

ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION

STATEMENT OF SPONSORSHIP COORDINATOR (AUSTRALIA)

Eleventh Annual Pledging Conference, 9 March 2026

Thank you Madam President and Juan Carlos, it is a pleasure to join you here today.

Australia is pleased to continue to serve as Sponsorship Programme Coordinator and we look forward to working under your leadership.

This is an important year for the Convention. As we continue to implement the Siem Reap–Angkor Action Plan, in the face of mine use across multiple regions, the importance of the Sponsorship Programme is clear.

It is the essential to the work of the Convention, by enabling participation in the meetings of the Convention by experts from States Parties with limited means.

This not only allows national experts to share progress in implementation of their obligations under the Convention but also allows them to share their challenges and to engage in person with other States and officeholders of the Convention.

In addition to this, the Sponsorship Programme, whenever possible, has also supported participation by States not party who are interesting in joining the Convention.

At a time of challenges to the Convention and its norms, including States' withdrawals, these efforts take on particular significance.

We were pleased the Programme was able to support the participation of a representatives from two States, Tonga and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, to join us at Twenty-Second Meeting of the States Parties to celebrate their States' ratification and accession to the Convention. We also sponsored a delegate from the Federated States of Micronesia at the 22nd MSP, allowing FSM to update the Convention on its steps towards accession.

Madam President

Most delegates we sponsor to attend are from mine-affected States – whose participation is critical. With this in mind, we therefore call for States Parties in a position to do so to invest in the Sponsorship Programme for 2026 to ensure broad participation.

With the average delegate cost to attend the Convention's meetings being reasonably low – between CHF 3,000-4,000 per participant– even modest contributions from States Parties will have a clear and direct impact. Of course, all contributions are welcome, both big and small.

Madam President,

As we reported at last year's MSP, thanks to contributions from the States Parties Austria, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Türkiye, together with my country Australia, we were able to support a total of 79 delegates to attend meetings of the Convention in 2025.

42 delegates were sponsored to attend the intersessional meetings and 37 delegates were sponsored to attend the MSP. The total cost of the Programme in 2025 was approximately 220,000 CHF, comprised of approximately 111,000 CHF for the intersessional meetings and 109,000 CHF for the MSP.

Madam President,

At present the Sponsorship Programme has approximately 110,000 CHF. At this level, we will only have capacity to support 31 delegates across the June Intersessional Meetings and the 23rd Meeting of States Parties and its preparatory meetings.

However, over 20 least developed and low-income countries implementing core obligations, including mine clearance and victim assistance, under the Convention which would benefit from sponsorship support to engage in the work of the Convention in 2026 – in in both our June and December meetings.

I appeal to all States Parties to consider a new, renewed or increased contribution – and to consider multi-annual funding to make this Programme sustainable amid the fiscal uncertainty we face in Geneva and more broadly.

We must demonstrate our collective support for the Convention, including through guaranteeing an inclusive process in our efforts. We also believe that inclusivity should extend to this work as well, and we continue to urge States to strive for a gender balance in those they nominate for sponsorship.

We thank those States that are able to contribute to the Sponsorship Programme, we look forward to hearing from you today. Australia is pleased to have made a multi-year commitment, we look forward to more States joining us.

For further information please contact myself, my Australian Mission colleagues, or the ISU.

I thank you Madam President.