

Thank you Mr President for giving me the floor.

Australia is pleased to continue serving as coordinator of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Sponsorship Programme.

As you know, since the intersessional meetings in 2020, our collective work has unfortunately been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

While we were hoping we could offer sponsorship to attend the intersessional meetings in 2021, we continue to be subject to travel and meetings restrictions in general.

I am pleased to see participants from the four corners of the world online this week and I do hope that all of us can meet again in person in the Hague in November for the 19MSP.

I must say that while I am happy that we had the opportunity to continue our work virtually, there is nothing that replaces the in-person interactions between delegations, especially the opportunity to engage with capital-based representatives from mine -affected states.

For those interested in the financial status of the sponsorship programme, it began 2021 with around 109,000 CHF which was carried over from 2020.

Thanks to the generous contributions from Austria, Australia, Canada and the Netherlands the programme received around

72,000 CHF this year to take the total available to just over 183,000 CHF.

This means we are well placed to sponsor delegates to attend the 19MSP in the Netherlands should Covid-19-related restrictions be lifted.

This relatively healthy financial position should also not discourage those in a position to do so to contribute to the programme in 2021 so that we can increase participation of mine-affected states in future meetings and strengthen the engagement with those that most need it.

I thank you Mr President.