

**Mine Ban Convention**  
**June intersessionals**  
**Statement of Australia, Coordinator of the Sponsorship Programme**

**Informal Sponsorship Programme**

26 June 2015

Thank you Mr President,

Australia is pleased to provide an update on the informal Sponsorship Programme, which was established on a voluntary basis by an interested group of States Parties in 2000.

At the Cartagena Summit, the States Parties agreed that those in a position to do so would contribute to the Sponsorship Programme thereby permitting widespread representation at meetings of the Convention, particularly by mine-affected developing States Parties.

In Australia's capacity as the informal Coordinator of the programme, and with the valuable support of the ISU and the GICHD, the programme has continued to be both effective and efficient. The ISU has provided sound strategic advice to the Coordinator, while the GICHD has administered the programme at no cost.

However, we have seen a steady decline in the donors that have been willing to contribute to this programme. In 2013, six States Parties provided contributions – Australia, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland. In 2014, this reduced to three States Parties – Australia, Denmark and Norway. This year, only two States Parties have contributed – Australia and Denmark, with the total sum contributed at its lowest level ever since 2000.

The programme has efficiently prioritised in recent years in order to ensure the best use of its increasingly limited resources. In 2014, the programme spent CHF 113,194, supporting the participation of 11 delegates representing 11 States Parties at the Convention's meetings in April, and 21 delegates representing 19 State Parties at the Maputo Review Conference.

For the 2014 April intersessionals, some sponsorship costs were shared with the sponsorship programmes related to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the United Nations Mine Action Programme Directors Meeting, in keeping with the commitment at the Cartagena Summit to make use of synergies with other relevant instruments of international humanitarian and human rights law.

For this intersessional meeting in 2015, with the technical advice of the ISU, I consulted the Committee on Article 5 Implementation and the Committee on Victim Assistance on this year's priorities for the programme, in order to ensure that there would be adequate and appropriate sponsorship for the intersessionals, and funds reserved for sponsorship for the 14MSP as well.

Based on the feedback of the two Committees, and after also informally consulting recent donors on these priorities, invitations were issued to 15 States Parties to sponsor up to 16 delegates: six for matters relating to mine clearance; nine for matters relating to victim assistance; and one for matters relating to compliance and reporting.

Of those invited, 12 delegates were provided sponsorship as follows: four for mine clearance (*Ethiopia, Niger, Senegal and Zimbabwe*); seven for victim assistance (*Cambodia, Jordan, Peru, Serbia, Sudan, Tajikistan and Zimbabwe*); and one for compliance and reporting (*Ukraine*). Two invited States parties (*Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda*) did not nominate a delegate for sponsorship, while a nomination from another invited State Party (*Yemen*) was unable to proceed due to visa difficulties.

We also collaborated with the CCM sponsorship programme, which held its meetings earlier this week, to share the costs of eleven sponsored delegates attending the meetings under both Conventions i.e. this meant an additional seven sponsored delegates were able to attend this meeting. This is also in keeping with the Maputo Action Plan's commitment to make use of synergies with other relevant instruments of international humanitarian and human rights law.

Thus, the Sponsorship programme remains fundamental to the transparency of States Parties in their implementation of their obligations, by facilitating their participation in the meetings, as well as the political engagement between the experts from capitals and the relevant Committees.

No commitments are yet in place to support this programme in 2016. Clearly, without more donors contributing to this informal programme, we can be certain that there will be no programme in 2016. A small and dedicated group of donors is needed to sustain this relatively modest, but effective, programme.

We therefore urge all States Parties in a position to contribute to the sponsorship programme to consider doing so this year and in future years.

Thank you.