

Fifth Annual Pledging Conference Sponsorship Programme Coordinator

Mr. President,

Australia is pleased to be serving as Sponsorship Programme Coordinator again in 2020. This is an important time in the life of the Convention as the first year of implementation of the Oslo Action Plan.

Implementing the Oslo Action Plan requires that those States with limited means and that require support in attending the meeting receive this support to attend and update us on their implementation efforts.

Such participation also allows them to share their challenges and to hold a continuous dialogue with other States and office holders of the Convention. This continuous dialogue between all of us is crucial to ensure effective implementation of the Convention and Oslo Action Plan and supports the Committees and President in fulfilling their respective mandates.

Support through the Sponsorship Programme has also allowed participation by States not party that have demonstrated an interest in the work of the Convention. This aids our universalization efforts and allows States not party to communicate steps they are taking towards accession to the Convention.

Mr. President,

As we reported at the Fourth Review Conference in Oslo last November, thanks to contributions from a small number of States Parties— namely Austria, Canada, France, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey and Australia— the Sponsorship Programme supported a total of 47 delegates to attend meetings of the Convention in 2020. Fifteen (15) delegates were sponsored to attend the intersessional meetings and thirty-two (32) delegates were sponsored to attend the Fourth Review Conference.

The total cost of the Programme in 2020 was approximately CHF131,474, comprised of CHF39,214 for the Intersessional Meetings and CHF92,260 for the Review Conference.

Mr. President,

At the moment the Programme has just over CHF 90,000 available to it having received contributions from Canada, the Netherlands and my country. If the Programme's funds remain at this level, the Programme will only have capacity to support approximately twenty-five delegates to attend the intersessional meetings in June and the Eighteenth Meeting of the States Parties.

However, 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 engage in the work of the Convention in 2020.

As we embark on the implementation of the Oslo Action Plan, the participation of mine-affected States is critical. Allowing mine-affected States Parties to have a say in the future direction of the Convention's work is essential to the good functioning of this Convention. Given the importance of this year, we therefore ask that States Parties, which are in a position to do so, to invest in the Sponsorship Programme for 2020 to ensure broad participation in our deliberations. Given that the average delegate cost to attend these meetings is reasonably low - between CHF 3,500-4,000 - even relatively small contributions to the Programme by States Parties will have a significant and direct impact.

Mr President,

In the Oslo action Plan we also committed to strive to remove barriers to full, equal and gender balanced participation in mine action and in Convention meetings as well as to take into consideration the needs of mine survivors and affected communities and ensure their meaningful participation in all Convention related matters, including their equal and active participation in Convention meetings.

The Sponsorship Programme will play its part in this regard by promoting the implementation of these actions of the Oslo Action Plan. However, in order to succeed, we will need States to put forward suitable candidates and we look forward to working with States in this regard.

In closing, it is my role and duty today to appeal to all States Parties to consider a new, renewed or increased contribution to the Sponsorship Programme, to provide this contribution as early as possible and to consider multi-annual funding to make this programme sustainable as we work towards the States Parties 2025 ambitions.

Thank you.