

ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION FOURTH REVIEW CONFERENCE

STATEMENT OF SPONSORSHIP COORDINATOR (AUSTRALIA)

NOVEMBER 2019

OSLO

Mr President,

Australia has been pleased to serve as Sponsorship Program Coordinator again in over the course of 2019.

But why is it important? Why does it matter?

The Sponsorship Programme plays a critical role in ensuring that all States Parties – and in particular those with limited resource capacity and with whom the Convention Committees engage on implementation – have the opportunity to attend the meetings of the Convention. We have all seen the direct benefit of the Sponsorship Programme through the extensive engagement of sponsored delegates in our proceedings at this meeting, in particular through their interaction in plenary to push our agenda forward in this regard and contribute to the purpose of our Convention. In this respect it is a key tool supporting universalisation of the Convention.

So how did we go about achieving another successful program this year?

Thanks to the ongoing support of a small number of donors in 2018- the Programme commenced 2019 with just under CHF 30,000 available to it.

In February, a joint letter from Norway, as the Presidency, and Australia, as Sponsorship Coordinator, was sent to all current and recent donors appealing for further contributions to the Programme. A further appeal for contributions was made at the Pledging Conference at the end of February and at the First Preparatory meeting. In 2019 and following appeals, the Programme received contributions from Canada, France, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey and Australia – bringing the total available to the Programme in the first six months of the year to just under CHF 200,000. I must point out that many of these contributions are multi-annual which is extremely helpful to the programme.

On this basis, and on the advice of the ISU, the Donor Group agreed to offer sponsorship to nineteen delegates to attend these intersessional meetings in May. Of the offers made, fourteen countries took up sponsorship and had delegates attending these Intersessional Meetings. The total cost to the Programme of the Intersessional Meetings was just under CHF 40,000.

Mr President,

Our objective for this Review Conference was to support up to 44 delegates to attend. With this in mind, in consultation with the Donor Group we issued a total of 44 invitations to take up sponsorship for this Review Conference. Ultimately, 32 delegates of States Parties have been sponsored to attend the meeting thanks to the Sponsorship Program – a quarter of them women – a point I will come back to at the end of this statement. The total approximate cost of the participation of these delegates is around CHF 90,000, at an average cost of under CHF 3000 per delegate.

Delegates attended from countries:

- with extension requests to be considered at this meeting;
- that have deadlines in 2020 and 2021;
- in the process of implementing Article 5 obligations with upcoming deadlines in 2021 and beyond
- that have indicated having a responsibility for a significant numbers of landmine survivors
- required support to attend the Fourth Review Conference

Mr President

In summary, the Sponsorship Program supported over 45 delegates to attend meetings of the Convention this year, compared to 36 delegates last year – appropriate for a review conference year. We are very pleased that the trend toward fewer contributions and lower numbers of sponsored delegates we experienced in 2015 and 2016 has at been reversed, thanks to the generosity of our small group of committed donors.

So what are our next steps?

Next year, we focus on implementation of the Oslo Action Plan; this is no time to waver - the high-level participation from States Parties is crucial for its success.

While the Sponsorship Program will carry around CHF 65,000 into 2020, providing it with a solid base for the new year, we would urge against complacency. We would encourage all States Parties to consider including pledges to the Sponsorship Programme at next year's Pledging Conference.

Finally, Mr. President, the Sponsorship Program has encouraged those delegations that have been invited to apply for sponsorship to consider gender and the inclusion of persons with disabilities and persons from affected communities in their delegations. We make that appeal today to delegations to continue considering gender and diversity considerations when participating in the Sponsorship Program.

Thank you Mr President.