

Sponsorship Programme Coordinator

(delivered by Australia)

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 in 2023. The Sponsorship Program is a critical tool in ensuring broad, inclusive participation in the work of the Convention and we are glad to have had this reflected in the last three days of our deliberations.

As we enter the last year of implementation of the Oslo Action Plan and we begin our conversation on a new action plan to be adopted by States Parties at the Review Conference, the Sponsorship Program is more important than ever. The Sponsorship Programme 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 take part in our conversations.

In addition to this, support through the Sponsorship Program will also allow for participation by States not yet party that have demonstrated an interest in the work of the Convention to outline the steps they are taking towards accession. The upcoming Review Conference presents an important opportunity for States not party to consider joining the Convention and joining the high level Review Conference as States Parties.

I would like to acknowledge the generous contributions of donors to the fund in 2022 Austria, Canada, France, Germany, Slovenia, Switzerland and the

Netherlands. Australia was also a proud donor to the fund last year and continues to fund the programme.

The Sponsorship Programme began 2023 with a total of approximately 66'000 Swiss Francs. This year we also welcomed contributions from Canada, France, Germany, Switzerland, ~~and The Netherlands~~ and Australia. Additionally, Austria has also announced its commitment to once again contribute to the programme, ~~And Australia also provided a contribution to the sponsorship programme in 2023.~~ Total Contributions in 2023 amounted to approximately 152,000 Swiss Francs.

We are extremely happy that we were able to execute a Sponsorship Programme for these Intersessional Meetings and for this Twenty-First Meeting of the States Parties. To these meetings we were able to provide support to a total of 55 delegates from 28 countries. We expect the cost of the Sponsorship Programme for the Intersessional Meetings and Twenty-First Meeting of the States Parties to total approximately 133,500 Swiss Francs.

The balance going towards the Fifth Review Conference of the States Parties will total approximately 85,000 Francs.

With next year being a Review Conference in 2024, and to ensure an inclusive approach to our deliberations, we will certainly need to increase our funding to the Sponsorship Programme. We have a strategy for 2024 and we will be reaching out to current and historical contributors to the sponsorship program to consider maintaining or increasing their support to the Program.

I take this opportunity to appeal to all states to consider supporting the Sponsorship Programme.

Thank you.