

**Second International Pledging Conference for
Implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban
Convention:**

Statement of Australia

Tuesday 28 February 2017

Mr President

Having already taken the floor to report to the Conference in our capacity as Sponsorship Coordinator, we take the floor again now in our national capacity. In doing so, let me begin by reiterating our thanks to the Presidency for convening this Conference.

Australia remains committed to supporting the implementation of the Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention and will work cooperatively with States Parties to achieve the objectives set out in the Maputo Action Plan for the 2014-19 period, and to meet the Maputo Declaration's aspiration of completion by 2025.

Mr President

As we have done for many years, we will continue to provide significant funding support to the operations of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU).

We are pleased to advise that, under our new multi-year partnership agreement with the Geneva Centre for International Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) for 2016-2019, we will make an annual contribution

of AUD140,000 (CHF108,000 approx) to the Implementation Support Unit, through to financial year 2018-19.

Mr President

Australia has been pleased to serve as the Sponsorship Coordinator for the Convention, and that contributions from Australia and a number of other states to the Sponsorship Programme enabled the attendance of delegates of nineteen states to attend meetings of the Convention in 2016.

We have been pleased to hear of the intentions of fellow States Parties to contribute to the Sponsorship Programme in 2017.

For our own part, under our new agreement with the GICHD Australia will make an annual contribution of AUD35,000 (CHF27,000 approx) to the Sponsorship Programme, through to financial year 2018-19.

Mr President

As well as our contributions to the ISU and Sponsorship Programme, Australia will continue supporting a range of bilateral and global mine action programs. In the 2015-2016 financial year, Australia's contributed over AUD13 million (CHF 10 million approx) to bilateral and global mine action, supporting programs in Iraq, Cambodia and Palau, and organisations including UNMAS, the ICRC, the ICBL-CMC, Handicap International, Geneva Call, the GICHD and the Gender and Mine Action Program (GMAP).

Mr President

Australia is gravely concerned by the drastic shortfall in payments of Conference dues that threatened the viability of the Meetings of States Parties of this Convention, and other UN Disarmament Convention, last year. We reiterate our thanks to Chile, together with UNODA, for their efforts to secure the payment of sufficient arrears to enable the 15th Meeting of States Parties to proceed last year. We must avoid a similar situation in 2017. As we have consistently done in the past, Australia will pay its dues for this year's Meeting of States Parties in full and in a timely manner. We will continue working with other States Parties on ways to safeguard against future Conference funding crises.

Mr President

In conclusion, we strongly encourage all States Parties to contribute, as they are able, to the critical work of the ISU, the Sponsorship Programme, and direct mine action through national, bilateral and global programs.

Thank you Mr President.