

## Sponsorship Programme Coordinator

Thank you President and good afternoon to all colleagues.

Australia is pleased to be serving as Sponsorship Program Coordinator for the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention again in 2022. The Sponsorship Program is a critical tool in ensuring broad, inclusive participation in the work of the Convention.

Last year, for the second year in a row, we were unable to execute a Sponsorship Program as the pandemic forced our meetings online. We are hopeful that this year we will be able to welcome representatives of our Convention community in person.

In 2022 we continue our implementation of the Oslo Action Plan. The Sponsorship Program can assist these efforts by ensuring that States with limited resourcing, particularly those with active mine clearance and destruction obligations, can attend convention meetings and update States Parties on their implementation efforts. This facilitates a continuous dialogue with other States Parties and office holders of the Convention.

In addition to this, support through the Sponsorship Program has allowed for participation by non-party States that have demonstrated an interest in the work of the Convention to outline the steps they are taking towards accession.

I would like to acknowledge the generous contributions of donors to the fund in 2021/2022: Austria, Canada, France, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey. Australia was also a proud donor to the fund last year and continues to fund the programme in 2022 together with Canada, Slovenia, Switzerland, at present.

We are extremely happy that we were able to execute a sponsorship programme for these Intersessional Meetings. While we launched a sponsorship programme to support up to 39 delegates from 23 States Parties. Following some cancellations and visa issues finally we were able to support 29 delegates from 19 States Parties, including 17 mine clearance experts and 12 victim assistance experts. Of the total delegates sponsored 29% were women. Expenditures for the sponsorship program was approximately 63,000 CHF. As expected, some costs saving was possible through cost sharing with sponsorship for the NDM administered by the GICHD.

The balance of the fund currently stands at approximate CHF 94,000. Thanks to donors, we are well placed to sponsor eligible delegates to the Meeting of the States Parties in 2022 and we are hopeful to receive additional funding that will allow us to also execute a successful Sponsorship Program beyond the Twentieth Meeting of the States Parties.

I appeal to all States Parties to consider a new or renewed contribution to the Sponsorship Program in 2022 as we work towards the States Parties' 2025 ambitions. Given that the average delegate cost to attend these meetings is reasonably low, even relatively small contributions to the Program will have a significant impact.

Thank you.