

- Only official requests from States will be considered. While States may nominate whomever they wish as potential recipients, they must indicate these individuals' relationship to work to implement the Convention and requests must be submitted on the letterhead of the requesting State's permanent mission or ministry of foreign affairs.
- Requests must be received by the deadlines stipulated by the donors. The cost implications of accepting requests made after deadlines means that the donors cannot consider such requests.

- Sponsored individuals must accept to travel to Geneva in economy class on a ticket arranged by the Programme, and must accept to stay in hotel arranged by the Programme.

The number of delegates that can be sponsored ultimately depends upon available resources. In order to provide sponsorship support at levels consistent with past practice for the February 2003 ISC meetings, CHF 250,000 must flow through the fund, with some commitments toward this amount already made. To overcome this challenge, we call upon all those States Parties in a position to do so to make contributions to the Programme. We wish also wish to thank Austria, which, while not in a position to formally join the donors group for the Sponsorship Programme, has cooperated with the group – most recently by committing significant resources to sponsor delegates to this meeting.

The success of the Sponsorship Programme in meeting its objectives would not be possible without the efforts of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), particularly Catherine Borrero, in administering the Programme – at no additional cost to the Programme’s donors. We wish to thank the GICHD and Ms. Borrero for their support, and the Implementation Support Unit for providing us with advice and information.

In closing, allow me to say that it has been a privilege for Canada to coordinate the Sponsorship Program donors group since its establishment in 2000. At this time the decision has been made to rotate the opportunity to another State Party – the United Kingdom – and another individual – Mr. John Wattam – to take on this responsibility. We wish the United Kingdom and John Wattam every success, and express our hope that all States Parties will offer their cooperation to them.

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