

**ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION  
INTERSESSIONAL MEETINGS  
22-24 May 2019**

**STATEMENT OF SPONSORSHIP COORDINATOR (AUSTRALIA)**

Mr. President,

Australia is pleased to be serving as Sponsorship Programme Coordinator again in 2019.

The Sponsorship Programme is essential to the work of the Convention. It enables participation in the meetings of the Convention and direct interaction with the Convention's Committees by capital and field-based experts from States Parties with limited means. Such participation helps these experts coordinate their countries' implementation of their mine clearance, stockpile destruction and victim assistance obligations and allows us all to have a fruitful conversation concerning our commitment to the implementation of the Convention.

As outlined in a communication sent ahead of the February Pledging Conference calling for contributions to the Sponsorship Programme, signed by Australia and the President, at the beginning of 2019, the Programme had just under CHF30,000 (CHF29'599) left available to it.

Since that time, the Programme has received an additional contribution from the Netherlands and expects to receive a further contribution, based on pledges and standing agreements, from Canada, Norway, Sri Lanka and Switzerland as well as from my own country which will bring total new contributions so far this year to approximately CHF 117,000. We thank our fellow donors for their generous contributions.

This brought the total funding available to the Programme in 2019 to approximately CHF 147,000 ahead of these intersessional meetings.

On this basis, for the intersessional meetings, we offered full or partial sponsorship to a total of 22 delegates. Unfortunately, for a range of reasons, a number of those offered sponsorship did not take of the sponsorship offer or were not able to attend the intersessional meetings.

Ultimately, the Programme provided sponsorship for 18 delegates to attend the meetings, from Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and Asia. My understanding is that fruitful bi-laterals have been conducted with these delegations on the day before the meeting as well as on the margins of the meetings concerning their Article 5 extension requests, Article 5 work plans, preparations for extension requests to be submitted in 2020, submission of Article 7 reports and on matters concerning the taking of steps towards accession.

We have also had the pleasure of hearing from most of these delegations in the plenary including information on the progress made and challenges faced by them in implementation.

The expected cost for the participation of these delegations during the intersessional meetings is approximately CHF 47'000.

This means that, following the intersessional meetings, the Programme will have approximately CHF 98'000 available to support delegates to attend the Fourth Review Conference. With this funding, we will be able to sponsor approximately 28 delegates to attend the Fourth Review Conference.

However, we must keep in mind that this would leave no funding for 2020 and that there are more than 19 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 send delegates to meetings in 2020.

We therefore urgently need more States Parties, which are in a position to do so, to invest in the Sponsorship Programme for 2019 to ensure broad participation at the Fourth Review Conference and next year's Convention related meetings. Given that the average delegate cost to attend and MSP is reasonably low - between CHF 3,500-4,500 - even relatively small contributions to the Programme by States Parties will have a significant, direct impact.

Mr President

We need significantly increased funding to enable mine-affected States Parties to have a strong voice in the future direction of the Convention's work. We encourage all States Parties to consider new, renewed or increased funding the Sponsorship Programme.

We look forward to the Sponsorship Programme contributing to a successful review Conference as well as a successful contribution to the successful implementation of the soon to be adopted Oslo Action Plan.

Thank you Mr President.