

**ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION INTERSESSIONAL
MEETINGS, 19-20 MAY 2016**

STATEMENT OF SPONSORSHIP COORDINATOR (AUSTRALIA)

Madam President,

Australia has been pleased to serve as Sponsorship Programme Coordinator again in 2016.

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.

Madam President,

As we reported at the MBC Pledging Conference in March, although the Programme funded the participation of 30 delegates to Convention meetings in 2015, due to lack of new contributions to the Programme's funds over the past year, the Programme began the year with only enough funds to support a very small number of delegates for 2016. We had foreshadowed this serious financial situation at the Fourteenth Meeting of States Parties in December last year, and reiterated it in our joint letter with you, Madam President, sent to all States Parties in January this year.

Madam President,

On the basis of the funds remaining available to the Programme for 2016, invitations were issued to 7 States Parties to sponsor up to 7 delegates to attend this intersessional meeting: six for matters relating to mine clearance; and one for matters relating to universalization.

Of those invited, one did not nominate a delegate for sponsorship, one declined the invitation for sponsorship, and 5 accepted sponsorship and have delegates present at this meeting, namely Angola, Niger, Sudan, Ukraine and Yemen.

In addition, the sponsorship programme was able to support the participation in the intersessional meeting of victim assistance experts sponsored by Australia to attend the 18 May Geneva workshop on Victim Assistance organised by the Convention on Cluster Munitions Coordinators on Victim Assistance and Cooperation and Assistance. The costs of extending the stay of victim assistance experts from four States Parties (Cambodia, DRC, Mozambique and Tajikistan) were covered by the sponsorship programme.

Madam President,

With the sponsorship of these delegates, we have, for the moment, exhausted all funds in the Sponsorship Programme. We have received indications of planned contributions to the Sponsorship Programme for 2016 at the Pledging Conference from four SPs, but I must emphasise that, given the likely high costs of travel to Santiago de Chile, the level of these pledges will be sufficient to cover only around ten delegates. By way of comparison, we were able to sponsor 18 delegates to attend the 14MSP.

Madam President

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 with the Committee on Article 5 implementation, with the Committee on Cooperative Compliance, with you on the issue of stockpile destruction and with the Committee on Victim Assistance and the two Victim Assistance side-events.

With this in mind, I wish once more to urge States Parties to consider contributing to the Sponsorship Programme in the coming months, to ensure that all States Parties – and in particular those with limited resource capacity and with whom the Convention Committees need to engage on implementation of clearance and stockpile destruction obligations – have the opportunity to attend the 15MSP. Together with you, Madam President, in coming weeks, we will be directly approaching former donors to the Programme to discuss their capacity to re-engage with the Programme.

Thank you Madam President.