

APMBC Intersessionals 2015
SWITZERLAND

Statement for the thematic discussion „Administrative and financial issues“ (Check against delivery!)

Mister President,

Let me join others in thanking you for organising today's discussions on financial issues related to the Convention's ISU. I would like to also thank Australia, Chile and Zambia for the excellent concept note they have prepared on this question in anticipation of our discussions.

The ISU plays a central role in the life of the convention. It is an essential instrument in support of States Parties and their implementation efforts, in particular for affected States. In this context, I will join previous speakers in expressing our concerns about the ISU's deficit of some 180'000 CHF in 2014. I would also like to express my gratitude to the GICHD for the exceptional and one-off contribution it has provided to cover the deficit. Finally, I would also like to thank the ISU Director for the immediate and robust measures taken during the past months to address the situation.

At this stage, I would like to stress that the ISU 2014 deficit cannot be seen as a problem simply linked to the management of the ISU. The ISU did not go over budget. The reality is that States Parties agreed on a work plan with a related budget but failed collectively to provide the means to cover it. We have, in other words, an issue of process or procedure that has to be addressed.

As the concept note indicates, we have a short term challenge to meet as well as considerations of a longer-term nature to address.

- Regarding the **short term**, we have to ensure that a new deficit of the ISU in 2015 is avoided.
 - In this context, we welcome the robust steps taken by the ISU to this effect. We would like also to express our gratitude for all the demarches its Director has undertaken with a view to securing funding towards the 2015 budget.
 - These strenuous efforts are yielding benefits and we have noted that, as of June 2015, this year's contributions - paid, pledged or at least indicated - already cover a large part of the budget and it seems possible that the ISU will be in a position to realize the 2015 work plan in its totality.
 - These efforts should be furthered and, in this context, we see value in the different recommendations spelled out in the concept note for the year 2015, in particular the first three in that list.
- From a **mid-term perspective**, a number of elements needs to be addressed :
 - Safeguards needs to be built-in the financial process to ensure that budget deficits cannot be repeated,

- We also need to look at how the financial model can be made more predictable,
- Some interesting ideas have been put forward in the concept note distributed for our discussions regarding the two points I have just made,
- This includes in particular the idea of prioritizing activities and to be in a position to defer some planned action to a later stage if funding is insufficient. It also concerns the idea that States Parties should be invited to indicate their level of contributions as early as possible, ahead of the beginning of a budget cycle, and when possible base on a multiyear commitments. In this context we welcome the idea of establishing at the 14th MSP an ISU budget for the next four years. A multiyear work-plan and budget also facilitates fund-raising ahead of the respective year of expenditure.
- Finally, one important element that we believe will also be important to improve will be to ensure that the number of contributors is widened – here we can already see some progress this year and we hope that efforts in this area will be furthered.

Mister President,

Before closing, I would like to indicate that, for its part, Switzerland will continue to support the ISU with its in-kind annual contributions through the GICHD and through direct additional contributions.

Thank you.