

## Sponsorship Program Update

Thank you President and good afternoon to all colleagues.

I am pleased to take the floor, on behalf of Australia, to deliver an update on the Sponsorship Program.

I wish to start by recognising the generous contributions of donors to the Sponsorship Fund in 2022. These donors were: Algeria, Canada, France, Slovenia and Switzerland. Australia was also pleased to continue its contributions to the fund in 2022.

Total contributions to the Sponsorship Fund totalled almost **71,000 CHF (swiss franc) this year**. There was also a carry over of around 175,000 CHF (swiss franc) due to reduced expenditure in 2020-2021.

As a result of these contributions, in 2022 we were able to offer sponsorship to **29 delegates for the intersessional meetings** and **35 delegates for this 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties**, 33 per cent of which are women.

Total expenditure on sponsorship this year was approximately 160,000 CHF (swiss franc). That leaves the fund with a **remaining balance of around 86,000 CHF**. This means we should be in a position to support a number of eligible delegates attending the intersessional meetings next year.

Many of you will be aware that the sponsorship program for this Convention was initiated by a group of donors back in 2000. The primary aim of the program is to support participation in the Convention's meetings by mine-affected States - with active clearance and victim assistance obligations - that may lack the financial resources to pay for their own attendance.

The program can also support eligible delegates of States not yet party, that are interested in pursuing accession to the Convention, to participate in the work of the Convention.

Due to a high level of demand and limited funds available, the program is not able to support *all* delegates who may wish to be sponsored. We seek to support delegates from a mix of different regions and to strive for gender balance.

I appeal to all States Parties to consider a new or renewed contribution to the Sponsorship Program. Given that the average delegate cost to attend these meetings is reasonably low, even modest contributions to the Program will have a significant impact.

Finally, I extend my sincere appreciation to the ISU and to the GICHD for all their work in administrating the sponsorship program. This program would not be possible without your support.

Thank you.

**If-raised: Where can we find information on the Sponsorship Fund? How does it work?**

We are working on an information sheet to provide information on the APMBC Sponsorship Fund.

Given the limited size of the fund, there is no general call for applications under this program. The Implementation Support Unit makes recommendations on the basis of those considerations I have outlined earlier. These recommendations are then put to the donor group for approval.

We are working to make this information more accessible.