

**ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION THIRD PLEDGING  
CONFERENCE**

**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.

Madam President,

As we reported at the Meeting of States Parties in Vienna last December, thanks to contributions from a small number of donors in 2016 and 2017 – namely Austria, Chile, Croatia, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Turkey and Australia – the Sponsorship Programme supported a total of 27 delegates to attend meetings of the Convention in 2017. Ten delegates were sponsored to attend the Intersessional meetings and 17 delegates were sponsored to attend the Meeting of States Parties.

The total cost of the Programme in 2017 was approximately CHF67,000, comprised of CHF20,000 for the Intersessional Meetings and CHF47,000 for the Meeting of States Parties.

Madam President

As we outlined in our joint letter with you, circulated to all States Parties in advance of this Pledging Conference, at the beginning of 2018, the Programme has only just under CHF38,000 left available to it. If the Programme's funds remain at this level, it is expected that the Programme will only have capacity to support around ten delegates to attend the Intersessional Meetings and 17MSP.

However, 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 Intersessional Meetings and the Seventeenth Meeting of the States Parties. 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.

With increased funding, the Sponsorship Programme could support delegates across all of the following categories:

- States Parties that will submit requests for extension under Article 5 for consideration by the Seventeenth Meeting of the States Parties;
- States Parties that are required to submit updated work plans and additional information on the basis of decisions made on previously granted requests for extension under Article 5;
- States Parties that are nearing completion of their Article 5 obligations;
- States Parties that are in the process of implementing Article 5 and would not be in a position to participate in the meeting without sponsorship support;
- States Parties that have indicated having a responsibility for a significant number of landmine survivors and would not be in a position to participate in the meeting without sponsorship support;
- States making demonstrable progress toward ratification of or accession to the Convention; and
- In special cases, certain subject matter experts who have been invited to make a material contribution to panel or other discussions at meetings of the Convention.

Madam President

We need significantly increased funding to meet these ambitions and allow mine-affected States Parties a strong voice in the future direction of the Convention's work. We must avoid the situation faced over the past two years, in which numerous appeals have been required to secure the funding necessary to support relatively small numbers of delegates to attend the intersessional meetings and Meetings of States Parties.

We therefore encourage all States Parties to consider new, renewed or increased funding the Sponsorship Programme, to provide funding as early as possible this year, and to commit also to funding in future years to help build and stabilise the Programme.

Thank you Madam President.