

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

Statement of the Sponsorship Coordinator

Tuesday 28 February 2017

Mr President

Let me first thank and congratulate you for convoking this Second Pledging Conference to encourage States to renew and strengthen their commitment of resources to supporting the implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

We are confident this Conference will provide renewed political and financial momentum required to meet our objectives under the Convention and the Maputo Action Plan. You have the assurance of Australia's full support in your leadership as President toward these goals, on which you have embarked so energetically and effectively.

We also wish to thank Chile for its strong leadership as President of the Convention last year, and in particular for its tremendous efforts – in cooperation with UNODA - to secure the payments by States Parties of their arrears in conference dues, and generously contributing its own additional funding, in order to allow the 15th Meeting of States Parties to proceed. We must agree on measures to ensure that we do not face the same Conference funding crisis again in the future.

Mr President

Australia has been pleased to serve as Sponsorship Programme Coordinator again in 2016.

The Programme is essential to the work of the Convention, supporting widespread participation in this work, particularly by States Parties with few means and which are in the process of clearing mined areas, destroying stockpiles and assisting victims. The Programme has allowed capital and field-based delegates, selected on the basis of their expertise, to engage in critical dialogue with the Convention's Committees and fellow States Parties. This facilitates their progress in implementing their obligations on mine clearance, stockpile destruction and victim assistance. It has also allowed States Parties to engage other States to take steps towards accession to our Convention.

Mr President

As we reported at the 15th Meeting of States Parties in Santiago in December last year, the Programme received only a limited number of contributions in 2016. We wish to acknowledge and thank Austria, Chile, France, Switzerland and Turkey for their generous support.

Although the Programme funded the participation of 30 delegates to Convention meetings in 2015, due to the limited number of contributions to the Programme's funds in 2016, the Programme was able to support only 19 delegates to Convention meetings in 2016. Nine delegates were supported to attend the Intersessional Meetings in May for matters

relating to mine clearance and victim assistance, and ten delegates were sponsored to attend the Meeting of States Parties in December.

Mr President

I regret to say that the disturbing decline in contributions to the Programme continues. On the basis of funds remaining to the Programme at the beginning of 2017 (just under CHF40,000), it is expected that the Programme will only have capacity to support around ten delegates to attend the Intersessional Meetings and the 16th Meeting of States Parties.

However, there are at least twenty least developed and low income countries implementing core obligations under the Convention which would benefit from sponsorship support to send delegates to meetings in 2017. On current projections, the Programme will require at least an additional CHF 40,000 to support this minimum number of sponsored delegates.

We therefore urgently need more States Parties, which are in a position to do so, to invest in the Sponsorship Programme for 2017 in order to ensure widespread participation at the Intersessional Meetings and the 16MSP. Given that the average delegate cost to attend and MSP is reasonably low - between CHF 4,000-5,000 - even relatively small contributions to the Programme by States Parties will have a significant, direct impact.

Mr President

It is my duty today to appeal for the urgent assistance of all states parties in securing this additional funding, to enable those states with limited means which have pressing obligations under the Convention to be supported in essential, direct engagement with the Convention's Committees and membership on Article 5 mine clearance extension requests, workplans and progress, victim assistance and treaty universalisation.

Allowing mine-affected States Parties a strong voice in the future direction of the Convention's work is critical. I therefore urge all states parties to consider funding the Sponsorship Programme as part of voluntary contributions to the work of the Convention in 2017, including as part of commitments made at today's Conference.

Thank you Mr President.